

# BOUSE GENIES

## WHAT IS A LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT?

by Carolyn H. Brown  
[from the SKP Genies Newsletter May/June 2009]



In genealogy, one of the best ways to prove relationships is through wills. They often state the name of the spouse and all children. Some even mention parents, siblings, in-laws and/or grandchildren. Wills can clear up misinformation in the family structure. Unfortunately, some wills mention "my wife and children" and never provide a name to any of them.

Each of us owns "stuff" which falls into two categories: "real" and "personal" property. But when we die, what will happen to our "stuff" like our home, automobile, prized possessions and anything else we may have accumulated over the years? Depending on the laws of the state, the treatment of your possessions may differ. It is up to you to know how the state will treat your possessions, if you have not stated in a legal document how you want them distributed. A will is considered that legal document.

Wills have been in existence for centuries to allow individuals to determine just what should happen to their possessions. The current legal laws of the United States are taken from the old English laws. The structure of the will has changed very little over the centuries. Today a will consists of a testament of what the individual wants done with their physical and personal property, followed by the instructions for those remaining to follow in the distribution of the individual's real property. Many of us have created several wills over our lifetime, but the last document created has precedence over all others.

A will expresses the wishes of the individual for the legal disposition of the contents of their estate and physical remains. It provides guidance for the administrator or executor in performing the duties associated with the individual's stated wishes and for the probate court.

Some things an individual owned do not appear in the will if they have been assigned through other documents to a specific individual/individuals, or to a trustee/trustees. These include, but are not limited to trusts, bank accounts, stock market accounts, retirement accounts, and other such accounts or instruments. You choose how they will be distributed when you die, at the time the account or trust is created.

When there is a need to make a change in a will without rewriting the will, the individual may have included a codicil. The codicil is attached to the will and becomes an integral part of that will.

Wills from past generations are a gold mine and experienced genealogists know: *Where there is a will there is a way* to find one's ancestors.



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## Bouse Genies Electronic Newsletter

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Please send all general correspondence to:

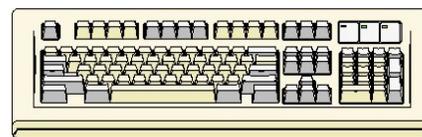
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The Bouse Genies meet every other Friday at the Bouse Community Building next to the Library. The schedule of meeting is posted in this newsletter.

The Bouse Genies Website is  
<http://bousegenies.weebly.com>

## FROM THE COMPUTER DESK

**IT WASN'T THAT LONG AGO** by Barbara A. H. Nuehring  
[from the SKP Genies Newsletter May/June 2009]



It wasn't that long ago that *Google* and *Terabyte* were added to our vocabulary. It wasn't that long ago that an encyclopedia filled 30+ volumes. It wasn't that long ago we didn't know a neighbor was a distant cousin, much less have the resources to find a living cousin in the "old world". But that was yesteryear.

Today keyword searchable encyclopedias are on paper-thin DVDs. Search engines link us to sources that answer questions we didn't even know to ask. Libraries post their hours of operation, maps and directions to their facilities and even their catalogues online. Near and distant cousins populate mailing lists, message boards, social networks and web sites. And all this data is continuously updated!

It wasn't that long ago that finding a genealogy library when we are traveling depended on what we found in genealogy magazines. Today several web sites provide up-to-date information about repositories:

The Directory of Genealogy Libraries in the US	<a href="http://www.gwest.org/gen_libs.htm">www.gwest.org/gen_libs.htm</a>
The Directory of Public and Academic Libraries	<a href="http://www.publiclibraries.com">www.publiclibraries.com</a>
State Archives & Historical Societies Directory	<a href="http://web.syr.edu/~jryan/infopro/hs.html">http://web.syr.edu/~jryan/infopro/hs.html</a>

It wasn't that long ago that the *Genealogical Helper Magazine* was the only way to post or read a query. Today genealogists around the world contribute to and search online surname databases. Detailed information is provided so that you can determine if a particular name is one in your line. Google "surname databases" or start your surname search using these web sites:

Rootswest Surname List	<a href="http://rsl.rootswest.ancestry.com/#search">http://rsl.rootswest.ancestry.com/#search</a>
Surname Helper	<a href="http://surhelp.rootswest.ancestry.com/srchall.html">http://surhelp.rootswest.ancestry.com/srchall.html</a>
Kindred Konnections	<a href="http://www.kindredkonnections.com/ancestry.html">www.kindredkonnections.com/ancestry.html</a>
Global Tree	<a href="http://www.gencircles.com/globaltree/">www.gencircles.com/globaltree/</a>

We still read genealogy magazines for information on how to do our research, and what records are available, but we don't post queries or look for library locations in them. Make sure you use the Internet to post and read queries. And before you take off for those wonderful places RVer's go in their travels, make sure you have a list of the genealogical libraries that are near where you are planning your stops. These big magazines were needed "not that long ago", but today a new generation of lists provide the most current and accurate data available in a format that weighs little and will fit in any size RV.



Web sites come, move, and go on a regular basis. These URLs were current at the time of publication and are subject to unannounced changes.

### *Internet Sites about using Wills and Probate Records*

Article: Analyzing Wills for Useful Clues	<a href="http://www.bcgcertification.org/skillbuilders/skbld955.html">www.bcgcertification.org/skillbuilders/skbld955.html</a>
Glossary of unusual words found in wills	<a href="http://www.btinternet.com/~tylcoat/gloss.htm">www.btinternet.com/~tylcoat/gloss.htm</a>
How to Read Probate Records	<a href="http://dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/probateRecords.html">http://dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/probateRecords.html</a>
Overview of the current Probate Process	<a href="http://www.newyorklife.com/cda/0,3254,11275,00.html">www.newyorklife.com/cda/0,3254,11275,00.html</a>

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## UNDERSTANDING WILLS

by Carolyn H. Brown [from the SKP Genies Newsletter May/June 2009]

It is necessary to know the laws in place for the specific state in question at the time of the will. Laws and customs varied over time and they do affect the way a will was written.

Wills, especially many early wills, may tell you a lot of information about the family and their relationship to each other. Often, not always, they will tell you the name of the person's spouse and all children. In some cases even grandchildren are listed. However, there are times when, for some reason or other, the individuals may just be listed as "my wife, husband, son or daughter". If a parent gave a child's share to them sometime before the parent's death, that child may be totally excluded.

If land is being given, the actual location of the property is recorded, providing information which should be followed up in the deed books.

Following are some relationship terms used in early wills which may seem strange to us today.

**RELICT:** The spouse of the individual was already dead.

**CONSORT:** The spouse left behind. This is usually a widow, but may be widower.

**MY NOW WIFE (OR HUSBAND):** Current spouse, usually means the person was married before.

**SON (OR DAUGHTER)-IN-LAW:** May be the spouse of a son or daughter, or may be a son or daughter of their spouse by another marriage (or relationship), or an adopted child.

**MY WIFE'S (OR HUSBAND'S) SON OR DAUGHTER:** A child of the spouse by a previous marriage or relationship. Could be an illegitimate child.

**MY WIFE'S (OR HUSBAND'S) GRANDCHILD (SON OR DAUGHTER):** The child of the spouse's child by a previous marriage or relationship.

Take careful note of the above terms in early wills as they may lead to the discovery of a whole family you were not aware of. Many times when a man died his brother married his widow. Untangling these families can be difficult, as all of the children carry the same last name.

Be sure to read the entire will for every little nuance that may help determine relationships or lead to

additional research. Sometimes items are willed to a child that are later passed down in the family for many generations. Relationships may be proved by following these items.



## WHAT IS THE PROBATE PROCESS?

by Carolyn H. Brown [from the SKP Genies Newsletter May/June 2009]



The probate process is a legal procedure intended to certify that a person's estate is disposed of in a standard way. When a will is presented to a court it must be proved. It must be verified as the most recent document expressing the wishes of the deceased. Witnesses to the will (if available) must confirm that they did, in fact, witness the signing of the document by the testator. In cases in which the witnesses are deceased or unavailable, a handwriting analysis may be used.

The probate packet often contains all of the documents generated through the course of the probate process. However, over time some of the documents which should be in a particular probate packet may have been misplaced, misfiled or destroyed to make room for more documents in the facility. If you have trouble finding a specific document that should be in a probate file, look in other probates filed on that same day.

When a person dies intestate it means that they died without a will, in which case a court may become involved in making sure the person's estate is correctly valued, divided, and distributed to the appropriate beneficiaries. In this case, an executor/executrix and/or an administrator is appointed by the probate court and is provided with "letters testamentary," which authorize the person(s) to act on all matters related to the processing of the estate. Copies of all documents and transactions are filed periodically with the probate court and become a part of the probate packet.

The probate of a will or the settlement of the estate of someone without a will can be very important to the genealogist. When the estate is settled, and the property disposed of, the information about where the property—real and personal—went is recorded. It is important to note the names of everyone receiving any part of an estate. Since the settlement of an estate can occur long after the individual's death, information contained in the probate records can clarify relationships. Documents filed with the probate records

may list the husband's or wife's name or one or more of the children who married after the individual died. If the spouse remarried, the name of the new spouse may be identified.

A trust, when properly drawn up and funded, does not die when the creator dies. A trust allows a trustee to take over management of the trust's components without the trouble and expense of going to court for the appointment of a conservator if the testator becomes disabled. It also avoids the probate process and facilitates a trustee to immediately take over all management of the trust, payment of bills, and distribution of the assets indefinitely until the trust is dissolved (if ever).

Anyone who owed money to the deceased, or to whom the deceased owed money, will also be included in the probate records. Funeral bills and other costs incurred at the time of death will be included. This information could lead to funeral home records for the deceased.

If, for some reason a child was left out of the will, they may appear in the probate records.



## PROBATE PACKET ITEMS

by Carolyn H. Brown [from the SKP Genies Newsletter May/June 2009]

The probate packet can contain lots of documents and it is important to read each carefully for any clues to be followed up on. Depending on the size of the estate or surviving family members, there can be more information than you ever expected to find in one place. If the will was contested, there will be more information still.

Documents likely to be found in a probate packet are:

**WILL AND CODICIL(S):** These are the core documents in the probate packet. It is upon them that all else is predicated. Read these very carefully as they may provide names of heirs and beneficiaries. They often indicate the relationship of the person named to that of the deceased. Wills have been known to contain names for three generations or more of a family. Names in these documents may lead to additional documents.

**LETTERS TESTAMENTARY:** Sometimes the name(s) of the actual executor/executrix and/or administrator are different from those named in the will. It can be important to know if and why the executor nominated in the will did not serve. Was he/she deceased,

incapacitated, or unavailable, or did he or she decline to serve? You will want to determine the actual person(s) and his or her relationship (if any) to the deceased.

**INVENTORY OF THE ESTATE:** Even if there was not a will there may be an inventory of the estate which sets the value of the estate. A good indicator of an individual's social status will be revealed by the financial state of the deceased. The person's lifestyle is reflected in the inventory of personal property. The individual's occupation can be determined by the tools, farm equipment or other items in the inventory. The possession of a great deal of clothing and shoes usually indicates an elevated social position. The presence of books in an eighteenth century estate inventory indicates education and literacy. Smaller items of memorabilia, such as military medals, jewelry or documents may confirm family stories.

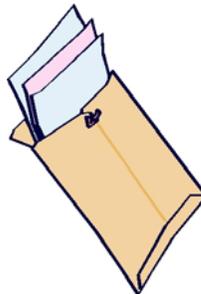
**LIST OF BENEFICIARIES:** It is the duty of the executor to locate all persons listed as beneficiaries in a will. You may not be able to locate some of the beneficiaries as they may be dead or have married and have different names. In some cases their spouses or descendants may have been the inheritors. In some cases the relationship to the maker of the will may be identified. You will want to follow every name on this list where possible.

**DEEDS, NOTES, BILLS, INVOICES, AND RECEIPTS:** Additional records that may be found in a probate packet are copies of deeds, notes, bills, invoices and other receipts. Deed copies will point you to land and property records and tax rolls. Make note of other names appearing on these papers as they may connect you to relatives, neighbors, friends, and business associates.

**ESTATE AUCTION RECORDS:** Assets were sometimes liquidated (by straight sale or auction) to pay bills or to raise money for the surviving family. Bills of sale and auction records can reveal much about estate contents and their value. Bidders/purchasers at an estate auction were often relatives, and you may find participants with the same surname (or maiden name) as the deceased. You will want to research all of them.

**ACCOUNTING REPORTS:** The administrator or executor/executrix had to file financial reports with the court during the probate process. These supporting documents filed with the accounting reports often provide entities holding estate debts and names of claimants that could include relatives.

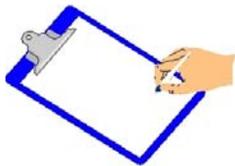
**FINAL DISPOSITION OF THE ESTATE:** The final disposition of the assets and contents of the estate report may



include the names and more current addresses of all the beneficiaries and what each received from the estate.

**ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS:** There also may be letters from family members to the court concerning the probate which can have more personal information not contained in the other documents. It is important to read each document carefully for clues.

**PROBATE COURT MINUTES:** You will also want to check the probate court minutes for information that may not have been included in any of the above items.



## **ESTATE INVENTORIES**

by Carolyn H. Brown [from the SKP Genies Newsletter May/June 2009]

The probate, which includes the estate inventory, can tell you significant information about the daily lives of your ancestors. Were they rich or poor? What did they wear? How did their lives compare to their neighbors? The amount of furniture may tell about the general size of their home.

Regardless of whether your ancestors left a will or not, if they had anything of value an inventory was probably made. It all depended on the laws of the state at the time.

Estate Inventories generally begin with the opening statement, the name of the deceased, the date of the inventory, where the inventory was done and the name of the appraisers. They will be organized differently depending on time and place. You may find all items listed separately or many items grouped together. The value of the items will be given. The person receiving the items will be listed when the items are a gift and usually those individuals are related in some way to the deceased. If there is an estate sale the name of the purchaser will be listed. Many times these individuals are related to the deceased, but are often neighbors. In any case, you will want to research persons receiving property from your deceased ancestor to see how they were connected. If Sally Jones is listed in the will of John Walker as his daughter, you can often find through the probate or estate sale records the first name of her husband. You may even identify some of her children.



**The bonds of matrimony are a good investment only when the interest is kept up.**

## **COURT ORDERS ARE A GENEALOGY GEM**

by Carolyn H. Brown [from the SKP Genies Newsletter May/June 2009]



Court Orders (also called Circuit Court Orders) generally include all cases that appear before the court. The way they are recorded will differ from one jurisdiction to the other. They are recorded by date in the Court Order books and these books are usually indexed. In some courthouses you will find that will, deed, marriage, and naturalization documents are in separate books and have been indexed separately. If they are in separate books, then the original document has usually been copied and will appear in the book. The actual documents are kept separately. Other types of records such as lawsuits (both criminal and civil), foreclosures, debts, divorces, name changes, guardianships, equity cases, or any other action which came before the court will be recorded together under Court Orders and will have one index. The amount of data which appears in a court order book is usually minimal.

### **FINDING THE DOCUMENTS**

Though the court case will be referenced in a Court Order Book, finding the original documents may take more digging. Depending on the way the courthouse files their documents, you may find them filed according to document type, and in some cases the documents may be kept in an entirely different location than at the courthouse.

**CRIMINAL CASES** are considered public, which means that the state or local jurisdiction files charges against an individual. If the case goes to trial, and the court pronounces a judgement, the case can generate a mountain of documents. The types of documents contained in this mountain of documents may include the complaint, bail or bond, arraignment, testimony, witness list, jury list and trial proceedings. Depending on the case, it could include a coroner's report and other forensic evidence, including DNA.

**CIVIL CASES** are where one party (the plaintiff) sues another party (the defendant) where the plaintiff feels wronged, such as a divorce, and foreclosures. Civil cases also include licenses, naturalization, name changes, adultery, cattle-brand or earmark, road-work appointments, fornication and other general types of cases. Depending on the time frame and the courthouse, these may be kept together or in separate volumes.

**EQUITY CASES** (also known as **CHANCERY** records) involve the resolution of property disputes often stemming from a divorce, estate division or probate. These cases were decided by the judge without a jury. Depending on the courthouse, these cases may not be indexed in the court order books. I know of one case where they are not in the court order books—they were found in a box stuffed in a corner of the courthouse. To know if a document you are seeking was there, you must ask the clerk. In Charles City County, Virginia the will, deed and court order books have been microfilmed, but there is no mention of any of the Chancery Court records being microfilmed.

Most of these court records have not been digitized or microfilmed and you will need to contact the courthouse to find them. Some of the older records have been abstracted. If there is an abstract, the courthouse may direct you to the abstract before actually searching the records. In the case of Virginia Land Patents and Grants, the early records (1623 thru 1732) have been abstracted by Nell Marion Nugent in the three-volume series *Cavaliers & Pioneers*. Additional abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants starting in 1733 have appeared throughout the 1980's in the *Magazine of Virginia Genealogy* published by the Virginia Genealogy Society.

The best place to find published abstracts is at the Family History Library <[www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)>.

Also check out Ancestry <<http://ancestry.com>>, RootsWeb <<http://rootsweb.ancestry.com>>, and USGenWeb <<http://usgenweb.com>>.

**COURT MINUTES** may also provide information, or lead you to the location of other court documents. All actions taken by the court are recorded in the court minutes. Most of the time they are very brief, but occasionally they can be quite lengthy. They can be very interesting to read.

**COURT ORDERS** are the directions to the sheriff or constable for action. They are usually in record books in chronological order. They might be part of the court minutes or in separate books. Many times a case will be continued over many sessions of the court, and can appear for an extended period of time.

These documents are generally in clusters of loose papers. Therefore, they have not, and may not ever be filmed. If they are filmed, they may not contain all of the documents in the file.

In many of these records you will find gems of genealogical information you would not find anywhere else. Many times these records will show relationships

where no other document exists. If you have a brickwall situation, start looking at the court orders and their related documents.



## **BEGINNERS' PITFALLS FALLS**

by Mary LB [From Easton's online genealogy newsletter [www.egon.com](http://www.egon.com) January 04, 2009]

### **WILLS DON'T ALWAYS MENTION ALL CHILDREN OF A DECEASED PERSON.**

Often a child has already been given property and it simply does not specify that in the will. If the gift was real estate or other personal property, then there likely would be a deed saying something like "For love and affection for my daughter and son-in-law Sarah and John Clark". Beautiful!!!! There is your proof of relationships. Wills are only a small part of probate records. Much, much more can be revealed in estate records, inventories, bills of sale, administrator bonds, order books, etc. All heirs are likely to be named in estate settlements. Lawsuits among family members often occurred and these can be a goldmine of factual information on which to build. Knowing the names of siblings and in-laws helps you to recognize key people in the indexes. Develop your family group sheets so the information will be handy.

### **COURTHOUSE RECORDS AND EVIDENCE ARE "JUST FOR PROFESSIONAL RESEARCHERS"**

Of course they are not!!! Courthouse records are essential for everyone's research project, as is evidence. All are there for everyone who wants to learn who their ancestors were. Begin with your parents / grandparents and work on back on your pedigree chart, building on the supporting evidence you find. Research is usually not difficult, but it does require understanding the basics. Basics are easily learned and, with experience, productive research will become easy.



## **LAWS OF GENEALOGY**

**No one in your family ever did anything noteworthy, always rented property, was never sued and was never named in wills.**



## **THE DICTIONARY SAYS ... BUT GENEALOGISTS KNOW**

Words you may find in a will or other court records.

### **ASSIGNMENT**

*Dictionary Definition:* Anything being assigned.

*Genealogical Importance:* A document transferring rights to property (not necessarily ownership; it applies to leases and other forms of temporary or potential rights) to another.

### **DEVISE**

*Dictionary Definition:* To bequeath real property through a will.

*Genealogical Importance:* A gift of real property in an estate. The devisee is the person receiving the land.

### **DOWAGER**

*Dictionary Definition:* A widow with title or property derived from her dead husband.

*Genealogical Importance:* Early usage applied to royalty and nobility, but over time became generalized to refer to any distinguished, older widow, regardless of rank.

### **DOWER**

*Dictionary Definition:* That part of a man's property which his widow inherits for her life.

*Genealogical Importance:* The provision which the law makes for a widow out of the lands or tenements of her husband for the support and nurture of her children.

### **DOWRY**

*Dictionary Definition:* The property which a woman brings to her husband in marriage.

*Genealogical Importance:* When the property is disposed of during her life, she has to sign her consent for that disposal. Now more commonly called a "portion".

### **"ET AL"**

*Dictionary Definition:* and others

*Genealogical Importance:* Deed and court order indexes may not include all of the people named in the document, just the first or principal name. They often use the term "et al" to mean that there are others included in the deed or court order. The person you are looking for may not be in the index, but might be in the deed or order itself, so you have to look at the original to make sure you have not missed the one person you were looking for.

### **"ET UX"** (short for "et uxor")

*Dictionary Definition:* and wife

*Genealogical Importance:* In deed indexes usually only

the husband is listed while the wife may be listed with her first name. Usually her maiden name is not listed, however, in some cases sufficient information may be provided in the deed to help you determine her maiden name from the document.

### **HUSBANDMAN**

*Dictionary Definition:* Farmer

*Genealogical Importance:* Usually a small landholder who may also have to work on others land to support himself, i.e. one below the status of yeoman.

### **MESSUAGE**

*Dictionary Definition:* A dwelling house and its adjacent buildings and the adjacent land used by the household.

*Genealogical Importance:* A house plus its associated outbuildings, garden, yard, orchard, etc. Often found in old wills.



## **MISCONCEPTIONS CONCERNING "LEGAL" AGES**

by **Edgar MacDonald**  
[*Magazine of Virginia Genealogy*  
Vol 25, August 1987, Number 3,  
page 52]



In carefully researched family histories one continually sees such statements as, "In witnessing the deed he must have been of age and therefore born before \_\_\_", and "He bought land in \_\_\_ and therefore must have been 21 as of that date." Two errors infect the first statement. While 21 was agreed on as being "of age" in the usual sense, under English Common Law a father's will, having the force of law, frequently determined when a child became of age. Virginia court records abound in instances where fathers named their children "of age" as early as 15 and 16. Indeed, a father could give a child "his freedom" verbally. More important, however, is the fact that under English Common Law a witness did not have to be 21 to qualify as such. An "infant" is the legal term for anyone under 21. However a person could testify at any age when understanding was presumed, and under common law the age of 14 was accepted without question as the age of discretion.

In the second instance, a minor could perfectly well buy land if he had the means or credit. At 14 a male could marry, sign contracts, choose his guardian, bequeath personal property, and/or apprentice himself. He could even sell land as a minor, but was usually

required to confirm the sale upon arriving at the age of 21; however, where unchallenged, few of these confirmations found their way into the records. The general assumption by many genealogists that 21 was the universal age for civic activities is simply erroneous. While a male had to be that age to vote, he was taxed at 16, and frequently he was mustered into the militia at 16. For most of his activities concerning his personal affairs, the colonial male in Virginia, and elsewhere, was eminently qualified to affix his name to public documents at the responsible age of 14.



# ABCs

## THE A-B-Cs OF GENEALOGY

by Maryalice Gordon [from the SKP Genies Newsletter  
May/June 2009]

### M - N - O - P

**M** is for **MANAGE**. It is very important to manage your research. Keep a list of what information you have and another list for what you still want or need to make your genealogy in usable shape.

**N** is for **NEAT** and . . .

**O** is for **ORGANIZED**. Having neatly organized records will give you assurance of a job well done.

**P** is for **PAPERWORK**. Filing paperwork can be a challenge. Should "Sarah Murray Jones" be filed under "S" or "M" or "J"? Regardless of which one works best for you, make an additional page with a reference to the main file.



## DONNA'S DICTIONARY

Surname spelling variations really don't matter.

Few ancestors are "islands";  
they traveled in bunches.

Your Elmer Snickerdoodle likely wasn't the only  
Elmer Snickerdoodle in the county.

Courthouses are places where miracles happen.

Family history is life in the past lane.



## What's Happening?

While you are traveling, take advantage of these organizations which are hosting multi-seminar conferences during the next few months:

### National Genealogy Society (NGS)

13 - 16 May in Raleigh, North Carolina

Info is at: [www.ngsgenealogy.org](http://www.ngsgenealogy.org)

**New this year – RV Parking Accommodations**

More RV info: [ancestor1776@optonline.net](mailto:ancestor1776@optonline.net)

### Palatines to America

18 - 20 June in Fort Wayne, Indiana

Info is at: [www.palam.org](http://www.palam.org)

### Southern California Genealogical Society

26 - 29 June in Burbank, California

Info is at: [www.scsgenealogy.com](http://www.scsgenealogy.com)

### Federation of East European Family History Societies (FEFFHS)

24 - 25 July in Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Info is at: [www.feefhs.org](http://www.feefhs.org)

### New England Historic Genealogical Society

10 - 15 August in Boston, Massachusetts

Info is at:

[www.newenglandancestors.org/events/7133.asp](http://www.newenglandancestors.org/events/7133.asp)

### Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS)

2 - 5 September in Little Rock, Arkansas

Info is at: [www.fgs.org/2009conference/index.php](http://www.fgs.org/2009conference/index.php)

### Germans from Russia Heritage Society

9 - 13 September in Rapid City, South Dakota

Info is at: [www.grhs.org](http://www.grhs.org)

### International Society for British Genealogy

5 - 9 October in Salt Lake City, Utah

Info is at: [www.isbgfh.org](http://www.isbgfh.org)

Plus there are several **Family History Expos:**

12 - 13 June in Loveland, Colorado

17 - 18 July in Sheridan, Wyoming

28 - 29 August in Salt Lake City, Utah

16 - 17 October in Redding, California

Info is at: [www.fhexpos.com/events](http://www.fhexpos.com/events)





## RESEARCHING IN OTHER COUNTRIES

In other countries, in general, they have the same types of records that we have in the United States. These include wills, deeds, court records, church records, etc. However, they will be identified by different names and may be housed in different facilities. They also cover different time periods.

It is important to know what records were kept at any given time frame. You will also need to know where they are currently located.

In most cases the records will be in a different language. Understanding how to research in other countries is important, so read as much as you can about the records available and where they are located in that country before you start your research.



## WHAT IS A GEDCOM?

by Carolyn H. Brown

**GEDCOM** stands for **GE**nealogical **Data** **COM**munications. It is a standard format into which genealogy information can be arranged. GEDCOM was developed by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. GEDCOM is not a program, but a format that allows genealogists to share data amongst themselves. If a program can import or export GEDCOM format files it can exchange information with any other program that has the same capability, regardless of the type of computer it was designed for. When you transfer data with GEDCOM you do not need to retype someone else's information all over again.

GEDCOM lets you use more than one genealogy program. If one program has certain types of charts that you would like to use, you can transfer the information into that program without retyping.

A GEDCOM file is stored in TEXT (sometimes called ASCII) format. You can open a GEDCOM file with any word processor to examine it. It should be noted though that GEDCOM files have "tags" and "pointers" that cross-reference other information. If you are not very well versed in the GEDCOM format, you could mess things up doing random editing of the file. On the reverse side though, using your word processor's Find and Replace functions, you can do massive global editing of a GEDCOM file and then import it back into

your genealogy program. If you examine a GEDCOM file created by you and only change items that you have entered yourself, you probably will stay out of trouble. **BE SURE TO WORK WITH BACKUPS. NEVER** import directly into your active file. Create a new family file, import the GEDCOM file into the new blank file and go from there.

### Legacy - Creating a Focus Group

Recently Legacy has a posting on their Legacy E-News about creating a focus group GEDCOM for sending to someone in an email. Following are the instructions:

1. Go to File > Export to > GEDCOM file.
2. Click on the Records Selection button in the lower left.
3. Click in the circle next to "Selected records contained in the Focus Group", then click on the View/Select Focus Group button.
4. Using the 6 buttons at the bottom of the screen, add the desired individuals to the focus group. When you are done, click OK.
5. The "View/Select Focus Group" button's text should now be red. Click Close. The phrase to the right of the Record Selection button should now read "Focus Group records".
6. Click on the "Select File Name and Start Export" button in the upper right.
7. Type the desired name of the GEDCOM, and navigate to the folder in which you want to save the GEDCOM. (Remember where you save this so you can attach it to an email later.) Click Save.
8. Enter the compiler information and click OK.

Now, using your email software, write your message and attach the GEDCOM file (the file will end with the .ged extension).

This type of GEDCOM file can be used when you only want to share part of your larger file with another family member.



*Those who do not look upon themselves as a link connecting the past with the future do not perform their duty to the world.*

...Daniel Webster

## *Bouse Genies*

### 2009 MEETING SCHEDULE

**We will be meeting every other Friday from May thru August 2009 as follows:**

May 22; June 5 & 19; July 3, 17 & 31; Aug 14 & 28; Sep 11.

We will start our regular meetings on the 25th of September. This sets the winter schedule through the rest of the year as: Sep 25; Oct 9 & 23; Nov 6 & 20; Dec 4 & 18. This schedule works out great for both Thanksgiving and Christmas weeks.

### *Bouse Genies News*

by Carolyn H. Brown - Chairman



Our regular session is over for the winter and we are about to embark on the summer schedule. Many of our members have departed, not to return until fall or early winter. We wish all of you very happy travels and please think about us left here for the HOT summer.

We completed presenting the Legacy CD's and most of us feel that we need to see them all again. So be thinking about how we should do it this next winter.

Some of us who are planning to spend the summer here will be taking short vacations to get some relief from the heat. But, there will be enough of us remaining to continue the meetings throughout the summer season.

We are scheduling a trip to the Quartzsite Family History Center shortly and may make plans for other outings as the summer months drag on.

Next winter I am tentatively planning to teach the 10 genealogy classes. We have discussed starting the classes in October or early November, so they will not overlap too much with the computer classes, if I do those again. I would like to have your comments. Email me at [geniecarol@gmial.com](mailto:geniecarol@gmial.com) with your thoughts on this.

As many of you know, we received two boxes of wonderful genealogy research books from Robert & Rebecca Batts. Most of the books are on Virginia. Included in those boxes were three volumes of *Cavaliers and Pioneers*. These are abstracts of the very early Virginia land patents. While I was inputting them into the library system to make them available for

loan to our Bouse Genies, I discovered that there is only one other library, using the same system, that had copies of these books. That is the Library of Virginia. If you are researching in early Virginia, you should take advantage of this opportunity to do research in these very valuable documents.

We send our condolences to Gloria Freemon on the lose of her husband last month. Also, we have had several members, or their spouses, sick recently. We are thinking about all of you, and wish you well for the travel season.

### *BOUSE PUBLIC LIBRARY I-NET NEWS*

This week we got some more news on the Internet situation in the library. The county is looking at breaking the contract with Starband. Seems that Starband told the library staff when the system was purchased that the system would be able to handle all computers in the library at that time. However, the contract was written for the use of only one computer. As most of us know, the system worked pretty well up until last summer. At that time the Friends of the Bouse Public Library decided to upgrade the equipment and the system went down hill from there.

The library was closed for 5 months this winter for renovation and during that time they were forced to go to a new program for checking books in and out. Unfortunately, the new system is totally online. Which means that they must have the two computers in use for library functions up and running at all times. Because of this, since the library re-opened, they have not had any Internet access for library customers.

This meant that the Bouse Genies, through donations from the Bouse Chamber of Commerce and the Bouse Boosters, were paying for Ancestry.com and are not able to access it. Unfortunately, Ancestry.com would not put our license on suspension while the library was closed. We could not afford to cancel our subscription, as we would have had to pay the full new library subscription price, which is over \$1700. We are only paying about \$1000 a year now. So, we have had almost a year of Ancestry.com without access.

The county is now trying to find a contractor who can provide the required band width via satellite to handle our situation. There is a possibility that the library may have Internet access for customers before August. They have made no promises, so it is a wait and see game.

