

I'll admit I am a newbie on RSS, but I have just subscribed to RSS feeds from Dick Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter (free version), About.com Genealogy, North Carolina Genealogical Society, The Genealogy Podcast Guys, and Italian Genealogy.com in addition to DGS. Google Reader gathers all your news feeds, even non-genealogy ones, and displays the most recent for each subscription in a list from which you may select for reading.

The nice thing about RSS feeds on Google Reader is that they don't flood your e-mail. You just open Google Reader at your convenience to read the latest from organizations to which you have subscribed. I was happy to see a RSS for The Genealogy Podcast Guys because I subscribe to their podcasts. All the RSS feeds and podcasts mentioned here have no subscription costs. Of course, that does mean that there may be some advertising support. It was through a Family Roots Radio podcast that I first realized that genealogists were creating RSS feeds.

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), along with many other federal departments, has a RSS feed. Genealogy societies are beginning to use RSS feeds. For example North Carolina Genealogical Society, California Genealogical Society and Dallas Genealogical Society have some type of RSS feed. I learned through the North Carolina Genealogical Society RSS Feed that the NCGS Journal is available to members online for years 1995 to 2007 and that they are seeking volunteers to compile an index of loose estate papers held in the North Carolina State Archives. I am looking forward to this way of reading national and international genealogical news.

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Barbara A. Ware



DGS Newsletter is now Electronic

The Dallas Genealogical Society Newsletter is now being delivered in both electronic and printed editions. The electronic newsletter is delivered to your email in PDF format. It is also posted on the DGS website. An email will alert members to the User Name and Password to view and/or download the newsletter.

To receive your DGS newsletter electronically, you must have an email address in your DGS account and you should check "Newsletter" as a Membership Subscription Option.

If you do not have an email address in your DGS account, send your name and the email address you want DGS to use to administrator@dallasgenealogy.org requesting that the information be added to your account.

Genealogy on Vacation

Genealogy probably should be regulated like tobacco or alcohol. It starts innocently; you make a few copies of your Aunt's papers, collect a few old pictures, then file them away to be almost, but not quite, forgotten. Every now and then you think about pursuing it but something else always seems more important or interesting. Then, one fateful day you take the plunge and actually read those letters and start to arrange the unfamiliar names and dates, and then you make your first discovery and feel that special rush and before you know it you are addicted, surfing the internet until after midnight every night and boring anybody who will listen (and many who won't) with arcane facts that nobody else understands or cares about.

Soon it begins to affect your job, your marriage and your relationships. Like any addiction, you begin to seek out others who share your affliction and try to interest them; in my case, it was my wife who fell under the spell. Eventually it even consumed our vacations. Back when we were normal we used to camp, lie on beaches, visit friends and relatives and eat at nice restaurants. Now we drive thousands of miles to visit small towns, home to nobody we know, lugging cameras, computers and documents and spend hours in basements of what seems like an endless tour of Carnegie endowed libraries, scrolling through miles of microfilms and paging through musty books. Then we drive around, trying to look inconspicuous while we stop to take pictures of houses where no relative has lived for generations, all the time hoping nobody shoots us or calls the police.

This year things were going to be different... we planned to escape the Texas heat and spend two weeks driving around Lake Michigan, relaxing and scouting possible locations for retirement (this was back when we still imagined that we might someday be able to afford to retire). We almost pulled it off too, but we finished the Michigan leg of the trip a little quicker than we anticipated and found ourselves in southern Wisconsin with a little extra time on our hands, so we decided to swing through Madison for a quick visit to the State Historical Society to see what they had to offer.

Libraries can be magical, wonderful places full of fascinating resources and helpful, knowledgeable people. Most towns have sections (some even have entire rooms) dedicated to local genealogy. I went to a town in Norway (Rakkestad), not even knowing that they had a library and ended up spending two fascinating days in the company of their full time genealogist. I was in the Rice Lake (Wisconsin) Public Library a few years ago looking for obituaries and the librarian who helped me had actually grown up next door to my grandmother. And so I entered the Wisconsin State Historical Society full of hope and optimism.

For those of you who have never visited a similar facility and who may therefore be unfamiliar with what it contains, let me paint a mental picture for you: it contains books (lots of them) and microfilms (lots of those too), located in many rooms on several floors of a large building. If you are a little rusty on your Dewey Decimal system, I'll tell you right now that there is no category for "Tony Hanson's family." If I had

attended Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry with Harry Potter I probably could have had the relevant films jumping out of the drawers from the dozens of metal file cabinets located in the microfilm room all by themselves. Unfortunately, I forgot to pack my magic wand.

So the problem certainly wasn't a lack of information, or any shortcoming on the part of the staff (they were great!); I simply arrived totally unprepared for the magnitude of what was available. But I am an experienced genealogist, so I did what I usually do in such situations, panic and turn into a grouchy, grunting lump. I'm not proud of it, but it is the way I am; just ask my wife. So while I frantically looked up microfilm references, she calmly picked up on an obscure reference about the cemetery where my great-great grandparents are buried and in what seemed like about 30 seconds unearthed a wealth of information about it, including the fact that it was located in Farmington, a small town about a 100 miles west of Madison.

Finding the films and the information I needed only took a couple of hours. We took a quick look at the map and realized that Farmington was more or less on our way back to Texas and decided that we could get there before it got too dark to see anything if we hurried, so we grabbed a quick sandwich and were soon back in the car and on our way.

Why my gg-grandparents ended up being buried where they are has been one of those "I really need to dig into that" mysteries that all genealogists know so well. Casper Frederick Amborn came to this country with his wife (Louisa Dora Hoerining) and sons (Antone and Gottreich) in 1847 and settled in the town of Bloomfield in Walworth County. I'm almost certain that they traveled with the Kimball family, which included 2 year old Martha who would marry Antone Amborn 20 years later and (eventually) become my great grandmother.

Casper was followed in short order by brothers Henry (1850), Sebastian (1852), Anton and Daniel (1853) and John (the exact year is unknown, but he appears on the 1860 census in Bloomfield Township). With all of these connections, it was not obvious how or why he could live in Bloomfield for 24 years and end up dead and buried 200 miles away.

It turns out that Farmington was settled by German emigrants from Wernshausen, the same town in the Sachsen-Meiningen region of Germany where the Amborns and the Kimballs emigrated from. The trip from Germany usually included a stay in Bloomfield before the last leg of the trip was completed by ox or horse, so there were strong connections between the two towns. In fact, Sebastian Amborn left Bloomfield and was living in Farmington by the time of the 1870 census. Casper was still in Walworth County in June of 1870 (according to the census) but it appears that he moved to Farmington shortly thereafter. That is probably where his daughter Bertha met and married John Storandt (a Farmington native) in 1874, and that is where Casper died in 1875. Louisa survived him for another 25 years: she died on Christmas day in 1899.

The Methodist Episcopal Church where they are both buried was formed in 1865 (one of the founding members was John Pfaff, who lived on the farm next to Sebastian in 1870). The

church itself is no longer standing, and the cemetery eventually fell into neglect and was ignored and overgrown until 1966 when the graves of two Civil War soldiers buried there were re-discovered.

Kathleen read the history out loud to me as we drove. As I heard about the deterioration of the cemetery I decided that our chances of locating the 100 year old graves were slim to none, but I thought that we could at least get a few pictures and know that we had been in the vicinity.

The cemetery really is out in the middle of nowhere... for the last few miles the road was hilly and had many tight curves, and my desire to beat the encroaching darkness made Kathleen nervous and nauseous (a dangerous combination in a small car at the end of a two week vacation) so I had to curb my impatience. When we finally did reach it, we could see that most of the now fenced in cemetery was without tombstones or markers of any kind. I took a few "we were there" pictures from the road, put the camera back in the car and began to walk around to examine the few remaining markers...

... and to my absolute amazement and joy I discovered that the markers for Casper, his wife Louisa and their son David still exist! They are located at the back of the cemetery and are in remarkably good condition. Many excited trips back and forth to the car ensued (for the camera, then scrapers and brushes to clean the markers, then later for a flashlight to try to highlight some of the more obscure writing).

The stones are a little faded, but I am fairly certain that Casper's brother John H. Amborn and his wife Elizabeth are buried in the same plot. I did not find a stone for Sebastian but he surely must be buried there as well.

There are many things I love about genealogy: the joy of discovery that Kathleen and I have in common, the way it connects me with my family, and the way it seems to make history come alive. Standing there in the fading light with Kathleen at the foot of the graves of two people who unknowingly played such a vital role in my very existence was deeply moving and made me feel things that are as difficult to describe as they were thrilling to experience. I could almost imagine that my great-great grandparents were aware that I had found them and were pleased that I made the effort to stop by.

Kathleen and I are already looking forward to our next genealogical vacation.

If you would like a little more background about the Burr Oak cemeteries, I suggest you read these articles by the La Crosse Public Library (<http://www.lacrosselibrary.org>):

- La Crosse County Cemeteries: Burr Oak / Salzer Methodist Church Cemetery
- La Crosse County Cemeteries: Burr Oak Lutheran Cemetery

Tony Hanson

DGS Newsletter



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Announcement of Proposed Bylaw Changes

The DGS Board announces proposed bylaw changes primarily concerning the return to a September-August operating year. After several committee meetings and consultations with the Board, the Bylaws Committee, which was made up of Jean Larson (chair), Sandra Crowley, and Jan Howell, submitted these changes to the Board at its June 5, 2010 meeting and they were approved. Members of the Bylaws Committee are all present or past members of the DGS Board.

The DGS bylaws with indicated changes can be found on our website. Paper copies will be distributed at the September 11th General Meeting and the changes will be discussed then. Reading copies will also be available at the DGS desk on the 8th floor of the library. Voting for the proposed changes will take place at the October 2nd General Meeting.

An explanation of the rationale behind these proposed changes can be found in the President's Column.

New Books Reviewed Lloyd deWitt Bockstruck

Genealogical researchers working from the known to the unknown approach the records of an ancestral county by reading the wills of anyone with the same surname seeking proof of filiation and extension of a pedigree. Whether successful or not, the more seasoned researcher proceeds to an examination of the deed records. Parish registers and vestry books are examined if they have been fortunate enough to have survived. Such researchers are reluctant, however, to undertake a page by page reading of the court minutes of the county. That decision is indeed an unfortunate choice. The records are voluminous, the handwriting is wretched, and the volumes are lacking in indexes other than perhaps the names of defendants. Even in such instances, the indexes are inconsistent due to a change of clerks or the entering of the record by a deputy clerk.

John Anderson Brayton has made another significant contribution to colonial Virginia genealogy with *Transcription of Lower Norfolk County, Virginia Records Volume Two Record Book C 1651-1656*. At that period of time the county included that part of Virginia from the Atlantic seaboard on the south side of James River to Isle of Wight County on the ill-defined border with Carolina. County clerks had not yet begun the segregation into record groups so that one finds deeds, wills, orders, and court minutes interspersed. Paper had to be imported from England and was quite expensive. Accordingly, clerks resorted to all kinds of shorthand with which readers in the 21st century are unfamiliar. The law had its own vocabulary so there are pitfalls facing the unwary. For example, incontinency might be interpreted as a urinary tract disorder. In law, however, it connotes the inability to exercise self-control in sexual matters. The crime was that of fornication or a couple living together prior to marriage in sin. *Lector*, read carefully.

This 555-page book may be ordered from John A. Brayton, 1900 Central Ave., Memphis, TN 38104 for \$30 post paid.

A Who's Who of Your Ancestral Saints by Alan J. Koman is a work setting forth the connections between 275 European Saints to two dozen personages of medieval Europe. It spans ten centuries from St. Gregory who died in 326 to St. Thomas, 2nd Earl of Lancaster, who died in 1322. Included are such figures as Alfred the Great, Charlemagne, Eleanor of Aquitaine, and Margaret of Scotland. If you have qualified for membership in the Old World hereditary societies, this work provides a new approach to your ancestry. As we near the third millennium of the founding of Christianity, this work is indeed timely. It has already prompted the formation of a new lineage society, The National Society of Saints and Sinners. One might wonder what the basis was for the choice of the organization's name until one remembers that there are but two kinds of people in this world—saved sinners and lost sinners. The work may be ordered from Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 3600 Clipper Mill Rd., Suite 260, Baltimore, MD 21211-1953, by calling 1-800-286-6687, or on-line at www.genealogical.com for \$34.95 plus \$5.50 handling.

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