

# OLAQ

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# OLA Quarterly



## Trends in Genealogy for Librarians

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Basic African American Family Research: Oregon and Other Resources

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# Trends in Genealogy for Librarians

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# Editorial

## Genealogy: Looking Backward from the 21st Century

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Identity and history have become more critical questions since 11 September 2001. Before, we in the United States didn't have to think about things happening over there, wherever "there" might be. History was everything that happened to other people; genealogy was the province of self-aggrandizing dilettantes.

Suddenly, we have been dragged back into the mainstream. We have a powerfully public collective history since 11 September, but we also have individual histories. Newly aware of the certainty of our mortality, we have a heightened need to know who we are in every sense of that term. Part of that self-knowledge is an awareness of our ancestry.

Out of all the questions we librarians encounter, none are more deeply motivated than the genealogical queries so many of us dread. Our disdain is often justified: many of our clients approach genealogical research as an attempt to prove they are somehow better than their present circumstances. As librarians, we are dedicated to equal access to information. These genealogists, in their quests to prove themselves

somehow superior, seem to repudiate the very basis of our profession. Who cares if someone's great-great-uncle was a physician? (Besides, a physician didn't have the social cachet in the 1800's that the occupation has today.) We hurry along the reference interview, trying to determine as quickly as possible which other agency can be the fortunate recipient of our client's rapture about his or her great-great-whomever. Jean-Paul Sartre wrote that existence precedes essence, and he made this the fundamental principle of existentialism. Genealogy attempts to connect many different existences into one essence that is a family and individual story—a story answering who we are, perhaps implying why we're here. Along the way, we see how interrelated all of us ultimately are.

This issue of the *Oregon Library Association Quarterly* looks at the past from the perspective of sometimes futuristic techniques. We librarians must be conversant in the technologies and the resources available for genealogical research, so that we can better guide those

who ask us about this topic. These articles will establish a basis in theory and articulate current practice, so that you can frame your knowledge in a structure that allows you to relate future learning to your knowledge base.

In addition to the articles in this print edition, an additional article will be available on our Web site, at <http://www.olaweb.org/>. That article, by Certified Genealogical Researcher Jacqueline E. A. Lawson, describes basic resources and techniques for African American genealogical research in Oregon. Ms. Lawson describes valuable local, statewide, and national resources.

—Fred Reenstjerna  
Douglas County Library System  
*Guest Editor*

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# Why Don't Librarians Like Genealogists?

## Beginning Genealogy for Librarians

by Anne Billeter, Ph.D.

**I**T'S TRUE: Most librarians don't like genealogists. Why? Librarians are human: they don't want to admit their ignorance of the specialized resources genealogists use. They believe (erroneously) that they don't need to know about these resources in order to assist other patrons. They are wrong: genealogy resources are an eye-opening treasure-trove for historians, the source of clues for adoption and missing persons researchers, and increasingly important for genetic medical research.

Why else don't librarians like genealogists? Because genealogists often are not library users prior to becoming genealogists, so they don't know library jargon (ILL, Ref, Circ, fiche) or procedures (using the catalog, using microfilm and microfiche readers, requesting an interlibrary loan). Notice that even spelled out the jargon isn't self-explanatory to the new library user: interlibrary loan, reference, circulation, microfiche.

Even the smallest public or academic library can be a great resource for local genealogy patrons, not by spending scarce money and space on lots of library materials about genealogy, but by devoting some time and energy to learning the basic terms and resources of this special field of knowledge. By doing this, the library will be able to assist an underserved group of patrons pursuing a hobby, an interest, a passion, and sometimes even medically essential data. What an opportunity to gain a whole new group of library users and supporters!

### Steps in Library Service

- 1) Learn a little about genealogy. Be sure the library has an adequate circulating collection of how-to books for genealogists and READ one of the books for beginners recommended on the following page.
- 2) Take a beginning class in genealogy. You will learn basic terms and re-

sources (ancestor charts, family group sheets, Sutró, census, Soundex, LDS); become familiar with the local genealogists; and learn about the local organizations and agencies to which library patrons should be referred (the local genealogical society, the local historical society, county archives, the city department responsible for cemeteries, etc.). Learning the language of any special clientele is an important part of continuing library education.

- 3) Have a core reference collection for genealogists and become comfortable with using these resources (see the recommended resources below).
- 4) Learn about regional and state organizations, agencies, and libraries and REFER, REFER, REFER. Refer neophytes to the local genealogical society: part of their mission is to help new genealogists get started. Refer patrons doing local research to the appropriate agencies. Refer patrons doing research involving distant places to the appropriate organizations, resources, and libraries.

The local genealogical library often has many resources pertaining to distant places, past and present, but many times the patrons' needs are best met by referring them to a larger resource. Oregon is blessed with a number of strong libraries which are well worth the travel effort, if the genealogist is well-informed about the specifics of their collections. (See "Libraries in Oregon with Strong Genealogy Resources" below.)

- 5) Explore the Internet and refer patrons to appropriate sites. Genealogists have capitalized on the strengths of the Internet. The genealogical resources available on the Internet are numerous and well-organized. They include



wonderful indexes, images of original documents, electronic mailing lists for people with common research interests, and much, much more. (See "Genealogy on the Internet" and the article by Tom Kenyon.)

These five steps will put you well on the way to providing services to genealogists. Learn their vocabulary and resources, and you will enhance the quality of your library's service to its community.

**Beginning Genealogy Booklist**  
Each of these books presents the beginner with basic information.

Croom, Emily Anne. *Unpuzzling Your Past: A Basic Guide to Genealogy*. 3rd Edition. Betterway Publications, Cincinnati, 1995.

Hartley, William G. *The Everything Family Tree Book: Finding, Charting, and Preserving Your Family History*. Adams Media Corp., Holbrook, Mass., 1997.

Hinckley, Kathleen W. *Locating Lost Family Members & Friends: Modern Genealogical Research Techniques for Locating the People of Your Past and Present*. Betterway Publications, Cincinnati, 1999.

Melnyk, Marcia Yannizze. *The Weekend Genealogist: Timesaving Techniques for Effective Research*. Betterway Publications, Cincinnati, 2000.

Rose, Christine, et al. *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Genealogy*. Macmillan, New York, 1997.

Willard, Jim, Willard, Terry, and Wilson, Jane. *Ancestors: A Beginner's Guide to Family History and Genealogy*. Houghton Mifflin, New York, 1997.

ogy. Houghton Mifflin, New York, 1997.

There are a number of books to help genealogists learn to use the Internet effectively.

Helm, April Leigh and Helm, Matthew L. *Genealogy Online for Dummies*. Hungry Minds, Inc., New York, 2001.

Howells, Cyndi. *Netting Your Ancestors: Genealogical Research on the Internet*. Genealogical Publishing Company, Baltimore, 1999.

McClure, Rhonda R. and Wilcox, Shirley Langdon. *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Online Genealogy*. Alpha Books, Indianapolis, 1999.

Richley, Pat. *The Everything Online Genealogy Book*. Adams Media Corporation, Holbrook, Mass, 2001.

For library patrons who need to maximize their use of limited time on the Internet, the printed version of *Cyndi's List* will allow them to plan their Internet search prior to going online.

Howells, Cyndi. *Cyndi's List: A Comprehensive List of 40,000 Genealogy Sites on the Internet*. Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, 2000.

#### Reference Resources

For genealogists who are doing local research there are a number of useful resources. The first title on the list is specific to genealogy; the others are titles which serve a number of uses, but to which the genealogist may need to be introduced.

Battaile, Connie Hopkins. *The Oregon Book: Information A to Z*. Saddle Mountain Press, Newport, Ore., 1998.



Librarians believe they don't need to know about genealogical resources in order to assist other patrons.

They are wrong.



Lenzen, Connie. *Oregon Guide to Genealogical Sources*. Genealogical Forum of Oregon, Portland, 1996.

McArthur, Lewis Ankeny. *Oregon Geographic Names*. Oregon Historical Society, Portland, 1992.

*Oregon Blue Book*. Secretary of State, biennial, Salem, OR. (Latest edition is 2001–2002; includes an excellent history of the state, and a wealth of other information.)

*Oregon Historical Quarterly Index*. 3 volumes. Oregon Historical Society, Portland. (The *Oregon Historical Quarterly* contains serious articles on every aspect of Oregon history. The index in three volumes indexes the quarterlies published from 1900–1980.)

The following resources will begin a core reference genealogy collection.

Szucs, Loretto Dennis and Luebking, Sandra H. *The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy*. Revised Edition. Ancestry Incorporated, Salt Lake City, 1997.

Greenwood, Val D. *The Researcher's Guide to American Genealogy*. 3rd Edition. Genealogical Publishing Company, 2000.

Everton, George B., ed. *The Handybook for Genealogists: United States of America*. 10th Edition. Everton Publishers, 2001.

Eichholz, Alice and Dollarhide, William, eds. *Ancestry's Red Book: American State, County and Town Sources*. Ancestry Incorporated, Salt Lake City, 1992.

Harris, Maurine and Glen, eds. *Ancestry's Concise Genealogical Dictionary*. Ancestry Incorporated, Salt Lake City, 1998.

Thorndale, William and Dollarhide, William. *Map Guide to the U. S. Federal Censuses, 1790–1920*. Genealogical Publishing Company, 2000.

Dollarhide, William and Derheim, James A. *The Census Book: A Genealogist's Guide to Federal Census Facts, Schedules and Indexes*. Heritage Quest, 1999.

Libraries in Oregon with Strong Genealogy Resources  
Use each library's Web page to access practical information (hours, fees, and how to get there) and, for most, their catalog of library materials.

#### **Oregon State Library**

State Library Building  
Summer & Court Streets  
Salem, OR 97310

*Web page:* <http://www.osl.state.or.us/home/>  
*Special Resources:* Oregon Index, a 3 x 5 card index filling almost 600 drawers, primarily indexing newspapers and periodical literature. (Many Oregon libraries have an old microfilmed version of this index.)  
The Genealogy Room on the 2nd floor is a comprehensive collection of genealogical materials with special attention to Oregon.

#### **Oregon State Archives**

800 Summer St. NE  
Salem, OR 97310-1347

*Web page:* <http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/>  
*E-mail:* [reference.archives@state.or.us](mailto:reference.archives@state.or.us)  
*Electronic mailing list:*  
[or-roots@archive14.sos.state.or.us](mailto:or-roots@archive14.sos.state.or.us)  
(to subscribe send message:  
"Subscribe OR Roots.")



*Special Resources:* vital records, naturalization records, military records, probate files, and the Oregon Historical Records Guide. The latter is an inventory of records in county courthouses and the Archives. It is available on the Archives web page and in print, and has been published for each county.

**Multnomah County Library**

801 SW 10th Ave.

Portland, OR 97205-2597

*Web page:* <http://www.multnomah.lib.or.us/lib/>

*Special Resources:* Library Association of Portland Newspaper Index. (A name and subject index for more than 100 years, primarily of the *Oregonian* and the *Oregon Journal*. (Many Oregon libraries have a microfiche version of this index.) Comprehensive collection of Polk's City Directories, particularly for Portland; newspapers and censuses on microfilm.

**Oregon Historical Society Library**

1200 SW Park Ave.

Portland, OR 97205-2483

*Web page:* <http://www.ohs.org/>

(click on Collections; click on "Horizon Online Catalog.")

*Special Resources:* Several card indexes, including an extensive one of biographies in Oregon county histories, the Pioneer Card File, and the Overland Journeys Index; manuscripts; over two million photographs; second largest newspaper on microfilm collection.

**Genealogical Forum of Oregon Library**

1505 SE Gideon

Portland, OR

*Web page:* <http://www.gfo.org/>

*Special Resources:* Early Settlers file, Civil War Soldiers Who Lived in Oregon card file, very strong Oregon resources; strong U.S. resources; some international resources.

**Knight Library**

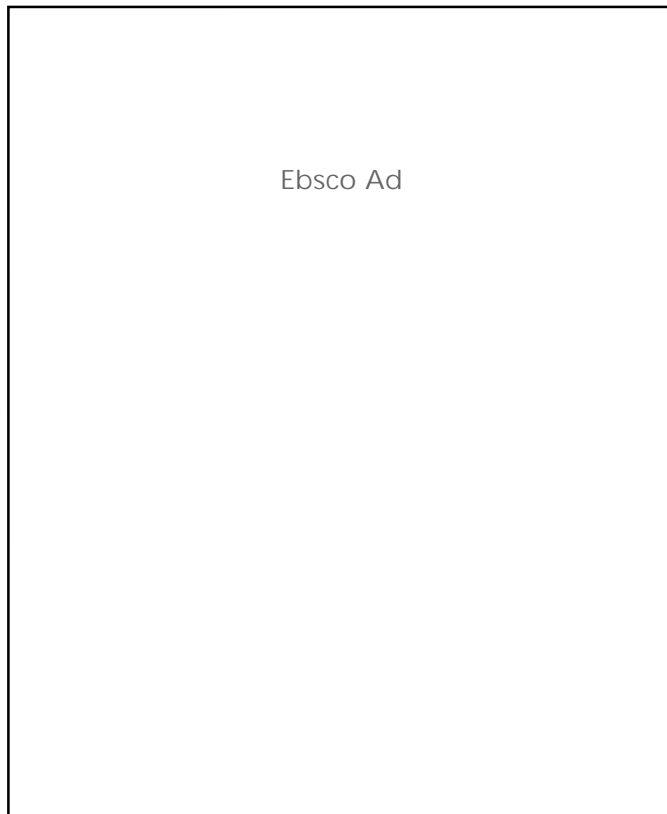
University of Oregon

Eugene, OR 97401

*Web page:* <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/>

*First Special Resource:* Oregon Collection Room, which is in the Knight Library, but which has more limited hours. Has a card file index of scrapbooks of newspaper clippings of Fred Lockley's column "Observations and Impressions" which ran for many years in the *Oregon Journal*; has a comprehensive Oregon collection, including many city directories. Only 30 percent of holdings are currently in the online catalog; there is an extensive card catalog.

*Second Special Resource:* Manuscript and Rare Book Collection, which is in the Knight Library, but which has more limited hours. Arrangements should be made for materials to be retrieved from storage prior to arrival. Strong collection of WPA papers





and of personal papers, including diaries and correspondence.

*Third Special Resource:* Newspapers on microfilm collection, which is in the Knight Library and is accessible whenever the Library is open. This is the most complete collection of newspapers on microfilm in the state. They are arranged alphabetically by city, which is a wonderful timesaver. The microfilm may be borrowed through local libraries via interlibrary loan, and may be requested by city and date (as long as only one newspaper was published simultaneously in the city!).

*Fourth Special Resource:* Map Library, which is in the Knight Library on the first floor, and which is accessible whenever the Library is open. Has a large Oregon collection, including Sanborn maps and Metsker county atlases. A special web resource has been created which indicates which of four libraries (University of Oregon, Oregon State University, Oregon Historical Society, or Oregon State Library) has which Metsker county atlases (these show actual land owners at the time they were published.)  
<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/mapmetskers.htm>

Genealogy on the Internet

**<http://www.CyndisList.com>**

One of the most complete listings of genealogical sites on the Internet. Over 100,000 links categorized and cross-referenced in over 150 categories. Updated constantly.

**<http://www.usgenweb.com>**

A countrywide project to provide and link Internet Web sites for genealogical research in every county of every state in the United States.

**<http://www.familysearch.org>**

This is a page to begin the search for ancestors. The IGI (International Genealogical Index) contains millions of names and events such as births, christenings, and marriages. The Ancestral File will provide entire family group records and pedigree charts. Also includes the catalog for the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah.


**<http://www.ancestry.com>**

Has a number of free databases such as the Social Security Death Index and the American Genealogical Biographical Index (which indexes 1628 databases), plus ever-changing databases which are free for several weeks and then available by a membership subscription fee. For an additional fee actual images of the census pages may be viewed.

**<http://www.familytreemaker.com>**

Includes millions of names in their Family Finder Index, Internet Web sites, CD-ROMs and more. Has areas for genealogy help, how-to articles, a Web site directory, and more.

**<http://www.rootsweb.com>**

The Internet's oldest and largest genealogy site. Includes surname, subject, and regional electronic mailing lists. 



Anne Billeter is the Manager of Children's, Young Adult, and Outreach Services for Jackson County Library Services. She has been an amateur genealogist for more than 20 years. She compiled the genealogies included in a number of Oregon Trail diaries and other books published by Bert Webber.



# Identifying Historic Photographs: Clues for Genealogy Researchers

by Irene Zenev

Until the invention and dissemination of photography in the mid-19th century, only a small portion of the population in Europe and America could afford to have portraits made. Before 1850, having one's likeness transferred to a two-dimensional work of art meant commissioning an artist to draw or paint it. Only the wealthy could afford this luxury.

Then came the photograph, and the world changed forever. Photography brought instant and affordable portraiture to the masses, and the popularity of the medium soared. By the 1850s and '60s, photographers had set up elaborate studios outfitted like salons in expensive homes. In the American West, itinerant photographers traveled the countryside, setting up tents, putting out signs, and making images of people of all ranks and classes for posterity.

Family photographs are often a godsend for genealogists. But sometimes, finding a photograph of an unidentified ancestor can be a "good news-bad news" situation. Problems usually begin when a researcher is handed a box of family photographs from Aunt Emily's estate that are undated, unidentified, and come with no supporting material to give clues about who these people are or what their family affiliation might be. Fortunately, there are a few ways to narrow down the possibilities. If you're already heavy into your family history, then the research you've done will help tremendously. Then, you just have to know how to search for clues in the photographs themselves in order to date them and corroborate your information.

There are three different ways that a researcher can attack the problem of photo identification. The first way is to identify the photo process itself. Like any new technology, photographic processes have constantly improved. Fortunately, information about the history of photography and the changes in photo processes is readily available.

The second way to help identify a photograph is to look for a photographer's

mark. Many 19th century studio photographers imprinted their name or studio name right on the photo mount. Through research, one can find the dates that the photographer worked in a specific location. Local historical societies and museums are good resources for information on 19th century photographers.

And the last, and somewhat trickier, way to help identify a photo is to examine the clothing of the sitter. Styles of clothing and the inclusion of personal items in a portrait may help identify the time period as well as the portrait's subject.

Researchers should always be cautious about identifying a historic photograph. There are several things that can throw you off track. The first consideration is that modern tourist photography sometimes imitates 19th century processes. Some of these "old-timey" portraits that you can have made at county fairs and carnivals can be confused with the real thing. These photographers offer period costumes and accessories for customers to wear, and even reproduce historic types of photos—tintypes or daguerreotypes, for example—with great accuracy. If you're not sure about the authenticity of your photograph, take it to an appraiser or to your local historical society or museum for identification. (Remember to call ahead to make an appointment at your local historical society or museum.)

The final caution in identifying a photograph through the clothing styles is to remember that 19th century photographers also lent clothing to their subjects. Don't assume that great-great Uncle Theophilous was wealthy because he was sporting a beautiful suit in his portrait. Etiquette developed in the 1800s about proper dress for having one's photograph taken, and ladies and gentlemen were advised in magazines and other publications about the most appropriate wardrobe for the sitting. Since many people could afford the price of the photograph but could



not purchase new clothing, studio photographers had a collection of “appropriate” garments for sitters to wear.

For an authentic historic photograph, dating through clothing styles (even though the clothes might not belong to the sitter) can be helpful. Fortunately, people abided by much more convention in dress in the 19th century than in the 20th or 21st centuries. Generally, women always wore dresses, men wore suits, and babies wore dresses until they reached a certain age, and then they were dressed like small adults. What changed over the years was fairly subtle: the silhouette or shape of the outfits changed, the fabrics changed, and the accessories and hairstyles changed. The only confusion arises when the sitter was wearing out-of-date clothing. Sometimes elderly people who sat for photographs wore clothes from a previous decade.

### Overview of Photo Processes and Clothing Styles

1840s

Photography was invented in Europe in the late 1830s, and developed in England and France. Henry Fox developed the collotype in England, but never sold the



Courtesy of the Horner Collection, Oregon State University, #15270-1 Daguerreotype (1844).

rights to the process in the United States. The daguerreotype, named for its French inventor, came to the U.S. through patent rights in 1847, and the popularity of this process spread rapidly.

Clothing styles of the late 1840s are distinctive. Women wore tight-fitting blouses, sometimes called basques, with a full, wide skirt. The sleeves of the blouse or basque were tighter in the earlier part of the decade, but became bell-shaped by the end. Older women wore lace collars or bibs. Sometimes a short cape covered women’s shoulders. Female headwear consisted of bonnets, often straw, tied with a ribbon. Women and girls wore their hair parted in the middle and drew it back into a bun. At the beginning of the decade, loose ringlets were worn over the ears. Toward the end of the decade the ringlets disappear, but the parted hair droops over the ears.

Men wore a fly-front trouser with a light cotton shirt that typically had a small, stand-up collar. A dark-colored necktie, tied horizontally in a bowknot, finished the collar. Coats and shirts had long, narrow sleeves. The hair was worn short to medium length, parted on the side. Facial hair consisted of a fringe beard.

1850s

Photo processes flourished in the 1850s. Collodion, or wet-plate processing, was developed. The daguerreotype still prevailed, but by the mid-1850s, the ambrotype gained popularity. Tintypes were a variation on the process. “(N)either the tintype nor the ambrotype dealt the death blow to the daguerreotype. That was left to a third application of the collodion technique, the *carte-de-visite* photograph, patented in France by Disderi in 1854.” (Newhall, 1964.) In this process, a special camera produced multiple negatives. When developed, the prints were pasted on a 4 by 2-1/2 inch mount. Mass production came to photography through the *carte-de-visite*.

Women’s fashions changed slightly from the previous decade. Skirts were





Courtesy of the Horner Collection, Oregon State University, #14939-5,6 Ambrotype (1858).

becoming fuller and fuller. Corsets narrowed the waist, and hoop skirts and crinolines gave fullness to the skirts. The bodice was much more jacket-like. Collars were broad at the beginning of the decade, but gradually became narrower. By the end of the decade the hoop skirt was popular.

Jewelry made from human hair was also prevalent. Sleeves on bodices were fuller, sometimes gathered at the wrist. Women wore decorative combs in their hair.

Men's coats were cut larger, with vests underneath. The shirt collar was turned over the tie, which was still wrapped around the throat. Pants legs got wider. Dress shirts had removable fronts. By the end of the decade, full beards were popular. Hair was longer and pomaded.

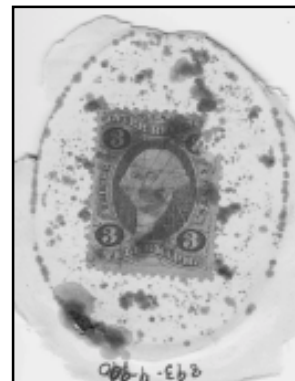
#### 1860s

In the United States, taxation for the Civil War gives clues to dating photographs. From 1864-1866, a tax stamp appeared on the back of photographs making them easy to identify. *Carte-de-visite* was still popular, along with ambrotypes and tintypes. By the end of the decade, cabinet cards were introduced.

Clothing styles of the Civil War period took on a military flavor. Women's bodices

often carried a trim, and buttoned down the front like a uniform. A high, narrow, round collar finished the look. The shoulder line dropped, but the sleeve width varied. Full skirts with pleats worn over hoops dominated. Hair was parted in the center and covered the ears.

Men wore longer, larger coats and shirts with bowties or narrow ties. Trousers were also wider, and suspenders common. Hair was parted on the side and facial hair consisted of chin whiskers or a beard. Full beards were fashionable by the end of the decade.



Courtesy of the Horner collection, Oregon State University, #893-4-900 Tintype (1864-1866), (photo on front, civil war stamp on back).





Courtesy of the Horner collection, Oregon State University, #15348-8, 4 Tintype (1870-75).

#### 1870s

Innovations in the photo process continued in this decade. The introduction of the gelatin dry-plate process made the collodion wet-plate process obsolete.

In fashion, the 1870s brought in the era of the bustle skirt. Women's skirts developed a large bustle by 1872. The female silhouette consisted of a high stand collar,

moderate bell or three-quarter-length sleeve and a small, corseted waist. A black velvet ribbon often adorned the neck. Large lockets and jet beads were worn as accessories. Hair was parted in the center and was sometimes worn loose and cascading down the back, or in a large braid with a hair comb. By the end of the decade the bustle diminished in size, sleeves narrowed and ruffles appeared at the neckline. Hair was still center-parted, but frizzed in front.

Men wore narrower jackets, collarless shirts with detachable collars, and wide, striped ties worn in a loose knot. Fur hats and coats were popular with men. Hair was shorter.

#### 1880s

In this era, picture taking came out of the studio and into the American home. Smaller, more convenient cameras made photography accessible to the amateur. Eastman Kodak introduced its first camera in 1888.

The 1880s were also distinctive years, fashion-wise. In women's clothes, the bustle moved up higher on the back of the dress and became more pronounced. An overskirt often revealed a ruffled underskirt. Sleeves of the bodice developed a small puff at the shoulder. Higher collars predominated for both men and women.

By the end of the decade, the bodice was tight, dropping below the waist. Sleeves were tighter as well, and the skirt often had an overskirt. Hair was worn frizzy at the crown. Accessories included muffs. Men's coats and trousers were also shorter and narrower. White shirts were worn with a variety of ties.

#### 1890s

With the refinement of gelatin emulsions, photographic processes became easier to handle. The developing and printing process was separated from film-exposure in the camera, and photography became accessible to the masses. Amateurs all over the world became enthusiastic picture-takers. Taking snapshots was a huge fad.





In the world of fashion, women's clothing took on a very dramatic silhouette. The large, ballooned, "leg-o-mutton" sleeve predominated by the end of the decade. A-line skirts were worn with gathered bodices that had high collars. Small straw boaters or bonnets with bird feathers were popular.

Men wore small, narrow coats that buttoned high. Collars were stiff, coming up high on the neck by the end of the decade. Bowties prevailed. Short hair and moustaches were commonly worn by men of this era.

### A Special Note on Wedding Portraiture

White wedding gowns did not become "traditional" until the 1930s. Prior to that era, women's wedding attire changed with the fashion of the time. Around 1900, white dresses were *de rigueur* for graduation or second-day (honeymoon) wear. In wedding portraits, don't look at the clothing, but at the sitters' hands, which will be predominantly featured toward the camera, showing the wedding rings. 🌸

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Courtesy of the Horner Collection, Oregon State University, #893-8-47 Carte-de-visite (1885).



Courtesy of the Horner Collection, Oregon State University, #893-8-57 Carte-de-visite (1880).

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Irene Zenev, Exhibits Curator at the Benton County Historical Museum in Philomath, Oregon, has been working with museum collections and developing exhibits since 1985.



# Resources for Tracing American Indian Ancestry

by Lorna Avery Scott

Assisting those tracing American Indian roots can be a fascinating and rewarding endeavor. Such a search should begin with what is already known—a family name, a place of birth, a photograph, a tribal identity. If an ancestor's name and tribe are known, a phone call to the tribe's cultural director or enrollment clerk could yield the information sought. If less information is known, a more time-consuming search will be necessary. A search of this type must begin with the researcher and continue back into his/her family's history. This search may be challenging and lead down many interesting roads. If the search is successful, the knowledge of one's heritage gained will be its own reward.

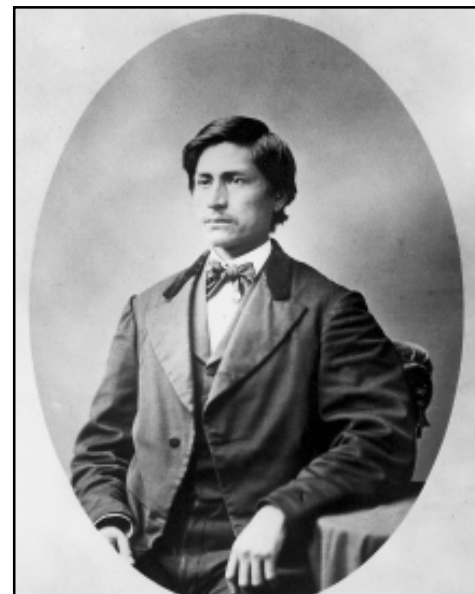
The federal government has long been involved in overseeing Indian affairs. Because of this, the closest regional branch of the National Archives may have records that will be helpful and provide a good place to start. As an example, the Siletz and Grand Ronde Agencies of Oregon were established in 1856. These agencies were responsible for American Indians who had been removed from their lands in the interior valleys of western Oregon and

the southern Oregon coast. Many different tribes and bands were removed and located together on the Siletz and Grand Ronde Reservations. Closely related peoples sometimes ended up separated by the administrative boundaries of the adjoined reservations.

A full census of tribal members was not conducted until the 1880s. However, annuity rolls were created to direct and record the distribution of treaty-stipulated goods, and partial censuses were taken periodically from the 1850s on. Usually a partial census listed the head of each family's name as well as the number of male and female adults and children in each "household."

When the allotment of parcels of reservation lands to individual tribal members became the standard policy in the late 1880s to early 1890s, there were generally good records kept regarding this process. Allotment applications sometimes included personal information that cannot be found elsewhere. Figure 1 shows an example of this type of information that was located for me by my tribe's cultural resources director, Robert Kentta. Similarly, when original allottees passed away, there

Melissa Montgomery, my great-grandmother.



George Harney (sic), Chief of the Siletz Indians, 1875 (NARA).



were sometimes elaborate proceedings to establish the most direct heirs to certain allotments. Affidavits given at these proceedings sometimes included family history going back several generations. These allotment and heirship or probate records are kept in the National Archives and include names and dates that may provide clues in the search. For a further description of archival holdings, see National Archives and Records Administration resources listed below.

Since many American Indians chose to leave reservations long ago, they simply are not listed on tribal rolls. In these cases, other resources may need to be located. Some reservations or regional offices of Indian affairs kept "Public Domain Indian Censuses" or "4th Section Allotment Rolls" for Indian individuals or families who remained "off reservation." These rolls are separate from "tribal rolls" and are meant for Indians whom the government considered to have "severed" or "relinquished" tribal affiliations. Special Homestead Law amendments and the 4th Section of the 1887 General Allotment Act made provisions for these non-reservation Indians. They were considered disconnected from their tribes and on their way to early U.S. citizenship.

State and local museums and historical societies may also possess helpful resources. Journals, diaries, and other papers of Indian agents, the agency doctor, or others involved in activities at the reservation in question often end up in other than federal repositories and can sometimes give a more detailed record than the often dry and impersonal agency records. Fur trading post employees and missionaries often kept detailed accounts of things far beyond the scope of inventory and prices.

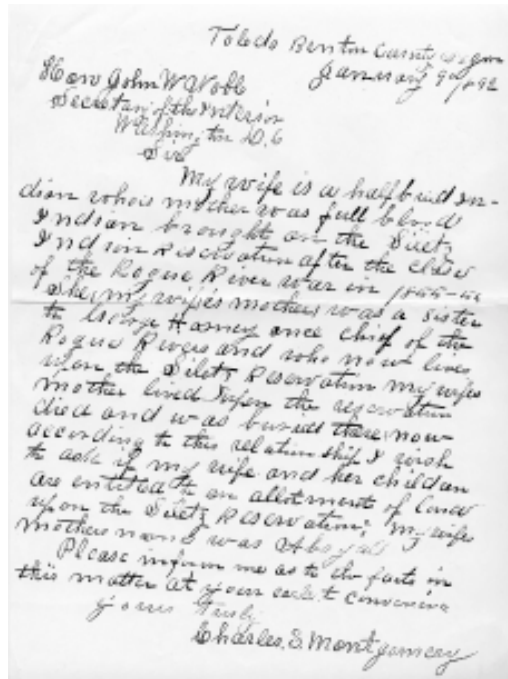


Figure 1: Allotment application written in 1892 requesting land for Melissa Montgomery and revealing her relationship to George Harney.

Toledo, Benton County, Oregon  
January 9th 1892

Hon. John W. Noble  
Secretary of the Interior  
Washington, D.C.

Sir,

My wife (Melissa Montgomery) is a half breed Indian whose mother was full blood Indian brought on the Siletz Indian Reservation after the close of the Rogue river War in 1855-56. She (my wife's mother) was a sister to George Harney once chief of the Rogue Rivers and who now lives upon the Siletz Reservation. My wife's mother lived upon the reservation, died, and was buried there. Now according to this relationship, I wish to ask if my wife and her children are entitled to an allotment of land upon the Siletz reservation. My wife's mother's name was Abigail.

Please inform me as to the facts of this matter at your earliest convenience.

Yours truly,  
Charles E. Montgomery

The Hudson's Bay Company Archives and various church records have cleared up more than a few family mysteries. Micro-filmed newspapers can be useful as well. For example, if a date of death is known, an obituary might have been printed in a local newspaper. Cemeteries and cemetery records can also provide clues. For instance, since I knew where my great uncle was buried, I decided to take a walk in that cemetery. I discovered a large monument marking my great grandmother's grave and was able to determine her date of birth. Until that discovery, I had been unable to locate that information anywhere.

University and college libraries can provide valuable resources. For example, The Valley Library at Oregon State University has the Indian census rolls for the years 1885-1940. Although the data on these rolls vary somewhat, most give the person's English and/or Indian name, roll number, age or date of birth, sex, and relationship to the head of the family. Starting in 1930, the rolls also indicate the degree of Indian







Tombstone of my great grandmother's grave located in Toledo, Oregon:

Melissa  
Wife of  
Charles E. Montgomery  
Born July 15, 1859  
Died Jan. 11 1899

blood as well as other information. (For more details about the Valley Library's holdings, see the resources listed below.)

#### Tribal Enrollment

If a researcher has located information about an American Indian ancestor and wishes to become an enrolled tribal member, he/she will need to contact the tribe's enrollment officer and probably meet blood quantum and possibly other requirements. Since each tribe is an individual entity, requirements for enrollment vary. Perhaps the simplest way to locate this information can be found through the resources located on the Bureau of Indian Affairs Web site. Enrollment criteria are explained and names and addresses are provided for contacting tribal entities. The Native American Nations Web site provides links to various tribes' Web pages. These provide another means of contacting one's tribe.

#### Resources

Locating and gaining access to appropriate resources can be a daunting task. Many institutions are being inundated with requests for genealogical information these days, so researchers must be prepared to be patient and persistent.

#### Bureau of Indian Affairs

To order a packet of information on tracing American Indian ancestry, dial (202) 208-6123. Follow the recorded directions, and the packet should arrive within four to six weeks.

#### Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Family History Centers

Many communities have a family history center connected with this church. These centers are staffed by volunteers who can assist in accessing information held in archives maintained in Salt Lake City. Each center has locality files for each state. For example, to search for Oregon tribes, pull the Oregon locality file and look under

native Americans. This microfilm file contains an index of other documents that can be ordered from Salt Lake City. Once the microfilm records arrive, the particular information sought can be located and copied. The center I visited in Corvallis has both a copy machine and a microfilm viewing station. The locality files also list books that may be helpful. Although these books are not available at the history centers, they may be available through interlibrary loan.

#### National Archives and Records Administration—Pacific Alaska Region (Seattle)

E-mail [seattle.archives@nara.gov](mailto:seattle.archives@nara.gov) or phone (206) 526-6501. A pamphlet entitled *Finding Native American Ancestors* at the National Archives Pacific Alaska Region (Seattle) is available on request. Note that there are regional archives throughout the United States with holdings indigenous to their particular geographic areas. These regional archives can be located and accessed at <http://www.nara.gov/>.

This resource is especially valuable for those tracing ancestry among Northwest Indian tribes. Its holdings include the Indian Census Rolls for 1884–1940. These rolls were compiled annually, and include both tribe and band. Although they are not indexed, once a name is located in a particular year, it can be found in the same relative position on the rolls for other years. The regular national census taken in 1900 and 1910 included a special schedule for Indians. The 1910 records are partially indexed. These records have been soundexed, or phonetically coded, which may prove very helpful. Also available are the land allotment records described above and enrollment records from the Chemawa Indian School located near Salem, Oregon. Note that when having trouble finding a name on older census rolls, checking for spelling variations and name reversals may be necessary. For example, changes such as Strong Bill to William Strong or Depot Charley to Charles DePoe are a very



common practice in Indian Country. Some of these records are on microfilm or indexed on microfilm. Others are original records. At some point, researchers may need to phone or e-mail an archivist at NARA (see above listing) for further assistance. Also, it should be noted that some original records have been neither microfilmed nor copied and can be found only in the Washington, DC NARA.

**The Oregon Historical Society at the Oregon History Center—Portland, Oregon**

The Oregon Historical Society Library in Portland possesses both primary and secondary documents relevant to American Indian genealogical research. The staff is helpful and will assist researchers in locating and accessing the information they seek. Contact the society by phone at (503) 222-1741.

**Internet Sources**

Web sites found through Internet searches can provide up-to-the-minute information. Some are incomplete, inaccurate, infrequently updated, or difficult to navigate. Others provide valuable information and are well worth a look.

**Broken Threads**

<http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~snowdawn/>

Advice for those researching American Indian roots is provided. Also included are over a hundred links to other sites.

**Bureau of Indian Affairs**

<http://www.doi.gov/bia/ancestry/index.htm>

This government source provides a guide to tracing American Indian ancestry. This comprehensive site contains links to information about ancestry and genealogical research. A link for those of Cherokee ancestry is included as well as information about the Dawes rolls. A general description of the enrollment process in a federally recognized tribe is also provided.

**Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints-History Center**

<http://www.familysearch.org/>

This site describes services available at The Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah. It features an interactive genealogy service. When family information is input, it provides links to relevant data.

**National Archives and Records Administration**

<http://www.nara.gov/genealogy/>

This source accesses a catalog of microfilm publications. When the genealogy page is reached, select the online list of microform catalogs and finding aids. From the next screen, select American Indians. Next, select the catalog of NARA microfilm publications. There are eight categories. Probably the most relevant would be those records relating to census rolls and other enrollments. These microfilm documents are available for purchase.

<http://www.nara.gov/nara/nail.html>

This source allows a search of archival holdings. Only those documents that have been digitized can be accessed. For example, the Dawes rolls of the “Five Civilized Nations” are available. Also, copies of enrollment cards for those nations can be accessed.

**Native American Nations**

<http://www.nativeculture.com/lisamitten/nations.html>

This site contains a list of American Indian Nations with links to sites that have either been set up by the nations themselves or are sites devoted to a particular nation. They are in alphabetical order by tribe and include both federally recognized tribes as well as unrecognized tribes.

**Oregon Historical Society**

<http://www.ohs.org/>

When the Society’s home page is reached, click on “Visit the Oregon Historical



1878  
Heads of Families and Individual  
Indians entitled to supplies at  
Siletz Agency Toledo Oregon

Name	Indian Name	English Translation	Family
Bill	Te sue hone	Many Men	3
Scalley	Scal - lee	Dirty Nose	2
Morris	Ghil se	Dry Back	3
Warner	Sut-la-til-us	Sing & Run	6
Santa Lawson	Santa Lawson	same as Flesh	6
Rogue Rivers			
George Harney	Al-hale-y	Forehead with hair	7
Evans Bill	Men ge ena	Killed & alive again	3
James Buchanan	Se-me-sa		2

(1878) Heads of Families and Individual  
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James Buchanan	Se-me-sa		2

Partial census from 1878 listing George Harney, my great-grandmother's uncle.

Society.” Choose “Collections,” and then the “Horizon Online Catalog.” From this location the library’s collections can be searched by author, title, or subject.

**Valley Library Oregon State University**  
<http://osulibrary.orst.edu/research/srg/nativeam.htm>

This site provides information about the Valley Library’s American Indian collection and provides links to other sources as well.

**State Historical Society of Missouri Native American Genealogy**  
<http://www.system.missouri.edu/shs/nativeam.html>

In addition to general instructions for those seeking information on American Indian ancestry, this site includes links to a variety of American Indian genealogy web sites as well as links to Cherokee-specific sites. A list of books and references is also included.


**WWW Virtual Library—American Indians—Index of Native American Genealogy Resources on the Internet**  
<http://www.hanksville.org/NAresources/indices/NAgenealogy.html>

The title of this comprehensive site is an accurate description of what is provided. There are over 50 links to various resources.

**Print Resources**

Although I have not reviewed these references personally, I have included descriptions given by others.

Carpenter, Cecelia Svinth. *How to Research American Indian Blood Lines: A Manual on Indian Genealogical Research*. 1994. 109 pp. Four Winds Indian Books, PO Box 544, York, NE 68467, 1-800-775-3125. This book explains how to get started as well as problems that might be encountered. It describes how to locate information in various records including census, marriage, and death records. Information on tribal registration is also included.

Platle, Ron. *How You Can Trace Your Family Roots*. 1996. 32 pp. Four Winds Indian Books, PO Box 544, York, NE 68467, 1-800-775-3125. This booklet contains forms, sources, guidelines, and procedures for research as well as relevant record keeping. It includes a four-page supplement for those wishing to trace their Indian heritage. 



Lorna Avery Scott was born into a Corvallis pioneer family where she developed a lifelong interest in local history. She taught in Corvallis for thirty-six years and is now retired.

*My own search was brief and successful, since I had the necessary names and knew my tribal identity. For those who lack that knowledge, the search will be much more difficult.*

*In order to provide information to librarians assisting patrons conducting challenging research, I needed to locate sources that would be helpful. I learned many things during this process and could not have obtained this information if it had not been for the generous assistance of the following people. I would like to express my thanks to all of them. My very special thanks go to Robert Kentta who checked and rechecked my statements about tribal history for accuracy and content. His knowledge and support were invaluable to me.*

Judy Juntunen, Assistant Director/Librarian, Benton County Historical Society and Museum, Philomath, Oregon.

Susan H. Karren, Director Archival Operations, National Archives and Records Administration—Pacific Alaska Region, Seattle, Washington.

Robert Kentta, Cultural Resources Director, Confederated Tribes of Siletz, Siletz, Oregon.

Bob Kingston, Catalog Assistant, Oregon Historical Society Library, Portland, Oregon.

Clara Royer, Volunteer, Family History Center, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Corvallis, Oregon.

Joe Toth, Social Science Librarian, Valley Library, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon.

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# The Molecular Genealogy Research Project

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by *Ugo A. Perego, MS,*  
*Natalie M. Myres, MS*  
and  
*Scott R. Woodward, PhD*

## Introduction

A couple of months ago, we received an email with the following request, "In 1986, my husband and I adopted a 5 month old boy who was abandoned at birth, which means we have no background information on the biological parents. He is bi-racial and they could not tell us his nationality other than he is possibly Asian. Now that our son is 15 years old, he would like to know what nationality he actually is as he gets questions all the time from friends. Is there anything in your research program that could help us to determine his nationality? I think it would be almost impossible to find the parents, but he wants to know his nationality."

This request is not unique. Many people find themselves at a dead end with their genealogical research. Written records are simply not available, or not reliable. No matter how willing they are to search for the needed information, there is almost no hope to find the missing link with their past. Sometimes, these precious ties with the past are destroyed by fire or flood. Other times, migrations or adoptions form a huge barrier between the branches (the present) and the roots (the past) of our family trees. What can be done when these situations arise for those who are desperately searching for their own origins and personal identity?

Genetic research with the purpose of tracing genealogies by using DNA is currently underway at Brigham Young University. This study is known as the Molecular Genealogy Research Project (MGRP) and its main goal is to develop a database containing correlated genealogical and genetic data from all over the world. This instrument will then be used to assist those having problems finding information about their family history.

## What is DNA?

DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acid) is the genetic material containing all of the genetic information necessary for living

organisms and is the repository of hereditary traits. The human genome (DNA) is the complete genetic blueprint of a person, and it consists of over three billion chemical pairs. It is found mainly in the nucleus of cells, in structures known as chromosomes: 23 received from the father and 23 received from the mother. In addition to nuclear DNA, there is also genetic material found inside mitochondria (mitochondria are energy-producing organelles found in the cytoplasm). These genetic components contain all of the necessary information for the foundation and the sustaining of human life. The color of our eyes, our height, our predisposition to certain diseases are just a few examples of what is contained in the DNA of our cells.

## What is Molecular Genealogy?

DNA is transmitted from one generation to the next. Some parts are passed almost unchanged, while others experience a high rate of recombination. This mode of transmission from parents to children creates an unbreakable link between generations and it can be of great help in reconstructing our family histories. Molecular Genealogy is therefore a new way to do genealogy, where DNA is used in association with traditional written records. Since we have inherited our genetic material from our ancestors, our relatives share with us a portion of this information. The closer the relative, the greater the amount of genetic information that is shared. This means that inside any family unit, the members of that unit share a greater quantity of genetic material than those outside of it. In other words, even though the entire DNA sequence of an individual is unique to that individual, similar genetic information can be found among those that descend from common ancestors. The objective of Molecular Genealogy is to establish family links among individuals, families, tribes and populations by using the information encoded in DNA.



### Why Do Molecular Genealogy?

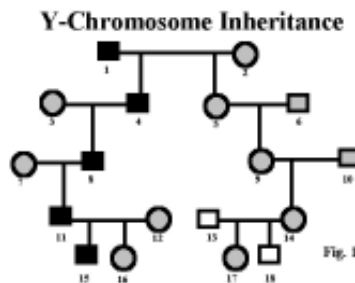
For some people genealogy is a hobby, while for others it is part of finding out who they are. In general, there is great interest in understanding the origin and history of different populations. Written records, pictures, archeological findings, and other material can provide important information used to elucidate personal and world history. History books are the result of these types of research. Unfortunately, because of the lack of such material, it is not always possible to reconstruct the history of an individual or of a people. This can become a serious obstacle for those who are trying to reconstruct their own origins. Because each of us has received our genetic material from those that came before, we are literally a living record of our family history. The use of DNA in genealogy will bring additional information to those who have reached a wall in their search for ancestors.

### How Do You Do Molecular Genealogy?

DNA is extracted from samples donated by volunteers using simple techniques. Although there are many ways to obtain genetic material, the MGRP uses blood samples. Blood samples are used because they yield DNA of superior quality and higher quantity than other sampling methods. Each sample is analyzed at approximately 250 loci (sections of DNA) across the entire genome. This genetic information is correlated to the genealogical data provided by the donors. The only genealogical information gathered is places and dates of birth. Names are substituted with codes to protect participants' confidentiality. People who belong to the same family groups or that share common places of origin will also share common genetic identifiers. This process will allow the MGRP to reconstruct a genetic map of the world that will be used to help people with blocked genealogies in tracing their family origins.

### The Y Chromosome

The surname is not the only thing that is passed from father to son. One of the 46 chromosomes in every male is known as the Y chromosome (Ycs). This chromosome is passed almost unchanged from father to son. Unless there is a case of adoption or illegitimacy, the Ycs follows a strictly paternal line. This portion of DNA is relatively small compared to the entire genome, but it is widely used in establishing relationships among individuals sharing the same, or similar last names. Fig.1 shows the inheritance pattern of the Ycs from one



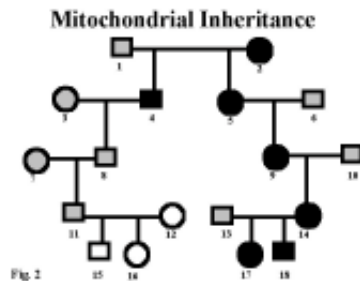
generation to the next, following the paternal line. Males are represented by squares, while circles represent females. The Ycs of individual 1 is represented in black. Males 4, 8, 11 and 15 have the same Ycs inherited from ancestor 1. Individuals 13 and 18 have different Ycs because they belong to a different male line. This method was used to compare individuals sharing a common paternal ancestor with President Thomas Jefferson with descendants of Sally Hemmings (one of President Jefferson's slaves). The Ycs analysis revealed that Sally's descendants share a common Ycs with President Jefferson's descendants, and therefore belong to the same family.

### The Mitochondrial DNA

As explained above, the nucleus is not the only part of the cell that contains genetic



material. Inside the mitochondria there is a small portion of DNA (mtDNA) that is transmitted from a mother to all of her children, males and females. However, only daughters will pass the mtDNA to their children. Because of this property, the mtDNA is also widely used in genealogical research. Fig.2 shows the inheritance pattern of the mtDNA through a number of generations, this time following



a strictly maternal line. The color black is used to show all the people sharing the same mtDNA. They all inherited the mtDNA from the common ancestor 2. Individuals 15 and 16 have mtDNA different from individuals 17 and 18 because they belong to a different maternal line.

#### The Remaining Chromosomes

The Ycs and the mtDNA are relatively easy to use because they experience little recombination and they follow strict inheritance patterns. However, their use places serious limitations on our search for ancestors. Within five generations, only two of sixteen great-great-grandparents can be identified with these two methods (Fig.3). The majority of one's DNA (and one's family history) resides in the rest of the genome—the remaining chromosomes. To better use genetics in genealogical research it will be fundamentally important to use the remaining chromo-

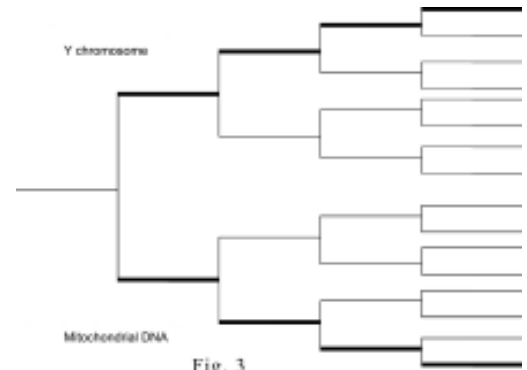


Fig. 3

somes. Unfortunately, these chromosomes are not transmitted in as clear a manner as the Ycs and the mtDNA. In order to trace the movement of these chromosomes through time and space, it is necessary to develop a very large database that will represent world populations.

#### The Application

Every person that is born has (or had) two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents, and so on. At each generation the number of ancestors doubles. This means that at the thirtieth generation (ca. 750 years) every person alive today should have had over a billion ancestors (Fig.4). However, the estimated world population for the year A.D. 1250 is 400 million. This discrepancy is explained by the fact that at some point in the past we all begin to share ancestors (Fig.5). Therefore the total number of actual ancestors is much smaller than the number of possible ancestors (Fig.6). This means that we are all related to different degrees. These family ties are continually lost at each generation. For example, few people know their third or fourth degree cousins, even though they share ancestors relatively close in time.

The genetic and genealogical work being conducted at BYU through the MGRP will result in the construction of a world-





38 generations = 760 years = 1 billion ancestors

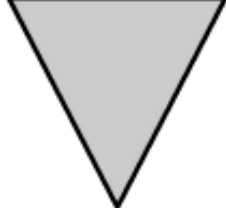


Fig. 4

Individual 1

Unique ancestors Shared ancestors Unique ancestors



Fig. 5

Individual 1 Individual 2

The number of actual ancestors is much smaller than the number of possible ancestors



Fig. 6

In Peru, most people know little about their past because of the absence of written records, and because of migrations within the country, particularly toward the larger cities. Within just a few generations, these movements have caused a gap between the present population and the past generations. Through the analysis of modern and ancient DNA, it was possible to link together the mummies of San José de Moro with the modern population of Cajamarca (Fig.7). Similarly, a number of genetic characteristics of the people living on the shore of Lake Titicaca are also found in other villages. These similar genetic traits shared by people of diverse locations could have resulted from Inca conquests that displaced local peoples to other parts of the country, in order to maintain control over them (Fig.7). This is just one example of how it is possible to shed light on the history of a people with limited written records through genetic analysis.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Database

In the past eighteen months, over 20,000 people have volunteered to participate in the MGRP by donating blood samples and four-generation pedigree charts. These samples have come mainly from people that

wide family tree that will link people together based on the genetic information inherited from common ancestors. This knowledge will be of great use to those people living in countries that do not have written records. For example, researchers from BYU collected over 6,500 DNA samples among different population groups in Peru, with the objective of increasing our understanding concerning the complex history of this country. These samples were collected in large cities along the coast and in small villages in the mountains. Among these samples were some collected from the ancient mummies in San José de Moro.



Fig. 7





live in the United States. Other sample collections have taken place in Oceania, Europe, South America and the Middle East.

The first objective of the MGRP is to create a database of correlated genetic and genealogical information representative of worldwide populations. To accomplish this goal, the MGRP will collect at least 100,000 samples from all over the world. The database will continue to grow until every population of the earth is properly represented, both genealogically and genetically. The collection and the analysis of these first 100,000 samples will take at least four years. Participants in the first stage of the project will not receive any information back because of confidentiality issues. As the database progresses and genetic markers of specific populations are identified, the MGRP will use this information to assist individuals with genealogical questions that cannot be answered using traditional written methods.

#### Special Cases


As explained in this article, the main goal of the MGRP is to complete the worldwide database. This is stage one of the project. Many answers regarding the migration of populations and the reconstruction of family trees will come with the availability of the database. In the meantime, the MGRP can assist in solving a certain number of family situations defined as "Special Cases." At the moment, many of these cases are limited to the use of the Ycs and mtDNA analysis. As the database grows, it will be possible to work on more complex cases, such as the one cited in the introduction. Participating in the construction of the database does not imply necessarily qualification as a "special case." Those individuals who think they might have a genealogical situation that can be solved with the use of genetics should contact the MGRP.

#### Conclusion

Blocked genealogies, adoptions, and records that are missing or unreliable are all situations in which the MGRP might provide some help. The success of this project is based on the participation of individuals with known genealogies from all over the world in the construction of the database. The MGRP is willing to work with groups that can help in accelerating the process of developing the database. A packet of instructions will be sent to all those interested in organizing such groups. Participants need to be eighteen or older and provide a biological pedigree chart in the form of paper or GEDCOM file.

Qualified medical personnel will perform the blood draws and the MGRP will provide all the necessary equipment for the collection of the samples. Those interested in learning more about the MGRP, or who would like to organize a group to be included in the database can use one of the following contacts:

Write: Molecular Genealogy Research  
Project 775 WIDB Brigham  
Young University, Provo, UT 84602  
Email: [molecular-genealogy@byu.edu](mailto:molecular-genealogy@byu.edu)  
Fax: (801) 378-1576

For more information concerning the progress of the research, visit the Web site at: <http://molecular-genealogy.byu.edu/> 

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<sup>1</sup>Joel E. Myres, PhD (1969–2001) was responsible for the collection and analysis of the Peruvian samples. At the time of his premature death, Dr. Myres was in charge of the special cases and co-principal investigator for the MGRP.

Ugo A. Perego has many responsibilities with the Molecular Genealogy Research Group. He is the Director of Public Relations and his main job is to find the 100,000 participants for the project worldwide. He organizes the presentations and blood draws, and writes articles and answers to inquires pertaining to the project. He also maintains the Web site, offers presentations and helps with the special cases. He has a background in accounting and health sciences and a masters in Health Science from BYU.



# Genealogy and the Virtual Library

by Thomas Jay Kemp


Genealogy has always been at the cutting edge of technology. In the early 1940s, Fremont Rider was the Librarian at Wesleyan University and an early proponent of virtual libraries. Based on the micro-formats of his day he envisioned research libraries filled with microtext copies of books shelved directly in card catalogs. These microtext cards would then be removed from the card catalog as requested and read by researchers. He was using cutting edge technology to save space and accommodate the growing number of books acquired annually by libraries. He left Wesleyan in 1951 and founded one of the key genealogical libraries in the country, the Godfrey Memorial Library in Middletown, Connecticut.

Librarians today are focused on providing more and more service online to the public. Hundreds of libraries, genealogical and historical societies, and other groups are mounting various levels of research content on their Web sites. The Library of Congress' enormous *American Memory Project*, begun in the late 1980s and launched in 1995, is steadily growing to its goal of providing full-text and digital images of thousands of the key records and books in its collection. The University of Michigan began its *Making of America* project in the fall of 1995, and it has mounted over 1,600 books and serials and has plans to add 7,500 more titles within the next two years. Michael Hart began the oldest of these projects, *Project Gutenberg*, in 1971. "The Project Gutenberg Philosophy is to make information, books and other materials available to the general public in forms a vast majority of the computers, programs and people can easily read, use, quote, and search."<sup>1</sup>

Using this same philosophy, commercial data providers like ProQuest Information & Learning (<http://wwwlib.umi.com/genealogy/main.htm>) offer libraries remote access for their patrons to the images of every page in more than 25,000 genealogies from the Library of Congress, all fully searchable.

They are in the process of adding the complete backfile of *The New York Times*, all of the Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Application files, and images/indexes of the entire US Census, 1790 to 1930, etc. Gale (<http://www.gale.com/>) provides libraries with in-library access to a wide array of biographical and genealogical materials indexes, as well as the images/indexes to census records between the years 1790 and 1920, the Social Security Death Index, and Periodical Source Index (PERSI), and plans to add Filby's Passenger and Immigration Lists Index.

American libraries have been collecting genealogy and local history materials for the past 370 years. The public's interest in genealogy has steadily grown, taken a phenomenal turn in the past 25 years and in the last 5 years has shifted to "warp" speed. We have gone from a time when genealogists had to go to a library or archives to do their research to a time when images and indexes of primary documents are full-text searchable online.

Every library in Oregon of every size can now, today, provide their patrons with in-house and remote access to the core genealogical reference materials that previously meant a trip to multiple libraries and archives. All the more powerful when we remember that genealogy is the most requested reference topic by adults in our libraries. It is a good feeling when we can give our patrons all that they need and more to meet their research needs. 

<sup>1</sup>Project Gutenberg Web site, <http://www.promo.net/pg/history.html>

Thomas Jay Kemp is an OLA member and the Chair of ALA's Genealogy Committee. He has written numerous articles on genealogy and the Internet for *Library Journal*, and is the author of the *Genealogist's Virtual Library: Full-text books on the World Wide Web* (2000) and the *International Vital Records Handbook*, 4th ed. (2001). He works at Heritage Quest, which was recently purchased by ProQuest.



# Basic African American Family Research Oregon and Other Resources

By Jacqueline E. A.  
Lawson, CGRS

*Editor's Note: We often assume that a specialized topic, such as African American genealogy, must use specialized materials from the beginning of the process. Certified Genealogical Researcher Jacqueline E. A. Lawson takes us through this research process from the beginning, and then recommends titles that would augment a reference collection—or a personal research library.*

Construct a very basic ancestor tree, beginning with YOU and going backwards to your *furthest-back* (a term used by the late James Dent Walker, who was an African American archivist at the National Archives), known ancestor. This basic tree should include as many dates and places as known, but should include *only* the information that does *not* have to be researched. That is, for this beginning step, simply include what you know right now.

It is advised that beginning researchers select one ancestral line at a time for researching. Decide which ancestral line you want to research first. Beginning with the furthest-back ancestor of that line, construct a descendant tree or outline. This should include the brothers and sisters of each person in each generation. Hopefully, you have a genealogy computer program, such as *FamilyTreeMaker*<sup>™</sup>, to input your information. This program will automatically produce ancestor and descendant trees, among other charts and lists.

Your research purpose now should be to fill in the blank spaces regarding:

- dates and places of birth
- marriage
- death
- names of spouses and children

Make a list of the individuals included in the descendant tree or outline, and indicate what documents are needed—birth, marriage, and death records. (Such a list can be produced from *FamilyTreeMaker*<sup>™</sup>.)

Send for the documents needed. While waiting for these documents, conduct research of Federal censuses. These are available at the National Archives in Seattle. If this site is not convenient, census microfilm should be available at the local public library or historical society library (or via interlibrary loan), or they may be ordered from Salt Lake City through the local Family History Center.

Federal censuses have been taken every ten years, beginning in 1790. Microfilm of all Federal censuses is available except for the year 1890, most of which was burned in a fire in the 1920s. The most recent Federal census currently open to the public is the 1920. The 1930 census will be available to the public in April 2002.

Begin with the 1920 Federal census and work backwards. The reason for beginning with 1920 is that, regardless of what we think we know about our family, the census often reveals additional children and even second and third marriages about which we had not known. You must know the surname (last name) of the individual who would have been the head of a household in that year. You must also know the state in which that individual was living in 1920. The 1920 census will reveal places (states) of birth so that we know where to look for the family in preceding census years.

Once you have identified the family in that year, you will search for them in the previous census year (1910), then in 1900, etc.

A point to consider: If you have a male ancestor who was 72 years old or older in 1920, he may have volunteered to serve during the Civil War and applied for a pension. The Civil War pension files are a great resource for family history information.

A second point to consider: If you have an ancestor who died, as an adult, after 1960, that ancestor may be included in the Social Security Death Index. This index is available at Family History Centers and may also be available in the Genealogy Section of your local library [Editor's note: The Social Security Death Index, as well as the Oregon Death Index, may be available through your regional reference library, such as SOLIC in Southern Oregon]. Information contained on the Social Security Death Index will provide you with the date of birth (for birth certificates) and the date and place of death (for death certificates).



Publications Pertaining  
Specifically to Oregon

Bosco-Milligan Foundation. *Cornerstones of Community: Buildings of Portland's African American History*. The Foundation, August 1995.

*Contains a master list of individuals, institutions, and businesses as well as ten area maps. Describes the changes in the community throughout the years.*

Davis, Lenwood G., comp. *Blacks in the State of Oregon, 1788–1971 [A Bibliography of Published Works and of Unpublished Source Materials on the Life and Achievements of Black People in the Beaver State]*. Monticello Il: Council of Planning Librarians, 1974.

Little, William A., & James E. Weiss, ed. *Blacks in Oregon: A Statistical and Historical Report*. Portland State University: Black Studies Center and Center for Population Research and Census, 1978

McLagan, Elizabeth. *A Peculiar Paradise: A History of Blacks in Oregon, 1788–1940*. Portland, Oregon: Georgian Press, 1980

Portland Bureau of Planning. *The History of Portland's African American Community (1805 to the Present)*. Portland: City of Portland Planning Bureau, February 1993. *Contains maps and many photographs, and three pages of related articles and books.*

Reference Books Used Personally  
Burroughs, Tony. *Black Roots. A Beginner's Guide to Tracing the African American Family Tree*. New York : Fire-side, 2001.

Byers, Paula K., Ed. *African American Genealogical Sourcebook*. Gale Research Inc., 1995.

Kemp, Thomas Jay. *International Vital Records Handbook*. Genealogical Publishing co., Inc.

*This publication is updated periodically, so no publication date is given here. It contains forms (which may be photocopied) for requesting birth, marriage and death records for each state. Also includes addresses and telephone numbers, as well as prices of documents. Researcher should call first to find out current prices.*

Because I conduct research for all parts of the United States, one of my favorite resources is the *National Zip Code Directory*, a two-volume set. Near the end of the second volume is a "Numerical List of Post Offices By Zip Code..." I use this to determine the location at the time of death of an individual who is listed on the Social Security Death Index. That index usually shows the zip code of the last residence and the zip code where benefits were sent.

#### Research Sites

##### Federal

*National Archives—Pacific Alaska Region*  
(Seattle)

6125 Sand Point Way NE  
Seattle, WA 98115  
Phone: 206-526-6507

##### Local

*Family History Centers*

(Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints).

The Family History Centers have indexes (on computer as well as microfiche) to the holdings in Salt Lake City. Use this resource for finding and ordering early birth, marriage, and death certificates which may not be available at the specific county or state offices. They also include city directories, court records (wills, probate), and many other sources of information not found elsewhere.

##### City

*Public Library*

Most larger city libraries include a Genealogy Section. Such a section would hold reference books of births,



marriages, and deaths, genealogies of specific families, information on histories of cities and counties, etc.

**State**

*State Archives*

State archives hold publications and other material relating specifically to that state and may include indexes to local births, marriages, divorces, and deaths.


*Genealogical and Historical Societies*

Check for locations in the specific cities and counties being researched. It may be helpful to join the society of your research site.

*Internet*

My personal family history was conducted years before Internet became popular for

genealogical research. During the past three years, however, I have become an advocate of “surfing the net” and have found innumerable resources this way. My current favorite is Ancestry.com, where I have located marriage records, city directory listings, and census citations that would have taken me weeks to obtain. I do caution the reader, however: Unless the material has been digitized using the original document, any use of internet-retrieved information should be documented personally. For example, if you should find a marriage listed in an index, send for the actual marriage document for authenticity.

These resources should give you and your genealogical customers an idea of possible resources available to them, to begin the rewarding process of finding their African American ancestors. 



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March 1, 2002

Online Northwest, Eugene  
<http://www.ous.edu/onlinew/>

April 17-19, 2002

Building Bridges  
Oregon Library Association and Washington Library Association  
Joint Conference, Portland  
<http://www.olaweb.org>

June 26-29, 2002

LOEX-of-the-West 2002  
Expanded Conversations: Collaborating for Student Learning  
<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/loexwest/>

July 12, 2002

Gateways 2002, Newport  
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