Kansas Council of Genealogical Societies

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Good morning all,
I am way behind again. I have been transcribing tombstones from St Marks Cemetery in Armagh, Co Donegal, Ireland, working from photos. They are now online if you think someone of yours might be there.
http://www.igp-web.com/IGPArchives/ire/armagh/photos/tombstones/armagh-st-marks/index.html

The job presented some challenges as you will note if you check out the site. Tombstones are hard to read at any time, but also the folks in this cemetery used every bit of space available on their stones. Lots of names to figure out. I did enjoy the work. My own people may have come from there.

Here is what I have been reading about:

Huge New King County, Washington, Database Unveiled
by Dick Eastman ·

The Seattle Genealogical Society is proud to announce the availability of a huge database, the SGS King County Court Cases Index, 1881-1980, or KC3I for short. This index contains over 1.7 million records. Of these, divorces and other end-of marriage cases comprise over 700,000 of the entries, and probate and similar cases account for nearly 300,000 more.

The KC3I was created over a ten year period by a small but resolute group of SGS volunteers from over 100 boxes of index cards from the Chicago Title Company. It is an index of ALL King County court cases that could potentially affect property rights, and therefore the title to property from before 1881 through 1980. In addition to divorce and probate cases, the KC3I also includes all King County court cases involving name changes, community property agreements and guardianships, among others. Nearly 80,000 hours of volunteer time went into the creation of the KC3I.

As its name suggests, the KC3I is an index only. It does not contain abstracts or summaries of these cases. A search of this index:

a) informs you if your ancestor was a party in one or more cases during this period;

b) lists the date and a few other details about each case (such as date of marriage or death, wife's maiden name, etc.); and

c) provides you with the case number and date of each case.

Once you have the case numbers, you can then obtain the complete case records from the King County Court Clerk's office.

Anyone with ancestors who lived in King County, Washington between 1850 and 1980 should be aware of this index, which is not available anywhere else, other than in the King County Superior Court Clerk's office. For more information, please visit http://www.seattlegenealogicalsociety.org/kc3i or email us at SGSkc3iLookups@gmail.com.

U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs Proposes to Expand Requests for Tombstone Markers on Behalf of Deceased Veterans
Dick Eastman

On October 1, 2014, the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) published, in the Federal Register, a proposed rule to amend the existing definition of eligible applicants by expanding the types of individuals who may request headstones or markers on behalf of decedents. The amendment addresses concerns that the existing applicant definition is too restrictive and results in identified Veteran gravesites going unmarked.

Those wishing to review and comment on the proposed changes are encouraged to do so by searching for "National Cemetery Administration" or "2900-AO95" at www.regulations.gov. Comments must be received on or before December 1, 2014.

Details may be found

at http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/features.asp#2.

Irish Potato Famine Pathogen Identified
By Helen Briggs
BBC News

Scientists have used plant samples collected in the mid-19th Century to identify the pathogen that caused the Irish potato famine. A plant pest that causes potato blight spread to Ireland in 1845 triggering a famine that killed one million people.

DNA extracted from museum specimens shows the strain that changed history is different from modern day epidemics, and is probably now extinct.

Other strains continue to attack potato and tomato crops around the world.

The fungus-like infection causes annual losses of enough potatoes to feed hundreds of millions of people a year.

A team led by The Sainsbury Laboratory, Norwich, traced the global spread of potato blight from the early 1800s to the present day.

Until now, it has been unclear how early strains of Phytophthora infestans are related to those present in the world today.

The Irish Potato Famine

Altogether, about a million people in Ireland are estimated to have died of starvation and epidemic disease between 1846 and 1851

Some two million emigrated in a period of a little more than a decade from 1845

Comparison with other famines suggests the Irish famine of the late 1840s, which killed nearly one-eighth of the entire population, was proportionally much more destructive of human life than the vast majority of famines in modern times

The famine began as a natural disaster, but historians say its effects were worsened by the actions and inactions of the Whig government of the time

Source: BBC History

Researchers in the UK, Germany and the US analysed dried leaves kept in collections in museums at Kew Royal Botanical Gardens, UK, and Botanische Staatssammlung Munchen, Germany. High-tech DNA sequencing techniques allowed them to decode ancient DNA from the pathogen in samples stored as early as 1845.

These were compared with modern-day genetic types from Europe, Africa and the Americas, giving an insight into the evolution of the pathogen. "This strain was different from all the modern strains that we analysed - most likely it is new to science," Prof Sophien Kamoun of The Sainsbury Laboratory told BBC News. "We can't be sure but most likely it's gone extinct."

The researchers believe the strain - HERB-1 - emerged in the early 1800s and continued to spread globally throughout the 19th Century. Only in the 20th Century, after new potato varieties were introduced, was it replaced by another Phytophthora infestans strain, US-1, which is now dominant around the world.

Potato blight is a major problem today
The research, published in the new open-access scientific journal, eLife, suggests crop breeding methods may have an impact on the evolution of pathogens.

"Perhaps this strain became extinct when the first resistant potato varieties were bred at the beginning of the 20th Century," said Kentaro Yoshida from The Sainsbury Laboratory.

"What is certain is that these findings will greatly help us to understand the dynamics of emerging

pathogens. This type of work paves the way for the discovery of many more treasures of knowledge hidden in herbaria."

Commenting on the study, Professor Sir David Baulcombe of the Department of Plant Sciences at the University of Cambridge said it shows how we can use herb specimens to track biodiversity. "It might be a revival in the fortunes or relevance of dried plants," he said. "It illustrates very nicely the arms race over pathogens and their host."

Phytophthora infestans - which causes potato blight - emerged in the US in 1844, and spread to Europe the following year.

The summer of 1845 was mild but very wet, giving the perfect conditions for the blight to spread.

The failure of the crop in Ireland - which relied heavily on potatoes as a food source - led to the deaths of about a million people from starvation and disease between 1846 and 1851.

A Way To Find Alternate Surname Variations

Our ancestors did it. The census takers did it. The transcribers did it. So we have to as well. It's a rare thing to find an ancestor whose name appears in historical records year after year spelled exactly the same way each time. Even a seemingly simple name such as Owens, will often appear as Owen, Owins, Owings or even Owns.

There are many creative ways to find alternate surname variations, but here is an online tool that is handy for this purpose. British Origins, a site for English research, employs a name search technology known as NameX. Created by Image Partners, NameX is based on a Last name thesaurus containing 75 million entries for 1.5 million distinct last names and a First name thesaurus containing over 3 million entries for 260,000 distinct first names. This generally results in fewer, more accurate name variants than Soundex. For example, while NameX identifies 21 highly plausible variants for the surname Owens, Soundex identifies 659 "variants," of which nearly 90% are extremely unlikely (eg. Oyoumick, Ounnoughi, Onehawk). NameX does miss a few likely ones, of course, such as Owins, but it also provides a much more reasonable

number of surnames to wade through than Soundex.

The First Name Thesaurus is of particular help, since Soundex doesn't address this, and many genealogy databases don't offer anything other than wildcard searching for first names. A search for Kimberly brings up some great variations, including Kim, Kimberley, Kymberly and Kimberlee.

The NameX name matching technology is sold to companies, but the Surname Thesaurus (which includes a Forename Thesaurus) is available on the Web, and can be freely accessed for personal use. A great resource the next time you need some help getting your creative juices flowing! (*Please google to find it as I have no address J*)

Preserving Historic Cemeteries
Michael J. Leclerc's Genealogy News

Danvers in many ways is a typical Massachusetts town. It is on the larger size in population (ranking 70th out of the 351 cities and towns in the commonwealth). It does, however, have a more infamous pedigree than most towns. Originally it was Salem Village, part of the town of Salem and the location of the Salem Witch Trials of the seventeenth century. It rarely gets the publicity, however, and tourists still flock to the town of Salem each Halloween, even though it was not the location of the trials. Today the town is facing a problem that is starting to come before many towns and counties throughout the United States: preserving historic burying grounds.

In New England most towns had a cemetery near the village common, often associated with a church. Family cemeteries are less common, but for a variety of reasons individuals and small groups did often create their own burial grounds. Danvers resident Samuel Holten was a judge, a member of the Massachusetts legislature, and an ardent voice in the Sons of Liberty. He served in the Continental Congress and was a signature of the Articles of Confederation. When he died in 1814, his will dictated that part of his property be set aside as a "burying pasture" for his family and others that lived in the area.

For two hundred years residents of the town served on in the cemetery association. Many of the leading families gratefully served. These members created an endowment by selling plots in the cemetery, hundreds of them. Through the years, veterans of Americas wars from the American Revolution through the Vietnam conflict were buried there. It was well cared for. Flowers and other mementos were often left at graves.

Historic Danvers cemetery orphaned, neglected

Danvers hesitant to take stewardship of run-down historic graveyard

By Sean P. Murphy
| GLOBE STAFF OCTOBER 27, 2014

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JOANNE RATHE/GLOBE STAFF

A sunken gravestone at the Holten Street Cemetery in Danvers.

Unfortunately, in recent years, things have changed dramatically. The cemetery ran out of space. All spaces were sold and revenues dried up. It became more difficult to get people to serve in the association. The cemetery is in need of major repairs, not only to burial plots, but to retaining walls and other structures.

In December, the last member of the association informed the town that she could no longer manage things. The endowment was down to $18,000, and she saw no way to raise funds for more without burial plots to sell. She asked the town to take over managing the cemetery.

The town, however, is not obligated to do so. It is a private burying ground. After the major repairs are done, annual maintenance costs are estimated to be $14,000. There is dissent amongst citizens of the town as to whether or not the cemetery should be taken over by the town, supporting it with taxes. But there is an overwhelming feeling that the cemetery

does need to be cared for, especially given its historic nature.

This situation is becoming more and more common all the time. Historic cemeteries have run out of ideas to raise money for care. Towns and counties are being faced with having to take them over or destroy the final resting place of hundreds or thousands of residents. We must find creative ways to help these burying grounds survive, or face a tragedy of irreplaceable loss. You can read more about the story of Holten's cemetery in **Historic Danvers Cemetery Orphaned, Neglected**.

Remember
Opportunities always look bigger going than coming.

Til next time
Janeice