

## You Need the Marriage

By Allin Kingsbury

I found a family tree on the Ancestry.com that had the family I needed. It listed six children and the father and mother, but there was no marriage date listed. The family had a link to the 1910 census, but it appears that the person who submitted the family tree had not looked at the data in the census. The first problem was that the mother had been married for only six years, making the marriage date about a year after the birth of the third child. The other problem was that the census data indicated that mother of the first three children was born in a different state than the mother of the latter three children. If the author of the family tree had worked a little harder, she could have found the marriage records. Either of the two records would have exposed the error. The first name of the bride of the first marriage was quite different from the wife in the 1910 census. The date on the second marriage record is well after the births of the first three children. If both marriages had been found, a clearer picture of the family history would have been available. Also a look at the 1900 census would have supplied the time of the first marriage and the first name of the first wife.

The example illustrates the importance of marriage data. The marriage defines the beginning of a family, and the marriage data helps to identify the two individuals who become the parents of the parents. Marriage information is available from many sources, and many of them are now available on the Internet. There is little excuse for not finding and using marriage records.

### Civil Marriage Records

Marriage records were usually kept by the county in the United States, often from the time the county was first organized. Each state had different laws regarding the information to be recorded. Some states like Pennsylvania did not require marriage records to be kept for a long time. The medical profession pushed for improvement in the vital records because they were useful in fighting communicable diseases and improving public health. The states began keeping vital statistics, beginning in 1800s and for some states, not keeping vital records until some time in the 1900s. Death and birth records came first and marriage records often came later.

State marriage records consist of three kinds of records. The marriage certificates, which are considered legal proof of marriage are available to the marriage partners and close family members. In some states, they are available to the public, but only after a set number of years have elapsed. In Alabama, all certificates, regardless of date, are available to anyone.

The second marriage record is the application. This record is less-used than the certificates. A part of this record is filled out by the person performing the marriage.

The third marriage record is the marriage index which is maintained by the state. It is used to find the certificates, but is also used by researchers because it is the most broadly available record.

A fourth record that may or may not exist is a state-wide index of county marriage records that cover the time before the

### May Seminar

On 8 May 2010, you can learn the lessons that Barry J. Ewell experienced in his family history research as he presents "The 20 Lessons Family Historians Need to Know." Our May meeting is an all-day seminar. There is no admission charge or advanced registration. You will not want to miss this event.



state began recording marriages. These indexes were usually done by the state or by contractors hired for the task. The quality of these indexes is usually good. The user should check for missing counties because the records of these counties may have been unavailable.

Another similar record is a transcription of the civil records. This is a copy of the essential information in marriages made by an individual or individuals who used the data. Sometimes the data is limited to specified years or to specific surnames of interest to the individual. The transcription could also be a project by a historical or local genealogical society, made for the purpose of genealogical research. If a transcription of marriage records is found, it is wise to learn how and why the transcription was made, and how complete the records are.

### Church Records

Many religious denominations kept excellent marriage records while others did not. On the American frontier, there were

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also individual circuit riders who conducted worship services and performed marriages for the scattered pioneers that had moved into the wilderness. Some of the circuit riders recorded their marriages and other events in journals. Some of these records are preserved, mostly by historical societies.

Church records are difficult to find because few are in central archives or repositories. The religion of the person must be known to find the records and for those living in the United States, religion was seldom recorded in public documents. Religion was likely to remain the same from generation to generation, making the odds in favor of looking for records with the denomination of an earlier or later generation.

Churches recorded the marriage and also, in earlier years, churches also recorded intentions to marriage or banns. These were recorded in the case where one of the parties was from another parish, therefore unknown to the local community. A bann is not a marriage record, and without the confirmation with a marriage record or of children born to the couple, one must assume that perhaps the marriage did not take place.

In England and Scotland and throughout the other European countries, church records are usually the only source of marriage data before civil registration began during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As nonconformist churches began to appear, English law required all marriages be performed by the Church of England for nonconformists. This made it easier to find information about nonconformist marriages before the law was rescinded.

### New England Town Records

Towns in New England kept minutes and recorded marriages in these minutes. The records do not have all marriages, but most marriages are recorded. These records have been collected by genealogists in a few of the states such as Connecticut and New Hampshire, making it possible to search marriages for the whole state. Almost all of these records have been published and made available on the Internet.

### Newspaper Records

Many old newspapers from the 19<sup>th</sup> and

20<sup>th</sup> centuries have been preserved either as paper copies or microfilm. Recently, there have been many projects to digitize these papers. Some are available on subscription sites and some are available free on the Internet. The sources are numerous, and can be found by a search using Google or comparable search engine. Newspaper sources can also be found on [www.cyndislist.com](http://www.cyndislist.com).

There are three types of records in newspapers that are of interest to genealogists. There may be an engagement party or announcement. More common is a marriage announcement which would be immediately after the marriage. The third possibility of marriage information is an article about the wedding mentioning guests and family members. The latter is likely to be a luxury reserved for families with social status.

### Census

In the United States Census, specifically in the 1900, 1910, and 1930 censuses, there is enough information to calculate the year of marriage. They either have the age of marriage or the number of years married. It is important to look at all these census records that have marriage information. There are instances where the marriage data of the husband and that of the wife produce different marriage dates. This is an indication that either the husband or wife or both are on their second marriage.

### Family Records

Most families kept records of births, deaths, and marriages. Family Bibles were a common place to keep these records in the nineteenth century and earlier. These records were often passed on to younger generations and may remain in the family. The old manuscripts or family Bibles may be donated to genealogical societies, museums, historical societies, or lineage societies. A few of these organizations have significant collections of family Bibles.

### Indirect Sources

When no marriage data has been found, there are some sources that can give some information about marriages. The records may not include a marriage date or place, but do provide proof of a marriage. These include:

**Divorce Records:** A divorce record or an entry in a divorce index usually have the date and place of the marriage and the maiden name of the bride. Nevada, considered a Mecca for divorce, may reveal details of a marriage from another state.

**Voter Registration:** California voter registration records are available on Ancestry.com, and other state records may be available. The registration lists the names of registered voters living at each address. The record will give the first name and middle initial of the wife.

**City Directories and Phone Directories:** Like voter registration, directories will usually list the first name of the wife. Neither record can be considered proof of marriage. After all, a male and female living at an address could be brother and sister instead of a male couple.

**Birth and Death Records:** Birth records usually give the name of the father and the maiden name of the mother. Thus the birth record of a child can give the name of both parents, hopefully including the maiden name of the mother. A birth index may not name the parents but often has the name of the mother. If the first name of the mother is obtained from another source, her full name is known.

The death certificate usually includes the name of the spouse, but it is limited to the knowledge of the informant. Of course, if there were several marriages, the death certificate would list the last marriage.

### Obituaries

Most obituaries mention the date and place of the marriage of the deceased. The accuracy of the information depends on the knowledge of the person writing the obituary.

### Internet Sources

During the past few years many sources have become available on the Internet. U. S. GenWeb, one of the earliest genealogy sites, is a huge collection of county sites which have collected and published local records of interest to genealogists. Many of the county sites have marriage records. The quality of the information varies. Some of the data is transcribed, and varies in quality as to the skill of the transcriber and the care taken to check the transcription.

Sometimes there is original data or a scanned image of the data.

Table I lists sources of state-wide marriage data found on the Internet. There are also many sources of county records on the Internet that are too numerous to list. The source with the most state-wide marriage record collections available is Ancestry.com.

try.com. It is a subscription site. The other sources are free.

In many states, marriage records are kept by the county, and in the remaining states, marriage records were kept by the county until statewide registration began. USGenWeb has made many marriage records available online. This Web site is broken down into thousands of county sites. The

site for the county of interest may have county marriage records posted online. GenWeb is a free genealogy site. Also, a Google search for county marriage records for the state and county of interest may find other sites which have marriage records for the county.

**Table I. Sources for State Death Records and Indexes**

State	State Certificates	Online Sources	Time Covered	Comment
Alabama	From 1936	Ancestry Ancestry Ancestry	1800-1969 To 1825 1809-1920	Marriages Marriages Marriages
Alaska	From 1950	none		
Arizona	From county	Ancestry	1864-1982	Marriages
Arkansas	From 1917	Ancestry Ancestry Ancestry Ancestry FamilySearch	1933-1939 To 1850 1820-1949 1851-1900 1837-1957	Marriages Marriages Marriages Marriages County Marriages
California	From Jul 1905	Ancestry Ancestry	1960-1985 1850-1877	Index Marriages
Colorado	From county	Ancestry Dept. of Public Health	1859-1900 1900-1939	Marriages Certificates
Connecticut	From 1897	Ancestry Ancestry Ancestry	To 1800 To 1850 1959-2001	Marriages Marriages Marriages
Delaware	From 1947	Ancestry Ancestry	1806-1935 1744-1912	Marriages Marriages
Dist. Of Columbia	From 1811	Ancestry Ancestry	To 1825 1826-1850	Marriages Marriages
Florida	From 1927	Ancestry Ancestry	1822-1875 1927-2001	Marriages Marriages
Georgia	From county	Ancestry Ancestry	1699-1944 To 1850	Marriages Marriages
Hawaii	From 1896	none		
Idaho	From 1947	Ancestry	1842-1996	Marriages
Illinois	From county	Ancestry Ancestry Ancestry Illinois Marriage Project Statewide Marriage Index	1851-1900 To 1850 1790-1860 1793-1900 1763-1900	Marriages Marriages Marriages Marriages Index

Indiana	From 1958	Ancestry Ancestry Ancestry FamilySearch	1800-1841 To 1850 1802-1892 1811-1959	Marriages Marriages Marriages Marriages
Iowa	From 1916	Ancestry Ancestry	To 1850 1851-1900	Marriages Marriages
Kansas	From 1913	Ancestry	1854-1873	Marriages
Kentucky	From 1958	Ancestry Ancestry Ancestry Ancestry Ancestry Kentucky Vital Record Index	1973-1999 1852-1914 1797-1865 1851-1900 1802-1850 1973-1993	Index Marriages Marriages Marriages Marriages Index
Louisiana	From parish records	Ancestry Ancestry Ancestry	1851-1900 To 1850 1718-1925	Marriages Marriages Marriages
Maine	From 1923	Ancestry Ancestry	1892-1996 To 1875	Marriages Marriages
Maryland	From county	Ancestry Ancestry	1655-1850 1667-1899	Marriages Marriages
Massachusetts	From 1906	FamilySearch	1841-1915	Marriages
Michigan	From 1867	Ancestry Ancestry FamilySearch	To 1850 1851-1875 1868-1925	Marriages Marriages Marriages
Minnesota	From county	Ancestry	1958-2009	Marriages
Mississippi	From 1926	Ancestry Ancestry Ancestry Ancestry	To 1825 1776-1935 1826-1900 1826-1950	Marriages Marriages Marriages Marriages
Missouri	From county	Ancestry Ancestry Ancestry Ancestry Ancestry	1805-2002 Bef 1850 Bef 1840 1766-1983 1851-1900	Marriages Marriages Marriages Marriages Marriages
Montana	From county	none		
Nebraska	From 1909	Ancestry	1856-1898	Marriages
Nevada	From county	Ancestry Ancestry	1956-2005 1860-1987	Index Marriages
New Hampshire	From 1883	none		
New Jersey	From 1878	Ancestry Ancestry	1884-1895 1605-1800	Marriages Marriages

New Mexico	From county	Ancestry	1727-1900	Marriages
New York	From 1881	none	1600-1784	Marriages
North Carolina	From 1962	Ancestry Ancestry	1741-2004 1741-1868	Marriages Marriage Bonds
North Dakota	From Jul 1925	none		
Ohio	From county	Ancestry	1803-1900	Marriages
Oklahoma	From county	none		
Oregon	From 1906	Ancestry	1906-1920	Marriages
Pennsylvania	From county	Ancestry	To 1810	Marriages
Rhode Island	From 1899	Ancestry	1630-1930	Marriages
South Carolina	From Jul 1950	Ancestry	1641-1965	Marriages
South Dakota	From 1905	Ancestry	1905-1949	Marriages
Tennessee	From county	Ancestry Ancestry Ancestry	1780-2002 1851-1900 To 1825	Marriages Marriages Marriages
Texas	From county	Ancestry Ancestry Texas Marriage & Divorce Records Texas Marriage Search Engine	1814-1909 1966-2002 1966-2007 1966-2008	Marriages Marriages Downloadable Files Marriages
Utah	From county	none		
Vermont	From 1955	Ancestry Ancestry Ancestry	1909-2008 1981-1984 1989-2001	Marriages Index Index
Virginia	From 1918	Ancestry Ancestry Ancestry	1740-1850 To 1800 1851-1929	Marriages Marriages Marriages
Washington	From 1968	Ancestry FamilySearch	1802-1902 1858-1950	Marriages County Marriages
West Virginia	From 1964	Ancestry FamilySearch	1863-1900 1853-1970	Marriages Marriages
Wisconsin	From county	Ancestry Ancestry Ancestry	To 1907 1973-1997 1835-1900	Marriages Marriages Marriages
Wyoming	From May 1941	none		

## Genealogy Blogs

Blogs are a popular variation of a newsletter for Internet users. They come in all shapes, styles and sizes. They are a recent invention, but the popularity of blogs has led to a significant increase in their quantity. The blog is designed to be scanned. Old

material usually remains on the blog for months, and perhaps years. Therefore, a visitor can scan the blog as often as seems necessary and information of interest can be read, skipping the items that are not of interest. If the material is of further interest, it can be collected in a document and saved for future use.

For the genealogist, there is a huge array of genealogy blogs. Some are full of research tips about where to find information or how to solve research problems. Some blogs are about technology and how to use the latest hardware and software to good advantage. A growing number of genealogy blogs are about DNA and how it is used to answer questions about family history.

Many genealogy blogs specialize by covering a narrow subject in depth. Single surname blogs have news and research results about a single family, usually with an unusual surname or descendants of a single ancestor. Others are about research in a specific locality which may be a town or city or perhaps an entire county or even a country. There are blogs about family pictures, genealogical repositories, document preservation and genealogical societies and associations. And should be frustrated by your genealogical problems, there are blogs which collect and publish genealogical humor.

You can find the blogs that are of interest to you using a search engine site such as Google. You will get a lot of hits. You will find a large list of blogs on [www.cyndislist.com/blogs.htm](http://www.cyndislist.com/blogs.htm). This site has blogs listed by category with links to the blogs and a short description of each blog. Another source for blogs is found at <http://blogfinder.genealogue.com/>. The home page of the site lists dozens of categories, and a click on a category takes the user to a list of blogs with short descriptions and links to the blog sites. The category, "Professional Genealogists," has a list of 52 blogs. "Photography Blogs" has a list of 32 blogs. A very narrow category, "Polish Genealogy Blogs," which lists blogs about research on Polish ancestors included 15 blogs.

You may prefer to go to a site titled "25 Most Popular Genealogy Blogs of 2009." The site describes the 26 most popular blogs because there is a tie for number 25. The site has links to each blog to make it easy to quickly scan the blog. The top 25 sites are populated with some of the well-known writers and speakers in the genealogy field and are probably on the list because the information is accurate, well-written and useful. You must be the judge.

If a person were to monitor all genealogy blogs, it could turn into a full-time project. A few carefully-selected blogs can keep a person well informed about what is happening in the genealogical community and about events and resources that can be of help when engaged in research.

### Memorable Epitaphs

All you that please these lines to read,  
It will cause a tender heart to bleed  
I was murdered upon the fell,  
And by a Man I knew full well.  
By bread and butter which he laid,  
I, being harmless, was betrayed.  
I hope he will rewarded be,  
That laid the poison there for me.

*From the headstone of Robert Baxter  
Knaresdell, England (1796)*

## Stranger Than Fiction: The Case of the Partly Missing Cemetery

Chris Gerrett has uncovered a perplexing mystery. She is a resident of Fairview Park, Ohio and a genealogist. Her research has taken her to the Fairview Park Cemetery many times. That is the name on the sign over the entrance to the city-owned cemetery, but the name is wrong. The official records say it is the Fairview Cemetery, and during its early days, it was the Rockport Cemetery. The cemetery was founded in 1830 when Francis Granger, president of the Connecticut Land Company, donated the parcel of land for the cemetery.

Chris estimates that she has spent about 200 hours at the cemetery doing her research. She uncovered the mystery when she discovered the burials of 45 individuals, who, according to the cemetery records, were buried in Section one between 1889 and 1905. The problem is that there is no section one. The oldest map of the cemetery, drawn in 1916 has no section one, nor do any of the later maps. She has looked for grave markers with names of the 45 missing individuals, and was unable to find a single individual from the list. She would love to know what happened between 1905 and 1916 to make the 45 individuals disappear.

Chris Gerrett is not one to cry "Wolf." Her sterling credentials include those of a competent genealogist and a cemetery restoration specialist. She has gone out of her way to help the cemetery by taking more than 3,000 photos of the tombstones and has identified several military veterans. She plans to see that the military graves are properly marked. A request from a family member or from the cemetery is sufficient to have the govern-

ment place grave markers on the graves.

Chris recently met with the mayor of Fairview Park to share what she had learned about the cemetery. She then volunteered to restore 10 broken headstones before the centennial celebration of Fairview Park scheduled for next year. She also volunteered to conduct tours of the cemetery during the city's Summerfest celebration this summer.

It seems that the name on the sign is not the only misinformation at the cemetery. Chris learned that 30% of the grave markers have errors. The most common problem is the wrong birth date. This usually happens when grandchildren bury their grandparents and guess at the birth date rather than look up the correct information.

As for the section one problem, Chris has a theory. The southern part of the cemetery land borders the Rocky River Reservation, a part of Cleveland Metroparks. This area may have been set aside for the burial of indigents. This was a common practice for cemeteries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They may have had wooden markers which rotted away or the graves may have gone unmarked to avoid the expense of the marker. Or, the bodies may have been moved and reburied somewhere else.

The mystery of Section One remains as compelling as it was when first discovered. No evidence has been found, there are no clear leads, and nobody has offered another theory. Chris, however, has vowed to pursue the mystery until it is solved.

# Spider Webs:

Funeral Home Resources, Boston Transcript Advertisements, The Underground Railway, First Families of New Hampshire, Northeast Alberta Cemeteries, Historic Newspapers from France, Indiana Archives, Ordinance Survey Maps, Veteran Gravesite Locator

## Funeral Home Resources

Funeral homes may be a source of information about individuals whose funerals they handled. They may have a file on the deceased that contains copies of obituaries, death certificate, and information supplied by the family regarding nearest relatives. Many funeral homes are family businesses and have been in business for many generations. To locate the nearby funeral homes, cemeteries, and other similar services, you can go to Funeral Home Resources and search by the zip code of the location where the individual resided at the time of death. If the zip code is not known. The search can also be done by clicking on the state and then on the town or city. A list of search results will appear with the name of the business or cemetery, the address, and sometimes additional information such as the year the funeral home was founded, services offered, and more. To visit the site, go to: [www.funeralhomeresource.com](http://www.funeralhomeresource.com)

## Boston Transcript Advertisements

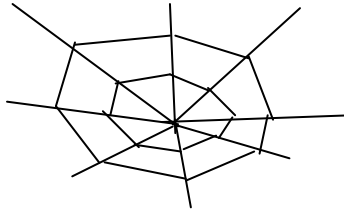
The Boston Transcript was a newspaper for Irish immigrants, and was widely read by Irish immigrants both in Boston and into surrounding states. The paper carried many advertisements by the immigrants looking for friends and relatives who also had immigrated. These advertisements, numbering 35,951, are now online. They are useful because they contain many genealogical clues for researchers working on Irish families. They cover the years starting in October 1831 to October 1921. To visit the site, go to: <http://infowanted.bc.edu>

## The Underground Railway

A site called "A Friend of Friends" is now online to help share information about slaves who went north on the Underground Railway. The site would like copies of documents about these former slaves from descendants of the slaves, former slave owners, and others who have information. To visit the site, go to: <http://afriendoffriends.com>

## First Families of New Hampshire

A new lineage group has been organ-



ized for descendants of the first settlers of the colony of New Hampshire. The eligible ancestor must have settled in New Hampshire by 1680. The official name of the group is the Order of the First Families of New Hampshire 1622-1680. To visit the site, go to: [www.homestead.com/offnh](http://www.homestead.com/offnh)

## Northeast Alberta Cemeteries

A Website called PrairieSouls has gone online to share information about individuals buried in northeastern Alberta in Canada. The site is similar in content to the Find-A-Grave Web site. It has high-quality photographs of tombstones at cemeteries located in six counties of northeastern Alberta plus a few towns across the border in Saskatchewan. The first two individuals sampled during a quick look at the site not only had easily readable pictures of the headstones, but photographs of the individuals were also included. The site can be searched for an individual of browsed by cemetery. When the cemetery is clicked with the mouse, a list of those interred there is seen with dates for birth and death. A click on the name of the individual will bring up the photographs and any other information available, such as a link to a spouse. To visit the site, go to: [www.prairiesouls.com](http://www.prairiesouls.com)

## Historic Newspapers from France

This site contains a list of links to other Web sites that have the Newspaper images. Included are France and other French-speaking areas including Canada, Luxembourg, Switzerland, the Caribbean Area and Morocco. To visit the site, go to: <http://quezi.com/9536>

## Indiana Archives

The Indiana State Archives now has a digital archive Web site where many of their collections are digitized and made available online. The site has collections military service, veterans list, death records, naturaliza-

tion records, city directories, historic maps, atlases, and plat books, all of which are very helpful to genealogists and family historians. Other records in the collection are harder to find but also useful to researchers. These include prison records, children in specialty schools, negro and mulatto county registers, vocational school records, and a collection of civil war era telegrams from the governor's office. To visit the site, go to:

[www.digitalstatearchives.com/indiana](http://www.digitalstatearchives.com/indiana)

## Ordinance Survey Maps

Cassini Publishing Ltd. is a long-time publisher of maps. They have now published the 1<sup>st</sup> series Ordinance Survey Maps of England and Wales online. They are useful to genealogists because they show the lay of the land and locations of parish churches, farms, roads, villages and other geographical features. These maps have a scale of 1 : 2,500, which is enough magnification to show most features including rural buildings. To see the maps, go to: [www.cassinimaps.com](http://www.cassinimaps.com)

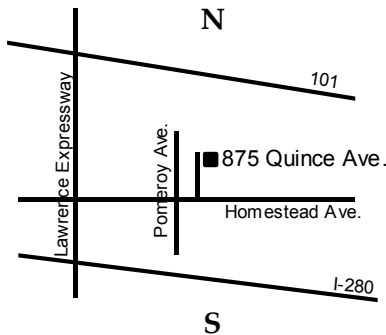
## Veteran Gravesite Locator

There are several indices of U.S. veterans who are buried in a military cemetery. The first of the indices are at the Veteran's Affairs National Gravesite Locator Web site. This site has a search engine which will search for burials in the United States at a military cemetery. The search will provide the birth and death date, the cemetery, and the location of the grave within the cemetery. The site is located at: [http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/j2ee/servlet/NGL\\_v1](http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/j2ee/servlet/NGL_v1). For veterans who died on foreign soil and are buried abroad such as those who were killed in a foreign war, these veterans are available at the American Battle Monuments Commission site at: [www.abmc.gov/home.php](http://www.abmc.gov/home.php). This site not only recent wars, but also includes veterans of the Mexican War, Civil War and Spanish-American War. Also in this database are civilians who built and operated the Panama Canal and are buried at the ABMC cemetery in Corozal, Panama.



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Articles contributed by readers are welcome. Articles may be submitted as a text file on PC-compatible disk, CD-ROM, or as an e-mail attachment. The editors reserve the right to accept, reject, and edit articles. Articles are not returned.

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SV-CGG, P.O. Box 23670, San Jose, CA 95153-3670 or leslyk@comcast.net

SV-CGG meets monthly, except December, on the second Saturday of the month from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints building, 875 Quince Avenue, Santa Clara, CA. We offer classes and sponsor guest speakers at meetings to help family historians with computer technology and research techniques. Membership dues are US\$15 per year (US\$20 for Canada and US\$25 for other international). Members are offered classes at meetings, mentor help, Silicon Valley PastFinder (a monthly newsletter published each month there is a meeting).

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Personal Ancestral File can be ordered from [www.FamilySearch.org](http://www.FamilySearch.org) or at 1-800-537 5950:

The following can be ordered from [www.svcomputergenealogy.org](http://www.svcomputergenealogy.org) or by mail or e-mail:  
 Newsletter back issues if available      Stuck-on Sources Post-It note pads  
 Videos of classes; syllabus copies      Flash Drives loaded with 11,000 Internet genealogy sites  
 Family History Documentation Guidelines      And more

**MEETING FOR 8 MAY 2010**

- **For the May meeting, the Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group will hold an all-day seminar (approximately 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM).** Barry J. Ewell is our guest speaker, and he will discuss "The 20 Lessons Family Historians Need to Know." There is no cost to this event. Come and bring a friend.

For more details or changes, go to: [www.svcomputergenealogy.org](http://www.svcomputergenealogy.org)