



THE BIRMINGHAM GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Founded April 15, 1959

www.bgsal.org

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

THE PIONEER TRAILS NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2018

General Meeting for April: The Birmingham Genealogical Society will meet at 2:00 p.m. on **Saturday, April 28th** 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 as Bob Davis, Senior Professor of History and Director of Genealogy Program of Wallace State Community College, Hanceville, Alabama, presents: “Summary of Georgia Land Grant and Land Lottery Records.” The state of Georgia used a unique lottery system to distribute land between the years of 1805 to 1833. There were eight lotteries held in total. Although a few other states tried a lottery system, none was to the scale of Georgia’s implementation. In most cases, the land to be distributed had been part of the Creek or Cherokee nation. **Please join us!**

Research & Genealogical Tips

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

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

Official Does Not Mean Accurate: Just because a record is “official” does not mean that every detail it contains is correct. A death certificate probably has the date of death and burial correct, but the date and place of birth could easily be incorrect. And there is always the chance that a death record has the wrong date of death or place of burial. An official record does not guarantee the information is accurate. Remember that in most records, the information is only as accurate as the informant and that in most records information submitted came from someone’s mind and was not verified with another source or official record.

Non-Resident Landowners: Not everyone who owned land lived on it. Deeds of sale and acquisition may indicate where the property owner actually lived. Some property tax records (if still extant) may indicate properties that were owned by non-residents. Heirs may own property even after they have left an area and, in the early days of settlement, speculators may acquire larger amounts of property in hopes of turning a profit.

Can’t Find the Deed of Acquisition: If your ancestor owned property, he somehow acquired it. If there is no apparent deed for him in the index of records, consider the following possibilities: (1) your relative inherited the property and there was no actual deed of acquisition—*the will served as the deed* (2) your ancestor’s name was spelled really incorrectly on the deed—*minor spelling issues aside, this was usually not the case* (3) your ancestor acquired the property via a patent—which somehow never was recorded (4) your ancestor’s deed simply did not get in the index (5) the county boundary changed and the acquisition records are recorded in the county where the property was located at the time it was acquired (6) the deed never was recorded (7) you overlooked it in the index

The past is not dead. It isn’t even past. --William Faulkner

Scott A. Martin, BGS Newsletter Editor

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The Georgia Land Lottery

Contributed by Jim Gigantino, University of Georgia,

Between 1805 and 1833, the state of Georgia conducted eight land lotteries (one each in 1805, 1807, 1820, 1821, 1827, and 1833 and two in 1832) in which public lands in the interior of the state were dispersed to small yeoman farmers (i.e., farmers who cultivate their own land) based on a system of eligibility and chance. During the twenty-eight years in which the lottery operated, Georgia sold approximately three-quarters of the state to about 100,000 families and individuals for minuscule amounts of money. As a colony, Georgia was controlled by an elite group of aristocratic planters. Rice and indigo thrived in the coastal region around Augusta and Savannah, allowing a few men to gain land, slaves, and wealth while leaving the majority of the white population poor and politically weak. The turmoil of the Revolutionary War (1775-83) and the British occupation of Savannah and Augusta drastically affected the plantation economy, decreasing the political and economic power of the colonial elite and increasing the influence of the small yeoman planter. The Georgia Constitution of 1777, which reflected the idea of the common man controlling the government, embraced this power shift. An increase in the demand for land by common farmers spurred westward migration. After the Revolution, Georgia claimed territory as far west as the Mississippi River. This enormous region allowed the state government to pay those who had fought against the British with land grants. Heads of households in Georgia could receive 200 acres of land or more if the household included family members or slaves. Yet by the 1780s speculators and legislators were authorizing more land for homesteading than was available. The speculative fever came to an end in 1795, when the legislature passed the Yazoo Act, which sold almost 60 percent of the land in present-day Alabama and Mississippi to four companies for \$500,000. The four companies and their allies engaged in bribery to gain the contract, and because of this corruption, Georgia ended the unregulated system of land speculation in favor of a lottery system to dispose of public lands. The first land lottery, held in 1805, was authorized by the legislature on May 11, 1803, and involved 490-acre plots in Wayne County and 202.5-acre plots in Baldwin and Wilkinson counties. For a fee of four cents an acre, common Georgians could amass a sizeable land holding. In each lottery eligible participants (families consisting of a husband, wife, and at least one child; every widow with children; and every white male who had lived in Georgia for at least one year) applied to the state, which entered their names on sheets of paper deposited in one drum while the lot numbers of the eligible properties were placed in another drum. The number of times a participant's name was entered into the first drum was dictated by age, marital status, war service, successful participation in previous lotteries, and years of Georgia residence. The other seven land lotteries operated on the same principles as the first. For an average price of seven cents an acre, Georgians gradually moved westward onto land previously owned by Native Americans. The acquisition of this land intensified after Georgia and the U.S. government signed the Compact of 1802. In that compact Georgia agreed to relinquish claims to Alabama and Mississippi; in exchange, the federal government paid the state \$1.25 million, which was used to settle disputed Yazoo land claims, and promised to remove the remaining Creek Indians from Georgia's borders. Andrew Jackson's victory over the Creeks during the War of 1812 (1812-15) helped effectively to eliminate the Creeks from the state. The 1805, 1807, 1820, 1821, and 1827 lotteries involved Creek lands; the 1820 lottery involved Creek and Cherokee lands; and the two 1832 lotteries and one in 1833 involved Cherokee lands. Beginning in 1832, Cherokee territory in present-day Bartow, Cherokee, Cobb, Floyd, Forsyth, Gilmer, Lumpkin, Murray, Paulding, and Union counties entered into the lottery system and was dispersed to thousands of Georgia families. A separate lottery was held in 1832 to distribute forty-acre "gold districts" for \$10 each in the same Cherokee area. The land acquired on the frontier by the lotteries was originally used for tobacco cultivation, but with the introduction of cotton and the innovation of the cotton gin, agriculture shifted to large-scale cotton production. The need for labor to toil on these plantations across the state called for more and more slaves; by 1820, slaves made up 44 percent of Georgia's population. Therefore, the land lottery not only increased the landholdings of common Georgians but also increased their ability to become slaveholders and enter the planter class. The final land lottery was conducted in 1833 to dispense with the remaining territory from the 1832 lotteries. But the system had dramatically changed Georgia so that aristocrats no longer held political and economic domination over the state as they had before the Revolution. On average, Georgia planters held less land than their contemporaries in other southern states, reflecting the power shift from large landholding aristocrats to yeoman farmers.

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Look for Missing Marriages

<http://www.genealogyintime.com/GenealogyResources/Articles/look-for-missing-marriages-page1.html>

Looking at historical records, it is not always easy to identify an ancestor who has been married more than once. Yet, it is one of the most common reasons for misconstrued family trees. Missing a marriage can often mean missing an entire branch of your family. It can also result in assigning descendants to the wrong parent. Are there any clues that can help you identify missing marriages?

Historically, the most common reason for a person to remarry would be the death of a spouse. One hundred years ago, people simply did not live as long as they do today. The most common reasons for an early death were accident, war, disease and childbirth. The unexpected death of a spouse was further compounded by the lack of a social safety net. This often resulted in the surviving spouse having to remarry quickly for economic and social reasons. When life expectancy was just 35, it was not uncommon for someone to be remarried within a couple of months.

There are several possible sources of information that can serve as evidence of a marriage:

- A marriage license issued by a government.
- A civil marriage certificate.
- A marriage registration from a church.
- A parish record of a marriage.
- A marriage licence application.
- A marriage contract (similar to today's prenuptial agreement).
- A marriage bann (announcement of an intention to get married, typically issued in a church).
- A marriage bond (a statement testifying that there is no legal impediment to a marriage).
- A newspaper announcement of an upcoming marriage.
- A newspaper article on a wedding.
- A wedding invitation.
- A wedding program.
- A wedding guest book or album.

When researching your ancestors, there are several signals that can indicate a potential missing marriage in your family tree:

- Look for evidence of any of the types of records listed above.
- Look for evidence a female ancestor received a war pension or some other type of government pension. Pensions to women were usually only granted to widows.
- If you know the date when your ancestor was married, consider looking backward in time through local death records. You may come across evidence of a prior spouse.

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- Look at the distribution of the ages of the children of your ancestor. This can be done from census records and other historical sources. Most families tend to have children clustered fairly close to one another. If there is a noticeable gap in the ages of the children (perhaps a couple of children close in age, a gap of a couple of years and then a few more children close in age), then this can be an indication of a blended family where one of the parents has remarried. [Just be aware that some early censuses (such as in England) rounded the age of children.]

- Carefully read obituaries of related family members for mention of previously unknown spouses.

- Check census records and electoral rolls (between censuses) to see who else lived at the same address as your ancestor. Be aware that some census records do not clearly state the relationships of household members.

- Check the gravesites on both sides of your ancestor. The neighboring graves could be a spouse that died years earlier. A potential spouse would typically be someone of the opposite gender born around the same time as your ancestor.

- Research your ancestor in local newspapers for mention of unknown companions.

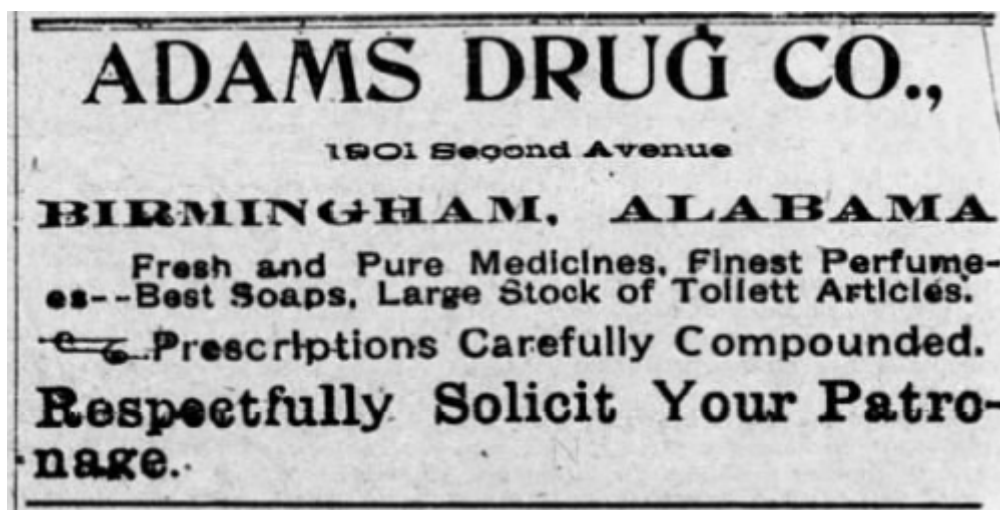
- Check land records and court documents. Deaths can often trigger the transfer of land and other property through wills and related documents. Wills typically list the names of spouses and other family members.

- Take the time to read family diaries and historic letters. They can provide good leads to previously unknown family members.

- Look for indications that your ancestor moved for no obvious reason. People often moved when they remarried.



In summary, always consider the possibility that your ancestor may have been married more than once. Genealogists constructing family trees often overlook this possibility. However, it could be the cause and potential solution to many problems. The clues discussed in this article will help point you in the right direction.



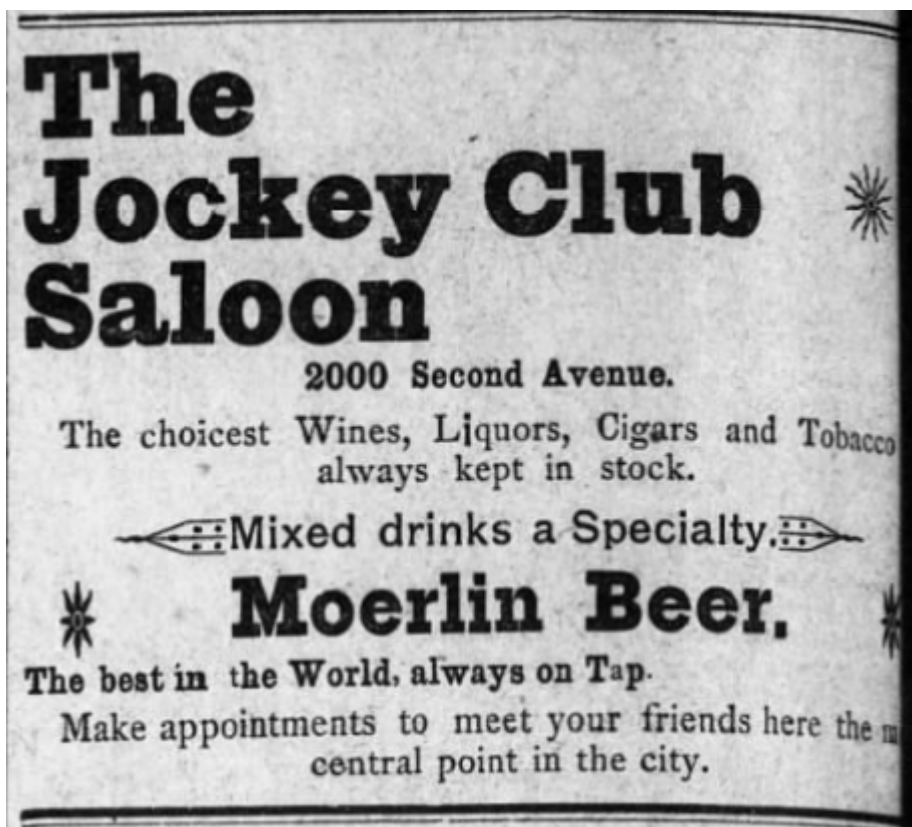
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The Birmingham Rifles, Company K, 1st Alabama Infantry Regiment, United States Volunteers

Contributed by Kenneth H. Robison II @ Johnnyreb6@aol.com

The "Birmingham Rifles" were organized as an Alabama Militia Unit in Birmingham, Jefferson County, Alabama. With the end of the American Civil War in 1865 the Militia of the southern states was disallowed until 1876, at which time the Company was reorganized as part of the State Militia, which was designated as the Alabama "State Troops" in 1881. After the reorganization the Company took part in several public disturbances including the Birmingham Riot of 1894, and at Huntsville in June of 1897 in response to a lynch mob that was going to take action against three colored prisoners. In 1897 the Alabama "State Troops" designation was again changed and the Company now was part of the 3rd Infantry Regiment of the "Alabama National Guard."

In May of 1898 the Company Volunteered it's services and reported to the rendezvous with ninety-seven (97) men, and the Company was mustered into United States service on May 9th, 1898, at Camp Clark in Mobile as Company K of the 1st Alabama Infantry Regiment, United States Volunteers, for two years service. The Company moved with the Regiment from Camp Clark in Mobile to Miami, Florida, on June 25th, 1898, and remained there until August 12th, when it was transferred to Camp Cuba Libre in Jacksonville, Florida, arriving on the 13th. They remained in that Camp until September 13th when the Regiment returned to Birmingham, Alabama, to prepare to be mustered out of United States service; upon arrival in Birmingham they were given a Thirty (30) Day furlough. Following there return from furlough the Company was mustered out of United States service with the rest of the Regiment on October 31st, 1898, at its Camp near East Lake, Alabama.



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SOME INTERESTING BURIALS AT OAK HILL CEMETERY BIRMINGHAM'S OLDEST AND MOST DISTINGUISHED CEMETERY (Edited from the Oak Hill website)

- Rucker Agee, banker and map collector
- Arthur M. Brown, pioneering African-American surgeon
- John Burford, Revolutionary War veteran
- Henry Caldwell, physician, president of Elyton Land Company, banker
- Dr. William Davis, pioneer gynecologist
- Ellen Pratt DeBardeleben, daughter of Daniel Pratt and wife of Henry F. DeBardeleben
- Henry DeBardeleben, industrialist and developer of Bessemer
- Frank Dixon, Governor of Alabama
- Christian Enslen, founder Jefferson County Savings Bank
- Robert Green, a Birmingham founder
- Robert Henley, First mayor of Birmingham, editor of the *Birmingham Sun*
- Walter Henley, coal baron, banker, philanthropist—Linn-Henley Trust
- Andrew Johnston, railroad officer, industrialist, founder of North Birmingham
- Dr. Mortimer Jordan, Jr (1844-1889), health care pioneer
- George C. Kelley, helped develop East Birmingham
- Charles Linn, industrialist and financier
- Alberto Martin, a Birmingham founder
- Richard Powell McAnally, first male child born in Birmingham
- John Milner, railroad engineer, surveyor of Birmingham
- Willis Milner, engineer of Cahaba Pumping Station
- William Mudd, attorney, judge, a Birmingham founder, builder of Arlington
- Frances Nabers, farm owner, father of William Nabers
- Frank O'Brien, manufacturer, mayor, industrialist, developer and opera-house owner
- A. C. Oxford, pioneering photographer
- A. H. Parker, educator, namesake of A. H. Parker High School
- Thomas Peters, a Birmingham founder
- Edmund W. Rucker, Civil War general, namesake of Fort Rucker, builder of the Walter Agee residence
- James Sloss, railroad magnate, founder of Sloss Furnace Company
- William H. Smith, (1868-1870) Governor of Alabama
- Sylvester Steele, a Birmingham founder
- Edward M. Tutwiler, railroad and mining engineer, developer
- William Walker, a Birmingham founder
- James Ware, a Birmingham founder
- Thomas Watts, namesake of Watts Building
- Louise Wooster, famed Madam, heroin of the 1873 cholera epidemic
- Benjamin "Pink" Worthington, plantation owner, a Birmingham founder
- F. B. Yeilding, founder Yeilding department store chain
- Peter Zinszer, merchant

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