

Seven deadly assumptions *(continued)*

(Continued from page 1)

Not yet.

We've heard various time frames for how long it will take to digitize existing holdings, but they always range from a few decades to many decades. New digitized records are coming online by the millions, but billions remain undiscovered, unreleased, undigitized, or unindexed. In other words, not everything is online; you may need to visit libraries and repositories. A brave new genealogical world is coming, but it's not here yet.

Assumption 3: I can find everything I need at Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org. Even at the vast websites, some information will not be included. Try less gigantic sites as well as libraries. Use old newspapers and books. You remember books, right? Many are now searchable online.

Assumption 4. I don't need to visit a library. Um...see Assumption 3. Many libraries have no resources for digitizing and posting local materials, but they welcome visitors. Perhaps the best part of visiting local libraries (*local* referring to a locality where your ancestors lived, or where their records are housed) is the likelihood of discovering records you didn't know existed.

If visiting a local library is beyond your means or capacity, explain the situation to the librarian; a local volunteer may be able to research your questions, particularly if you research an online catalog first to identify specific materials to search.

Offer a donation or, at least, your appreciation. Whatever you donate, going there could cost more.

Assumption 5: DNA testing has replaced traditional genealogy research. Not so fast. DNA testing, which is available through several vendors (Ancestry DNA, 23andme, Family Tree DNA, and others) may help you identify ancestors you and other clients of a company have in common, and thus might help you assemble a family tree. However, for many who are tested, the findings might be more suited to learning about ancient ancestry and migration patterns.

Someone — you or another client of a testing company — will need to assemble a personal database for DNA testing to be meaningful. Which is to say, if you find several potential distant cousins through DNA testing, but if none of you know anything about your proximal ancestry (e.g., grandparents, great-

grandparents, and so forth), none of you will be likely to learn much from each other. You may find people whose research would tie into yours if any of you had information, but someone has to do some actual genealogy research in the first place, or none of you will be able to benefit from each other's genealogy information.

As with all genealogy sharing, the information shared will be no better than the original research. If a potential distant cousin has created a tree or a personal database with inaccurate information, finding that potential cousin may not benefit you much. In other words, someone still has to do the research.

Assumption 6: I have an online tree, so I don't need a personal database. An online tree and a personal genealogy database serve different functions that overlap only marginally.

A personal database (such as Ancestral Quest, RootsMagic, Reunion, Legacy, or Personal Ancestral File) serves as an organizing central point for keeping track of your research documents, your findings, your notes and questions, your research logs and to-do lists, and your sources. Today's personal genealogy databases are programmed to be useful and portable. Most of these programs are available in limited-use free downloadable versions, so that you can try them out before buying one. The cost for fully featured versions ranges from about \$20 to \$100.

An online tree, on the other hand, is designed for sharing your genealogy information with others. An online tree lacks most features of a personal database, but it is a good way to share information. It is not an optimal way to organize and access your findings. Before you build a tree online, make sure you can export a GEDCOM file into it and out of it.

Assumption 7: One source is about as good as another. Au contraire. A source is "the actual record that contains the information we use in compiling our family history" (*Family History Documentation Guidelines* [SVC GG, 2000, 2003], p. 8.) The quality of sources varies. A *primary source* is one that was recorded near the time of an event by someone whose job was to record the information — for example, a birth or death certificate. A *secondary source*, or beyond, can be derived from a primary source but might be copied, transcribed, or recorded some time after the event.

Like a primary source, a secondary source may or may not be entirely accurate. Accuracy is not something you can assume. 

Pinterest.com *Relevant for genealogists?*

Can Pinterest be relevant to genealogists?

First, what is Pinterest? It is another social media web site that has been around for several years, but before you assume it's all about fashion and recipes, note that late last year (November 2013), it won another round of equity funding for \$225 million, with a valuation of \$3.8 billion.

PastFinder is publishing this article because some respected genealogists believe that Pinterest has great potential for genealogy. So this is a first glance at what Pinterest can do.

Pinterest is an online photo/scrapbooking application. Once you have signed into the free application, you are invited to select from a dozen or so screens full of colorful images, each representing a theme or subject that interests you. In effect, you select an image and pin it to your personal virtual bulletin board. Hence the name, *Pinterest*. You are telling Pinterest what interests you.

You can create multiple boards, one for each interest. As you pin images to your boards, they become place holders, or bookmarks, to which you can pin other images that represent links to countless other websites that relate to your interests.

Can you imagine how marketers are lusting over this way of tracing members' interests? No wonder its market valuation is billions of dollars. So, why would people in today's world post even more personal information? That's a rhetorical question.

Interest among the genealogy community involves thumbing our noses at the basic premise of the application and posting (or pinning) whatever interests us—namely, family photos, documents, charts, and the like. We then can use Pinterest's organizing tools by assigning our images to different boards.

Pinterest also is a research tool. Enter a topic (such as Irish genealogy or North Carolina genealo-

gy) and explore what others — including individuals and organizations — have posted.

Pinned images need not be available on the Internet; users can upload images to “pin” them. In view of that feature, Pinterest appears to be a great way to store genealogical images on the Internet at no cost to you, and to provide you a simple means to categorize them.

What about sharing your images? Pinterest is all about sharing your interests with networks of friends and family. One question that comes to mind is why we would want another social networking system when we already have so many networks to manage, including Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

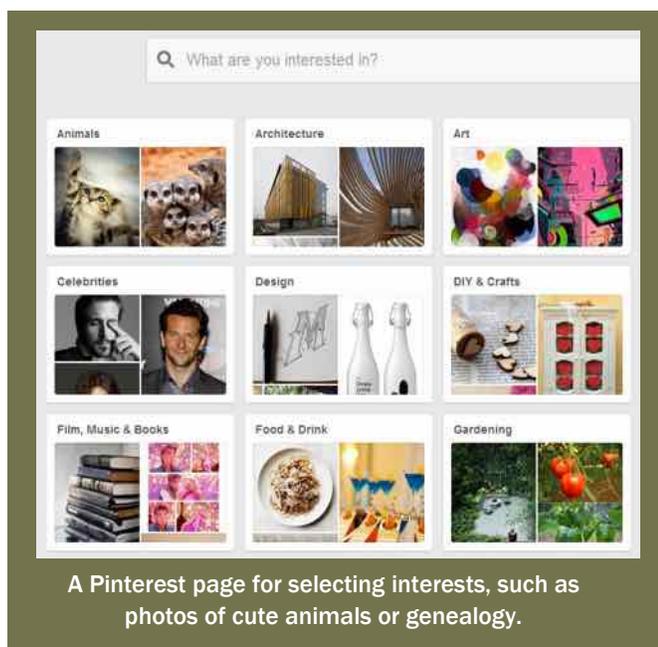
Pinterest has cleverly piggybacked its networking function on top of Facebook, Yahoo, Gmail, and Google+. When you register with Pinterest, as a way to share your interest boards with others, you also can link your registration to another social network.

Pinterest appears to have a functionality similar to the Photos feature of Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.org, MyHeritage.com, and others. Each allows users to

upload images to a family tree and to make them available to anyone searching the site.

Presumably, Pinterest will attract a wider range of viewers, including those who are not necessarily searching for genealogical information but are drawn through other social media connections.

That by itself has the potential for reaching possible family members. Create a board called Genealogy and upload unique images for which you would like some help. Link your boards to Facebook or another network and see what happens. Be sure to invite others who might be interested. 





How I found it Keeping up with the Joneses

By Richard Rands

It is not unusual during a lengthy search process on an ancestral line to come to a total standstill.

Often I search the Internet covering all the obvious sites, from Ancestry.com to Google.com, Archive.org to NewspaperArchive.com, the National Archives to state archives, and FamilySearch.org to Fold3.com. Even if I've filled lots of details into analysis forms, sometimes nothing offers a clue about how to make that all-important leap from North America back across "the Pond" (the Atlantic or Pacific ocean).

A recent case in point: What I had found about where members of a particular Jones family were born pointed to Illinois, Scotland, Germany, Prussia, or Bavaria — and that was just the paternal side of the family. The maternal side apparently came from New York, Virginia, Tennessee, and Switzerland!

This case emphasizes the reality of America being a melting pot. If the family weren't named Jones, the searching might have been easier. Even so, sometimes common surnames are not so common: Some places have no Smiths or Joneses.

At research junctures like this, I've found that the best approach may be to pick up a pen and paper, or perhaps the telephone, and start contacting local libraries or historical societies that lack the resources to post their holdings online. Or, even better, contact a living resource who knows the locations of clues. Sometimes a telephone call leads to an amazing discovery that brings down a brick wall.

This is the story of a Jones family that I traced to Illinois. John Jones was born in 1848 in Metamora,

Illinois. It would seem a trivial matter to locate John with his parents in the 1850, 1860, and 1870 U.S. censuses. But I found no concrete census entries, as I would have expected, as explained by family lore that John's parents died shortly after John was born, leaving him and his siblings to be distributed among friends and family.



Persistent digging among records and using surname-spelling variants provided a fairly complete picture of John and his siblings into the 20th century. Sometimes the siblings appeared together in the same household, and sometimes they were laborers on neighbor's farms. Eventually they married and established their own homes.

But the records were silent about the father and mother. Most of the census records for the children stated that their father was from Scotland, but once in a while a record simply said *England*. The mother was

listed as being from Prussia, Bavaria, and Germany.

Since none of the couple's children had been born outside the United States, I used a working theory that the parents had immigrated to the U.S. independently, met somewhere in the U.S., and then married. He being from Scotland and she being from the European continent, either could have been married previously. That possibility yielded no previous marriage records.

The one consistent detail that gave me the idea to use the phone was the fact that John's census records from 1880 through 1930 indicated that he had resided in Mendota, in La Salle County, Illinois. Not to belittle Mendota; I suspected that Mendota was

(Continued on page 5)

How I found it *(continued)*

(Continued from page 4)

not a major city in the late-nineteenth century.

Today it boasts less than 8,000 inhabitants, but one of its radio stations, WGLC, stands for World's Greatest Little City. *Mendota* is an Indian term referring to a crossing of trails. Mendota is a railroad town where two railroads crossed, located in the middle of the state, southwest of Chicago. A family who resided in Mendota for about 50 years, from about 1880 into the 1930s, should have left a paper trail.

So I looked up the contact information for the Mendota Museum and Historical Society, which has a tidy website with useful information and photos regaling a rich railroad history. Having been a model railroader in earlier years, I enjoyed reminiscing at the society's Gallery of Railroad Photos site. Back to business, I telephoned the society and left a message. The next day, a museum volunteer named Barb called.

Several years earlier, Barb said, she helped with a research project for a Mr. Jones, who was not interested at the time in his Jones family. Barb said she had become friends with this Mr. Jones and offered to contact him to see what information he had about the Jones line. Furthermore, she said she would search through the local records for anything about the John Jones family. Within two days, she sent an email with copies of several documents and indicated that she had made contact with Mr. Jones, who was gathering Jones family information. In addition, she had learned that a brother of Mr. Jones was "the real genealogist in the family" and

had written a book about the family. She was trying to locate an extra copy of it to send me.

Barb also told me that Mr. Jones wanted to know how I was related to the Jones family, and gave the telephone numbers for both Mr. Jones and his brother, so that I could call and figure out the family relationships.



Counties in the state of Illinois. A triangle marks Mendota.

=So often we hear about recipients of cold calls such as this one going sour because of fear of financial solicitation or the like. But this one turned out to be an amazing link that resulted in my Jones client calling Mr. Jones and his brother and spending hours talking about their memories of family members. Nonetheless, they had no new information about the parents of John and his siblings.

A week later, an e-mail message arrived from the Mendota Museum from someone other than Barb. This time it was the executive director of the museum, Deb Brokaw, who had become involved in the

hunt. She sent me a link to an entry in nearby Peoria County historical records for a historical biographical article published in 1890 for a John Radley. Radley was not one of the many names I had encountered thus far, but I knew that some of the Jones family had been at one time or another in Peoria County.

The article stated, "John Radley...has succeeded during a life spent in the practice of the virtues of industry and economy, in amassing a considerable amount of this world's goods and is now living in the

(Continued on page 6)

Whadya think this is?



This item may have been significantly useful to our ancestors. Whaddya think it is?

- A. A hook for hanging a fish on a scale.
- B. A shoe button hook
- C. A means of snagging items from the bottom of a lady's handbag
- D. A hook for removing leeches

(Answer is on page 8.)

How I found it (continued)

(Continued from page 5)

enjoyment of all the comforts and many of the luxuries of life.” Even though that same line may have been copied by everyone writing biographical sketches around that time, it did appear to indicate that John Radley was sufficiently well off to afford some comfort for his family.

I was curious what John Radley, who lived in Peoria County, had to do with John Jones’ parents in La Salle County. Clearly, the two Johns were contemporaries. The writer stated, “The mother of our subject was Elizabeth Jones, a native of Devonshire and daughter of John Jones, a farmer of that parish. She accompanied her children to the United States and died at the home of our subject in 1854.”

Wow, I thought, all that took was a telephone call. If John Radley’s mother, Elizabeth Jones of Jubilee, Peoria County, could be linked to John Jones of Mendota, La Salle County, a brick wall had crumbled, and we may have leapt the Pond.

I have since studied the Radley family further, looking for clues to make that connection. Elizabeth married a George Radley in England, and they appeared in the 1841 England census in Devonshire. George died in 1842, leaving Elizabeth widowed with eight living children. Her two oldest sons, George and John, already had immigrated to the U.S. several years earlier, before Elizabeth gathered up the rest of her children and immigrated to Illinois.

But that still did not give me a tight connection to the Jones family. John Radley's biographical sketch was filled with details, but, unfortunately, none of the details provided a link to the Jones family. Addition-

ally, some of the details appeared to be incorrect, such as an immigration date and Elizabeth's death date.

However, the 1860 U.S. Census record of Elizabeth's eldest son, George Radley, listed a 16-year-old boy named Peter Jones at the bottom of the family information. That particular census did not contain the relationship to the head of the household, and the column for the place of birth was blank.

So there Peter’s name sat on my census analysis form, all by itself. No stated familial relationship and no hint that he was born in England, only the indication in 1860 that he would have been born about 1844.

At first I played with the idea that George had married a Jones, suggesting that Peter may have been related to his wife. George's wife was from New York, and I could not turn up a marriage record for them. Besides, my work on the Jones family had uncovered no other connection to New York. The fact that Peter's birth place had been left blank, when everyone else's birth place listing on the page was written clearly, hinted that perhaps he was not from Illinois, or even from anywhere in the United States.

I returned to my records for the Jones family and noticed that one of John Jones’s older brothers was named Peter, and that Peter’s entry in the 1880 U.S. Census listed him as 37 years old. In the 1900 census Peter’s birth month and year were listed as April 1843.

The Peter Jones in the 1860 U.S. Census with George Radley's family was not listed with the family

(Continued on page 7)



Ask the Doctor

Old Bibles, place names

Q Several old Bibles have come into my possession. I have gone through them to determine that they contain no genealogical information, but I don't know how best to dispose of them, or if that's even a suitable approach.

If the Bibles are in readable shape at all, consider donating them to a group such as Open Doors (serving Christian minorities worldwide). Also, some donation sites (Salvation Army and others) take Bible donations. Check with a local donation center before donating.

You also could talk to antique booksellers, or sell the Bibles on eBay (enter *old Bible* on eBay and see if yours are like the ones for sale).

Some websites explain how to dispose of a Bible or other religious text, such as by burying it, because of the book's sacred nature. Also, it is relatively easy to find information about how to store and restore old books. If the Bibles were legacy items to pass on to descendant generations, check with family before disposing of the books.

Q I have been searching for ancestral information across time, but I find that place names often seem to change. How can I track such places?

If the name of a town, a county, or even a country changed, it can cause havoc with our research of an-

cestors who lived there. It can happen anywhere. For example, in the early 20th century in rural western Canada, places often were named after the individual whose home housed the post office. When that person died or left the area, the name of the community was changed to the name of the new postmaster.

Often when a community grew large enough to warrant its own post office, it had to change its name because that name belonged to some other town that already had a post office. In the German Empire, when a war resulted in a new jurisdiction, places may have been renamed by the new government.

When you are unable to locate the name of a place you have identified in your research, your best approach is to scour the Internet for obscure references to the name you already have. Such a reference may appear far down the list of search results, primarily because few people access it.

Also look for old gazetteers for the state or country where you suspect that the place was located. If you are looking in German-language countries, the best place to look is in *Meyers Gazetteer of the German Empire*.

For England, try a website called CuriousFox.com. In the U.S., explore the USGenweb.org site. These days, most other countries have searchable online gazetteers. 

How I Found It (Continued)

in the 1870 U.S. Census. A Peter Jones of the corresponding age was listed in the 1870 U.S. Census, living with a farmer and his family in Champaign County, further to the southeast. Although the record provided no hint that this Peter Jones was married or widowed, a three-year-old boy, Franklin Jones, also was listed in the household. This suggested that Franklin was Peter's son, and that Peter might be a widower.

A census analysis conducted on Peter Jones in sequential U.S. censuses indicated that besides being born in April 1843, as recorded in the 1880 U.S. Census, he later was living in Champaign County, was in his second marriage, and had a son named Franklin who was 13 years old, also born in Illinois.

Peter's second marriage began about 1874, and his

second child was born in 1875. All these details have been extracted from the 1880, 1900, and 1910 U.S. censuses, all of which corresponded to the Peter Jones in the Radley family in the 1860 U.S. Census, as well as to an entry in the 1870 U.S. Census.

To be sure, I cannot yet claim to have found the point at which the family crossed the Pond. A few Peter Jones entries are scattered around nearby counties. So far none of them can be completely eliminated from the realm of possibility, but neither do they have any coincidental connections like that of the two Peters discussed here.

Have I found the necessary connections and records? Whatever I find next, I need to send two boxes of chocolates, one to Barb and one to the executive director of the museum. 

What didja think it was? And were ya right?

ANSWER to question posed on page 5: B. Shoe buttonhook.

This item is a pocket version of a device used to pull buttons on shoes through buttonholes, before shoelaces were common.

The Victorian shoe styles often had a dozen or so tiny round buttons that had to be painstakingly pushed through a hole on the opposite side. A buttonhook made it a relatively fast process by threading the hooked end through the buttonhole, hooking the button and pulling it back through the hole.

Many shoe buttonhooks were exquisitely ornamental, with carved ivory handles or delicate sterling silver carvings. This im-

age is a reproduction of one most likely used by the common folk and can be found at the online site of Meanglean Alchemist in England. 

After 25 years, SVCGG raises dues

The Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group and its predecessor have gone more than 25 years without increasing the membership dues — until now.

Rising printing and mailing costs now necessitate increasing the cost of membership in North America to \$20. The cost has been \$15 per year since the group was formed.

Members will receive the *PastFinder* newsletter automatically by electronic link. Those members still needing to receive a printed and mailed copy should contact SVCGG by email, postal mail or telephone (see column at right).

“We have been putting this off for years,” said SVCGG president Richard Rands. “We hope that anyone facing a hardship because of this dues increase will contact us directly.” *PastFinder* will be distributed at meetings to members and visitors. 

Upcoming meetings

The group meets monthly except December, on the second Saturday of the month from 9 to 11 A.M. at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 875 Quince Ave., Santa Clara, California (see map at right). The group is not affiliated with any church or other group.

12 April 2014, 9–11 A.M.

- Military Records – Case by Case
- Organizing Your Stuff
- Reunion 10 for Mac Users
- Reunion for Mac, Basics
- Research with Pam (Brigham)
- Getting Started in Genealogy

10 May 2014, 9–11 A.M.

- Quaker Research
- New Apps for Genealogy
- Reunion 10 for Mac Users
- Reunion for Mac, Basics
- Research with Lesly (Klippel)
- Getting Started in Genealogy

PastFinder

First place, Major Society Newsletter, 2013
First place, Local Society Newsletter, 2012
National Genealogical Society

Website: www.svcgg.org

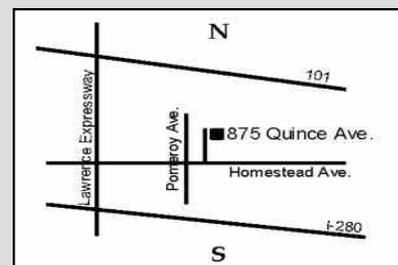
Email: siliconvalleygroup@earthlink.net

Postal mail: P.O. Box 23670, San Jose, CA
95153-3670

Officers and staff

Richard Rands	President rrands@earthlink.net 650-969-6567
Janet Brigham	Vice-president Newsletter editor jzbrands@earthlink.net
Wanda Levy	Secretary
Carleen Foster	Treasurer
Lesly Klippel	Membership director leslyklippel@gmail.com
Brian Smith	Program chair bsmith4gen@yahoo.com
Pat Burrow	Board member at large
Bill Weller	Webmaster
Leland Osburn	Education administrator
Pamela Erickson	Assistant editor
Betsy Shafer	Assistant editor
Allin Kingsbury	Editor emeritus/ past president

Copyright ©2014 Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group. All rights reserved. No articles herein may be reproduced for profit or commercial purposes without the express written consent of the Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group. Individuals and groups may reprint articles but must request permission and cite the original publication information.



Meeting site has ample free off-street parking, with a wheelchair-accessible entrance at the front.

About the Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group

SVCGG is the former Silicon Valley PAF Users Group, a nonprofit group of some 600 genealogy enthusiasts. We are based in Silicon Valley in the Bay Area of northern California; members live all over the world.

SVCGG offers classes, seminars, and publications to help family his-

torians improve their skills in using technology for genealogy research.

PastFinder is published monthly except December. It is distributed at meetings to members and mailed to others after the meetings. Members can receive the newsletter digitally by emailed link. 