



## THE BIRMINGHAM GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Founded April 15, 1959

[www.birminghamgenealogy.org](http://www.birminghamgenealogy.org)

<http://birminghamgenealogy.wordpress.com/>

## THE PIONEER TRAILS NEWSLETTER

JULY 2016

**General Meeting for July:** The Birmingham Genealogical Society will meet at 2:00 p.m. on **Saturday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>** on the fourth floor of the Birmingham Public Library (in the computer lab next to the Arrington Auditorium). The Board of Directors will meet at 1:00 p.m. in the same room.

**Please join us on Saturday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> (2:00 pm) as Mary Beth Newbill, Head of the Southern History and the Government Documents Departments presents: “Your Tax Dollars at Work: Using Government Websites for Genealogical Research.”** Many government agencies offer resources for genealogical research. Learn how to look beyond census records and find genealogical information in some truly surprising places. You can search for service records and land grants, view web tutorials, and much more using free websites from the state and federal government. Please join us for this informative program!

**Subpoenas, Summons, and Court Notices:** When using case files from court records, make certain to go through documents used to summon people to attend court. Many times subpoenas will at least give the name of the county where the person was believed to have been living at the time of the court action. Residential information may also be buried in the text of other documents filed with the court. You won't know if you don't look. And the court case file may be the only place that has the name of that elusive residence.

**Lone Burials:** When visiting that family burial plot, pay close attention to a “lone burial” of a “non-relative” close to your “known” relatives. That lone burial may actually be buried in the family plot (sometimes those records aren't available) and may actually be a relative. Always worth it to get pictures of adjacent stones that you don't think are related and to get an overview picture of the known family graves—including the nearby ones that “aren't related.” But that lone burial may be just that—a lone burial. In cemeteries where plots are expensive, your relatives may have sold that unused spot to someone outside the family.

**Hopped On The Train To Marry?** Is it possible that your ancestors took a train to a nearby county seat to elope? Some couples would venture to a nearby county's county seat so that the license would not be published in their own local newspaper. During the right time period, the train could be a quick way to do that and keep locals from finding out the news before the couple was ready to disclose it.

© Michael John Neill, “Genealogy Tip of the Day,”

<http://genealogytipoftheday.blogspot.com>, TIPDATE.

### **MARK YOUR CALENDAR! THE 2016 BGS MEETING DATES:**

August 27th - Story Castle – Second Floor Main Building    October 22<sup>nd</sup> - Fourth Floor Auditorium Linn-Henley  
September 24<sup>th</sup> - Fourth Floor Auditorium Linn-Henley    November 12<sup>th</sup> - Fourth Floor Auditorium Linn-Henley

**PLEASE SEE SEPARATE ATTACHMENT REGARDING  
THE BGS LOCK-IN ON FRIDAY, JULY 22<sup>ND</sup>!**

## **Southerners' Migrations: Where Did They Go?**

5/11/2015, From the May/June 2015 Family Tree Magazine

By Sunny Jane Morton

<http://www.familytreemagazine.com/article/following-southerners-who-left>

Looking for Southern US ancestors who disappeared after the Civil War? Start your search in these common destinations of Southerners who left the South postwar.

In the years immediately following the Civil War, thousands of people left the South for friendlier or more prosperous skies. Where did they go? Top destinations included northern cities, the American West, Brazil and Liberia.

Many displaced black and white Southerners migrated to northern cities such as New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago in search of work. State and federal censuses and city directories (available at libraries and on genealogy data sites) can help you trace these moves. See our City Genealogy guides for specific cities.

Your missing kin also may have gone west. The Homestead Act of 1862 offered the best-yet deal for unsettled federal lands in the Midwest and West. Only 15,000 claims were established by the end of the Civil War, but then things picked up. Americans claimed more than 4.6 million acres in 1872 alone. Confederate veterans who signed loyalty oaths could claim land under the Homestead Act starting in 1867. African-Americans became eligible when the 14th amendment granted them citizenship in 1868.

After the cotton market crashed in 1873 and then Reconstruction ended, African-Americans began fleeing the South in earnest. Black homesteaders most famously went to Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. Lured by word of mouth and newsprint, the “Kansas Exodusters” became a grassroots migration of at least 15,000 black Americans by 1880. Thousands of black farmers also headed to Oklahoma (“Indian Territory”) and Texas. By 1900, African-American farmers owned more than 1.5 million acres.

Finding ancestors on the western frontier may seem daunting if you don’t know where to look, but a major resource can help: the General Land Office (GLO) Records. Here you can search federal land patents made to individuals dating back to 1810. Under Search Documents, enter a name and select Any State or narrow your search to a state and county. Click on digital images of search results, because the recipient’s residence, often named in the land patent, could help you identify an ancestor. You can then obtain the person’s application for the homestead from the National Archives. Note that not everyone who applied for federal land secured a patent.

Beginning in 1865, as many as 20,000 Southerners fled to Brazil, which still allowed slavery. The town of Americana (or Vila dos Americanos) near São Paulo is still known for its Confederate roots, though many migrants eventually returned to the United States. Visit the bilingual website about “Confederado” heritage. Several books and published cemetery records exist, too.

Some wealthier white Southerners looking to rebuild their fortunes headed to Europe, particularly England and France. Though those countries were officially neutral during the Civil War, both had business ties to the South because of their reliance on US cotton. A stay in Europe may not have been permanent. Check ship manifests, censuses, society sections of newspapers and other records for evidence of a return trip.

African-American colonization of Liberia, Africa, began in the early 1800s under the auspices of the American Colonization Society. Thousands of black Americans headed to this haven for refugees from the US slavery system. About a third of the Reconstruction-era emigrants were from the state of Georgia. The Library of Congress has the papers of the American Colonization Society.

## Research in Burned Counties

<https://colonialroots.com/2015/04/genealogy-201-research-in-burned-counties/>

Unless your ancestors were fairly recent immigrants to the United States, you will probably face research in burned counties in your hunt for ancestors. While the county records of Virginia burned during the Civil War come first to mind, there have been countless other fires in county courthouses and other record repositories. So how do we compensate for a loss of records? How do we conduct research in burned counties?

First of all, determine if your county was a burned county. Do not assume that your county was a burned county. It is possible the county is actually an extinct county—one which was dissolved or combined into another county. Research the history of the county in which you are researching to ensure you are looking in the right place for the records.

If you must research in burned counties, follow these principles to aid in your research.

Keep a research log - You are going to be doing some extensive research, so make sure you keep a research log. This log doesn't have to be anything fancy. Just keep track of which records have been searched, the date of your search, the repository that holds the records, the subject of your search, and the results of your search effort.

Have as much information about your ancestor as possible - Build a profile of the ancestor you are researching. If you use a family group sheet, fill out as much information as possible. If not, try to have all of the vital statistics (birth, marriage, death) of your ancestor. This profile should also contain information found in census records, military records, church records, and other records that are not normally kept in courthouses. Information obtained from a published family history (or oral family lore) should also be added to this ancestor profile.

Make sure all of the facts about your ancestor have been documented. Source citations should be written for each fact in your ancestor profile.

Write as you go - Take your research log and your ancestor profile/family group sheet to the repository when you research. Each time you look at a new record, update your research log. Any new information found about your ancestor should be entered into the ancestor profile or family group sheet. Do not wait to add these details to your research log and your ancestor profile.

Plan your research - Remember that each research "project" begins with a research question or objective. "Find everything possible about John Smith" is NOT a good research question. Your research question, and the plan for that question, should cover one event in a person's life. For example: "Who were the parents of John Smith, born circa 1782, King George County, Virginia?"

When planning your research, you will need to research substitutes for the records that are missing in those burned counties. A few substitutes include the following records.

For city dwellers, a city directory may provide information about your ancestor. This is especially helpful for researching when census records are missing. Church records may hold clues about your ancestor's marriage if the courthouse records are not available. Newspaper records often contain information about probate of estates and other legal notices. In the absence of county probate records, newspapers can fill in the missing details. You may also find birth, marriage, and death information in newspapers. Land sales may also be reported in newspaper records.

If wills have been lost, but land records are still available, check the deeds. Many deeds have a clause containing previous transactions which identify the purchasers and sellers of the land. Additionally, if land was inherited, that is often noted in the deed. Also keep in mind that after significant record loss at a courthouse, county residents were often asked to bring deeds in to be re-recorded. Remember, the original deed usually stayed with the land owner. The deed books contain a clerk's copy of the original deed.

Tax records often show land transfers. The year of death may also be ascertained from tax records. Some tax records list households in geographic order, so neighbors can often be identified. If tax records are available, they can be used as substitutes for deeds, death records, and census records.

Published family histories may contain information that cannot be located elsewhere. The caveat when using family histories is that an unsourced history may not be reliable since the reader cannot verify the information.

## Pioneer Trails Newsletter

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Expand your research - Include surrounding counties in your research plan. Your ancestor may have participated in a land transaction with a person from an adjoining county. Your ancestor may have married in a different county, or his/her will may have been probated in a different county.

Explore the collateral relatives of your ancestor. Researching the records of collateral relatives may yield results for your ancestor from a burned county. Also study the associates and neighbors of your ancestors. Researching those who lived and associated with your ancestor may prove fruitful in finding details about your ancestor.

Visit the county's historical society or genealogical society, if applicable. There may be resources there that cannot be found elsewhere. Check the state archives as well. Some records may have been deposited there. State historical societies may hold manuscripts that could shed light on your ancestors. Government documents, usually held at a prominent university within the state, may also provide a glimpse into your ancestor's life. People have written their congressman ever since Congress was convened. Your ancestor may appear in a congressional record. Private acts were passed for citizens who requested relief or some other action by their government. Most states list private acts with the laws passed for a given year. Many of these old statute books are available online.

Be tenacious when you research in burned counties Like a bulldog on a bone, be persistent. Don't give up easily. Using smart research strategies can overcome record loss.

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### **When The Records Are Gone...**

Your favorite Tennessee genealogist, Arlene Eakle

<http://tnblog.arleneeakle.com/2009/04/13/when-the-records-are-gone/>

Step One. Collect and summarize family sources. These constitute the beginning facts upon which your genealogy research will be based—these are your “knowns.” Include siblings, parents, spouses, and family namesakes in your collecting, so you can use this “pivotal” data to help identify the ancestor you need.

Step Two. Do a complete census search where family members reside: both where you know they lived and where their places of origin are alleged to be. If census records are also lost, use census substitutes like tax rolls, militia lists and oaths of allegiance, newspaper abstracts, etc. Note which family members are found in specific households or neighborhoods. And who they are associated with.

Step Three. Draft a time line of residence in each place. Note who else matches those same time periods, so you can research the whole group together. Try out the Google online time line feature. You may be amazed at how much loose information is now retrievable from the internet about individual ancestors.

Step Four. Begin your searches in printed sources with every-name indexes. Those counties that are badly burned often have the most printed records as genealogists strive for access to whatever is left. Then check re-constructed or re-recorded records—those richest in proof of relationships and thus, lineage.

Step Five. SEARCH IT ALL! Surrounding counties, especially those along the borders including parent counties. Privately held collections including title and abstract companies in cities and towns. Other courthouses (some counties have more than one). Other levels of jurisdiction including state and federal records. Appeals courts where local briefs are filed with summaries of the evidence now lost. State legislative sources—watch for private laws that apply to your ancestor only. Records printed before or between fires and other disasters. Records copied for and by genealogists and local historians with grandiose plans to research all the families or all the towns in the county.

## Alabama's Burned Courthouses

By: Mildred Stinson Brown

<http://algw.org/butler/history/burned.htm>

Approximately one-half of all the counties in Alabama have had their courthouse to burn. Some of them were burned during the Civil War era of 1860-1865. Some have burned as many as four times. The destruction of courthouses greatly affects genealogists in every way. Not only are these historic structures torn from our lives, so are the records they housed: marriage, wills, probate, land records, and others. Once destroyed they are lost forever. Even if they have been placed on microfilm, computers and film burn too. The most heartbreaking side of this is the fact that many of our courthouses are destroyed at the hands of arsonist.

List of Burned Courthouses
• Butler - Greenville - 1853
• Calhoun - Anniston - 1861, 1895
• Cherokee - Fort Payne - 1882, 1895
• Chilton - Clanton - 1870
• Choctaw - Butler - 1859, 1871
• Clay - Ashland - 1875
• Coffee - Elba - 1851, 1863
• Conecuh - Evergreen - 1868, 1875, 1885, 1895
• Covington - Andalusia - 1895
• Crenshaw - Luverne - 1898
• Dale - Ozark - 1869, 1884
• Escambia - Brewton - 1868
• Fayette - Fayette - 1866
• Franklin - Russellville - 1890
• Geneva - Geneva - 1898
• Greene - Eutaw 1868
• Jackson - Scottsboro - 1864
• Jefferson - Birmingham - 1870
• Lamar - Vernon - 1866
• Lawrence - Moulton - 1859
• Limestone - Athens - 1862
• Marengo - Linden - 1848, 1965
• Marion - Hamilton - 1866
• Mobile - Mobile - 1823, 1840, 1872
• Morgan - Decatur - 1925, 1938
• Pickens - Carrollton - 1876
• Pike - Troy - 1828
• Randolph - Wedowee - 1896
• Sumter - Livingston - 1901
• Walker - Jasper - 1865, 1877, 1896, 1932
• Winston - Double Springs - 1891

**BIRMINGHAM**

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An Immense Steel Plant to be Erected  
Near Birmingham.

Pittsburg capitalists recently purchased property in the vicinity of Five Mile creek, near Birmingham, Ala. Their representatives have been locating a site for a new steel mill to be superior to anything in the south, the furnaces being constructed on the same identical plan as those at the great plant at Homestead, admitted the most successful steel making plant in the world.

The steel mill will be the largest and most modern in the country, and will be located at Boyles, five miles from Birmingham. In addition to the steel plant furnaces are expected to soon follow the announced determination of the purchasers some time ago being now about to be materialized. Several millions of dollars will probably be expended in developing this property.

### NEWS FROM 1904

The contract for making the iron casts of Vulcan has been let to the Birmingham Steel and Iron company, the new organization which recently bought the plant of the Hood Machine and Foundry company.

## NEW INDUSTRIES

ALABAMA.

Birmingham—\$30,000 macaroni factory.

W. Bandy Drug Co.

The Age-Herald of a few days ago, says: "Last night a number of gentlemen from Bessemer and other points tendered an elegant banquet at the Hillman hotel in Birmingham to Mr. Sam Lefkovits, of Bessemer, who will leave in a few days to visit his old home in Hungary and for a three months tour of Europe. The banquet was a most delightful affair, the party remaining at the table until a late hour." Max Lefkovits, of this city, was one of the banqueters.

**The past is not dead. It isn't even past. --William Faulkner**  
*Scott A. Martin, BGS Newsletter Editor*

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