

A Box Full of Family

Tony Hanson

Several years ago while cleaning out my attic I found a small box left by a previous resident that contained pictures, eyeglasses, letters written in the 1940's, and a few other tidbits. As a genealogist I knew how much any living descendant would appreciate these artifacts, and I set out to find someone from this family.

There was just enough information in the letters to allow me to begin a family tree. Whenever I hit a brick wall on my own family I came back to this little mystery.

The two main people of interest were: SARAH E MILES (born Sarah Elizabeth Slutts on 11 Oct 1862 in Lee, Iowa, d. 01 Jan 1956 in Polk County, Iowa, married to Phineas Young Miles b. 15 Jan 1850 in Lee, Iowa, d. 24 Oct 1929, buried in the Corydon Cemetery, Wayne County, Iowa), and her sister MARY BELL HUNT (born Mary Bell Slutts abt. 1867 in Van Buren County, Iowa, d. aft. 1943 in Keosauqua, Van Buren county, Iowa, married to John C Hunt b. abt. 1861).

Over time I made a lot of progress, but I never was able to make the leap to somebody in the family who was still alive.

I subscribe to the RootsWeb NORWAY mailing list and am impressed by the level of knowledge exhibited there, so one day I posted what I knew and hoped for the best.



Just four hours and twenty seven minutes later I received a reply from Ron. He had already traced the ownership of my house using on-line records and started comparing names to the family tree I had assembled. He had also found some possible connections in the Social Security Death Index,

which led him to an on-line family tree with names that matched those I had, and had contacted the owner of that tree to let her know that I was looking for a contact.

I received more updates over the next few hours from others. Meanwhile Ron happily went about filling in more blanks in my adopted family's history. My post back to the list the next day says it all:

Best of all was this email a few weeks later:

Hi, I got an e-mail from a Ron about the box you found in your attic. I think it may have been left there by my husband's uncle Elton McClanahan, listed on your tree, and I would dearly like to have it. Elton was my father-in-law Richard's brother (both now deceased),



and lived in Texas around the time you mention.

My husband is Richard's son. You have Elton, John and Kathryn listed on your tree, but there were also Richard and Robert born to John Newton McClanahan and Maude Miles (5 children total). Maude was Sarah Slutts and Phineas Miles daughter.

Richard, my father-in-law, now deceased, did a lot of genealogy and I am now working on it extensively. Elton was called Mick by the family. . . .

Thank you so much for posting about the box. My father-in-law cared deeply about his family heritage and I am trying to finish what he so arduously began, before sites like ancestry.com were around.

More email messages confirmed that I had the correct family. I heard from her again while she was waiting for the package I had shipped.

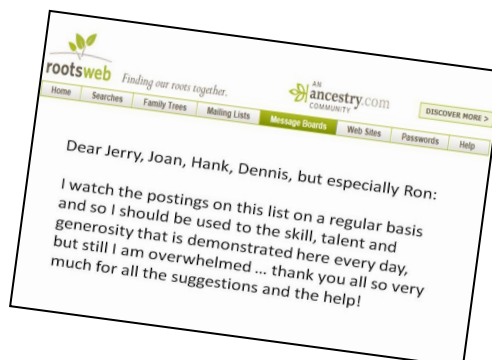
I can hardly wait to read the letters and see the 'tidbits', and to read what you have found out. I am really grateful to you for your efforts to get the box to our family. I am sharing what I find with all our family members. . .

My father-in-laws middle name was Phineas, after Phineas Miles. I wish he (dad) were still around to see all this. He'd be so thrilled....somewhere he is smiling!

I heard from her again after the package was delivered:

Thank you SO MUCH! The package arrived today and my husband and I are so excited, as are our sons. It is in fact photos, letters and items from my husband's family on his father's mother's side.... and we are ECSTATIC. . .

*Nobody in the family has ever seen any of these pictures or knew about the items.... **and so this little box which means SO MUCH to us [was] found and cared for by you.***



There are currently more than 32,000 RootsWeb mailing lists. They cover specific surnames as well as locations so chances are there is one that will be helpful to you and your research. For general information see <http://lists.rootsweb.ancestry.com/index/index.html>.

For the full story, visit [AND FURTHERMORE](#) under Resources at www.dallasgenealogy.org

DGS Newsletter



VOLUME 38, NUMBER 2

APRIL—JUNE 2012

DGS Joins the 1940 U.S. Census Community Indexing Project

The Dallas Genealogical Society has joined forces with genealogy societies and organizations around the country as part of the 1940 U.S. Census Community Project. The initiative aims to publish a free, online searchable name index of the 1940 U.S. Federal Census after images of the census are released to the public in April 2012. This online index will be free forever,

offering family history researchers a rich genealogical data set for their ongoing use. Three leading genealogy organizations, Archives.com, FamilySearch International, and findmypast.com launched the initiative at the end of last year, and the project is already engaging volunteers to help provide this invaluable resource to family historians around the world as soon as possible.



The index created by the project will allow the public to easily search every person found in the census and view digital images of the original census pages where he or she is listed. The highly anticipated 1940 U.S. Census is expected to be the most popular U.S. record collection released to date.

“The 1940 Census is attractive to both new and experienced researchers because most people in the United States can remember a relative that was living in 1940. It will do more to connect living memory with historical records and families than any other collection previously made available,” said David Rencher, Chief Genealogical Officer for FamilySearch.

The 1940 U.S. Census Community Project is also receiving support from leading societal organizations like the Federation of Genealogical Societies, National Genealogical Society, and Ohio Genealogical Society, as well as other societies around the United States.

Go to www.the1940census.com/society and follow the instructions for Society Members to register to participate with our society. Simply select Dallas Genealogical Society on the profile screen when creating your account. If you already have a FamilySearch account, go to indexingfamilysearch.org. Click Sign In, then click the Edit button to select DGS. Every person indexing with our society gets us closer to milestones that qualify us for incentives provided by the sponsors of the project, so sign up today!

Preparing for the 1940 Census

Release of the 1940 Census for public inspection is April 2, 2012. The U.S. Census Bureau and National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) have been preparing for this for quite some time. The digitization project has been completed and NARA will release these images for online browsing via the Internet beginning on Monday, April 2. Note that the images are available for “browsing.” It will be some time before the 1940 Census is searchable, as volunteers around the world begin the indexing process (see above article for how you can help). In the meantime, researchers can start preparing to search the records as soon as they are available by doing a little preparation now. Start by listing those direct-line ancestors who were found in the 1930 census and were still living in 1940. See page 3 or visit www.archives.gov/research/census/1940/. Some genealogy software providers have added tools to search your database for ancestors likely to be in the 1940 census.

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editorial@dallasgenealogy.org
 See Guidelines on back page or on
 DGS website for additional details.