

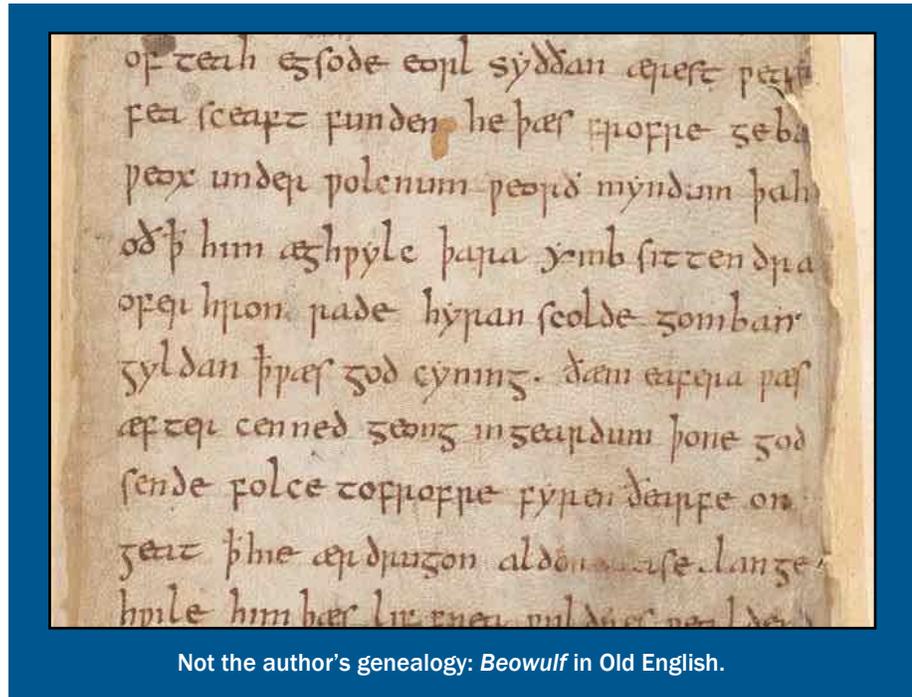
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SILICON VALLEY COMPUTER GENEALOGY GROUP

PastFinder

Fantasy genealogy



Not the author's genealogy: *Beowulf* in Old English.

By Janet Brigham

Some years back, a relative of mine was anxiously wooing a young woman from Asia. Her family believed one's ancestry was supremely important, so he asked me to put together a genealogy for him.

I hadn't yet done family history research in a systematic, organized way, although I knew from being around my genealogist husband that research ought to be done correctly. Everything should be documented, nothing should be taken at face value, and unverified information on the Internet was suspect.

My relative was so anxious to please his prospective in-laws that I quickly compiled not only what had been verified (details compiled by recent ancestors include several genealogically conservative great-aunts) as well as anything I could find on the Web that appeared to make any kind of sense.

It was a good thing the prospective in-laws were easily impressed with that genealogy, because, in retrospect, I am not. When I reached the point of

including ancient ancestors with single names (think Beowulf?) and the occasional Roman centurion, even I knew I was treading on shaky ground. Richard (genealogist husband) answered my questions about how to build a database but was not party to the odd inclusions in said database.

In time, the relative won over the girl's parents, and the long-distance lovebirds got married and had a child. I need to confiscate all copies of that original genealogy, so that she never tries to verify the shakier information.

It included kings, queens, conquerors, courtesans, and a few cowboys. It left out

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Outside and Inside

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Fantasy genealogy (*continued*)

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the stories — not yet discovered by Richard and me, for the most part — that make our family history compelling, astounding, and at times wrenching.

As hasty and fantastical as that pedigree was, it did serve to get me started in genealogy. It also taught me how easy it is to get it all wrong.

Yes, wrong — particularly those people I refer to as the *Beowulf People*, those fantastical, single-name folk who lurk at the ends of the rainbows of many online genealogies.

All it takes to get it wrong is to become too invested in something other than making sense of the facts at hand.

For example: If it is important to you that you descend from war heroes, documented research might impinge on that fantasy. Although many of us have ancestral ties to military service, far fewer of us have decorated or documented heroes as ancestors.

One of the early realizations we make as genealogy researchers is that we can't take credit (or blame) for what our ancestors did. You may have ancestors who fought for America's liberty in several wars, but you also might have an ancestor who committed homicide, or an ancestor who fought on what you consider "the wrong side."

I can't take credit for the actions of my ancestral Minuteman, nor can I take blame for an unfortunate ancestor who killed himself, or the one who apparently inadvertently knocked his wife down the stairs of their homestead house. Stuff happens, good and bad, and while some ancestors rallied to a noble cause, others were challenged just to keep their fences upright.

Occasionally we encounter people who are determined to prove that they have very specific, important ancestors. That type of search rarely works out to their satisfaction. They may want to be related to Abraham Lincoln, but instead they are related to farmers who never became politicians.

Having read biographies of various famous people, I actually prefer not being related to most of them. For example, my Danish immigrant ancestors worked hard, sold their home and property to come to America, and helped settle the West. I'm here

partly because they took a chance on building a new life a long way from Denmark, or England, or Germany. It may be possible that their adventurousness is somewhere in my genes or my psyche, but maybe not.

While some ancestors rallied to a noble cause, others were challenged just to keep their fences upright.

When I was quickly assembling that initial fictitious genealogy and first came across the generations of nobility, royalty, and Beowulf People, I felt a mild thrill wondering if their legendary fairy dust coursed through my veins. That lasted perhaps 10 seconds. I've since learned that the real thrill is in

a realization based on long-neglected evidence that opens a new understanding of someone long-deceased.

The online wiki encyclopedia Wikipedia actually has a category for the topic *Fantasy genealogy*, with this bubble-blasting description:

Fantasy genealogies are mythical, fictional or fabricated pedigrees, usually to enhance the status of the descendant. . . .

Many claimed ancestries are considered by modern scholars to be fabrications, especially the claims of kings and emperors who trace their ancestry to gods or the founders of their civilization.

To Wikipedia's credit, it also has links to real fantasy genealogy, such as the family lines of characters in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and other characters from Tolkien's Middle Earth (see lotrproject.com/).

(I confess to reading Tolkien's trilogy seven times in my teens and twenties, and even to designing but never completing a needlepoint map of Middle Earth. But I might never finish all seven Harry Potter books. Wikipedia links to this Potter-themed genealogy: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_universe#mediaviewer/File:Harry_Potter_Family_Tree.png)

True fantasy genealogies are harmless as long as you don't jump down the rabbit hole, so to speak. (Just so you know: if you search for the words *Alice in Wonderland pedigree*, you may find numerous canine pedigrees.) The real danger of fantasy genealogy is that you might miss the actual ancestors, who are far more engaging than fiction or fantasy. 



Database / software roundup

Genealogy software changes so frequently and so fast, who can keep track of it?

With a little help from *PastFinder*, you can. This page introduces a new feature, a roundup of announcements and events in the areas of genealogy and family history software, including databases and utilities.

Note that SVC GG does not endorse or support any specific genealogy software. The group provides this information as a service to SVC GG readers, who are encouraged to build a database of their genealogy information. SVC GG acknowledges that we are fortunate to have multiple powerful, friendly database software options.

Note that most commercial database software has a free, limited, trial version, which allows you to try the software before investing in the full version.

OHANA. Hawaiian software company Ohana Software has closed its doors but has enabled free download of its FamilyInsight database management software at ohanasoftware.com. This version does not interface with FamilySearch, but it does help you clean and maintain your database.

Over the last 12 years, Ohana has provided innovative solutions, particularly for users of Personal Ancestral File.

Mahalo, Ohana Software.

ANCESTRAL QUEST. Incline Software has released Ancestral Quest 14, now on build 22, which now features a research timeline (see illustration, above right; color-coded family lines, tags (touted as “wildly popular”), enhanced fan charts, and collaboration features. Any FamilySearch user can now interface with FamilySearch through AQ. The upgrade is free to users of AQ 12.x. ancquest.com

ROOTSMAGIC. A new feature in RootsMagic 7 is WebHints, a little light bulb that pops up next to a person's name on the main screens if possible records for that person can be found on MyHeritage.com or FamilySearch.org. The RootsMagic

The screenshot shows the 'Timeline' view for Erick Johan Petterson Farmer (16 Mar 1832 - 31 Jul 1893). The timeline includes events such as birth, death, marriage, and census records, color-coded by year. The interface includes a menu bar (File, Add, Edit, View, Search, Tools, Internet, Collaborate, Help) and a toolbar with various icons. The main window has tabs for Pedigree, Family, Name List, Individual, and Timeline. Below the timeline is an 'Individual Notes' section.

Erick Johan Petterson Farmer (16 Mar 1832 - 31 Jul 1893)			
Mother: Cajsa Jonasson (1802-)	Birth	15 Mar 1802	Farnebo, Varmland, Sweden
Napoleonic Wars (Begin)		18 May 1803	
Father: Peter N Petterson Farmer (1806-1847)	Birth	22 Sep 1806	Oure, Ulfrud, Varmland, Sweden
Napoleonic Wars (End)		13 Sep 1815	
Father: Peter Neilsson Peterson Farmer	Married	18 May 1826	
Mother: Cajsa Jonasson			
Erick Johan Petterson Farmer	Birth	16 Mar 1832	Farnebo, Varmland, Sweden
Father: Peter Neilsson Peterson Farmer	Died	8 Nov 1847 (15)	Farnebo, Varmland, Sweden
Erick Johan Petterson Farmer	Married	15 Nov 1855 (23)	Tryserum, Kalmar, Swed.
Sp 1: Johanna Charlotta Andersson (1831-1894)			
US Census 1860		1 Jun 1860 (28)	
American Civil War (Begin)		4 Feb 1861 (28)	
American Civil War (End)		23 Jun 1865 (33)	
US Census 1870		1 Jun 1870 (38)	
US Census 1880		1 Jun 1880 (48)	
US Census 1890		2 Jun 1890 (58)	
Erick Johan Petterson Farmer	Died	31 Jul 1893 (61)	Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah
Erick Johan Petterson Farmer	Buried	3 Aug 1893 (61)	Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah

Research timeline from Ancestral Quest 14.

newsletter explains, “When we first wired that feature into the program, we found that we were getting behind in our programming because we kept playing with that feature. We were finding records (newspaper articles, draft records, certificates) on our own families that we hadn't seen before.” The same thing happened with their beta testers.

rootsmagic.com

REUNION. Leisterpro's version 10 of Reunion for Mac has several appealing features, including (but not limited to) these: *Pictures Everywhere* allows you to include pictures in all buttons in the family view. New features of the *Places* option include mapping places in Google or Bing, geocode entries, and an internal place database that tracks place entries, to encourage consistency and accuracy. leisterpro.com/

LEGACY FAMILY TREE. Version 8 has an innovative Origins Report that tells you “where you came from and the percentage of ‘blood’ you have from your countries of origin.” legacyfamilytree.com/

PERSONAL ANCESTRAL FILE (PAF). Though long ago discontinued, this perennially popular free database software for PC is available for download at parowansoftware.com — listed as PAF 5.

How I found it Finding young Bertram

By Richard Rands

One of the most saddening things about family history research is when I notice in a 1900 or 1910 U.S. Census record that a mother has borne more children than are still alive, leaving children that often cannot be accounted for.

It leaves an empty feeling in me to know that children lived whose names may never have a place in the family's records. I take extra time poring over vital birth and death records, church records, or newspapers, hoping to find the slightest trace that will give some mention to the missing children in the family's history.

For me, it is a way of giving those children a new life – in a way, an eternal life among all of those who come years later. So whenever I am able to discover the details of one of those missing children, it makes what I do so much more worthwhile.

I have been working on a client project for several years that has taken me in many directions. But over the last few months, I have been working hard to prepare a thorough chart showing the results of all the research thus far that would be presented to several family members as a Christmas gift. Conse-

quently, it required that I devote a lot of time tidying up dozens of loose ends. One of those messy loose ends involved a piece of family lore that I had procrastinated researching for a long time.

Whenever I am able to discover the details of one of those missing children, it makes what I do so much more worthwhile.

The family in question was a large family who were descendants of a widely-known English preacher who came to the United States and died in 1900 while on a national evangelism tour. For the most part, the de-

scendants were highly respectable citizens in their respective communities. The family lore was a story about the oldest son, one Joseph Finney Adams. The lore was that he had married, fathered three daughters, and then abandoned his family, went to Cuba, married a second time, and had another family. On top of that, he later returned to the United States, married again, and had a third family, through which my client is a descendant.

I had procrastinated the issue thinking that it was not likely to have much of a paper trail, and knowing that during this period of time, Cuba was in the midst of a revolution, having just won its independence from Spain, and was struggling to deal with the intrusion of the United States' trying to turn Cuba into a territory. It would not have been a popular

time for an American citizen to be settling in Cuba. But the story had to be explored to fill a gaping hole in the family history.

The first major breakthrough occurred when we discovered a Public Member Tree at Ancestry.com that purported to have information about Joseph Finney, including a lovely photograph of his wife and three daughters (at left) that family lore said he had abandoned.

Second, the owner of the tree had discovered an obscure, poorly indexed 1900



Frances Adams and her three daughters (Photo courtesy of C. A. Murphy)

(Continued on page 5)

How I found it

(Continued from page 4)

census record for a family in Florida who could be Joseph Finney Adams and his family. This particular record had escaped my research for several reasons. It contained only initials in the given name fields, and the record had misrepresented Joseph's English birthplace as well as that of his father, indicating that Joseph was born in California and that his father was born in Massachusetts.

Communicating with the owner of the Public Member Tree led us to believe that there was good reason to be confident in the materials she had posted with the tree. The 1900 census record lists J. F., F. J., and three daughters, G. E., Dorothy, and Kathryn.

Since the 1900 U.S. Census covers the twenty-year gap following the 1880 census (the 1890 U.S. Census having been destroyed by fire), the 1900 record provided useful details, including the birth months, number of years married (12), number of children born (4), and number of children still alive (3).

The oldest daughter, named as *G.E.*, was identified on the family photograph as Gertrude Edith. She was born in Illinois, where Joseph's father's family had resided. Dorothy was born in Texas, and Kathryn was born in Florida. Joseph's occupation is listed as lumberman. It takes a bit of imagination to wonder what would take a lumberman from Illinois to Texas and then to Florida. It takes even more imagination to wonder why someone would abandon his family and go to Cuba.

Most notable was the fact that by 1900, Frances had given birth to four children, but only three were still alive. I found no indication that anyone had made an effort to track down the missing child. I

made a mental note to take on that task at some future time. Meanwhile, back to family lore.

Among the documents posted on the Public Member Tree was a copy of a Consular Registration Certificate dated 6 February 1908, showing that on that date, Joseph Finney Adams had registered with the U.S. Consulate in Havana as a U.S. citizen. The certificate is one of those amazing records that teems with genealogical data. It gives his date of birth, place of birth (incorrectly stated as Oakland, California),

when he arrived in Cuba, his occupation, and, best of all, his family members with full names, birth dates, and birth places. Incidentally, we may never know why Joseph kept up the practice noted in the 1900 U.S. Census of being born in the U.S. of an American father. It may have been related to

troubles with immigration.

Joseph had arrived in Havana on 15 November 1902. Listed among his family members were the three daughters — Gertrude, Dorothy, and Kathryn — along with their full birth dates and birth places. Joseph had not abandoned his family after all. There his children were, living with him in Havana.

Frances was not listed. He had married a Cuban, Blanca Rosa Quintana, giving rise to the belief that Frances had died sometime between June 1900 and November 1902, perhaps in Florida. Indeed, it seems unlikely that all three daughters would follow their father to Cuba rather than remain with their mother if she were still alive.

I was able to trace the return to the United States of each of the three daughters as married adults. There is more to the story, because the record shows Joseph also fathered two children by his Cuban wife by

(Continued on page 6)

Joseph had not abandoned his family after all. There his children were living with him in Havana.

Name	Age	Sex	Marital Status	Birth Date	Birth Place	Father's Birth Place	Mother's Birth Place
Adams, J. F.	41	Head	M	27 July 1858	Florida	Massachusetts	Illinois
— F. J.	40	Wife	M	9 Oct 1863	Massachusetts	Illinois	Illinois
— G. E.	12	Daughter	S	6 Jul 1888	Illinois	California	Massachusetts
— Dorothy	9	Daughter	S	9 Mar 1891	Texas	California	Massachusetts
— Kathryn	7	Daughter	S	7 Jan 1897	Florida	California	Massachusetts

1900 U.S. Census, Florida, Sumter, Sumterville, Dist. 0152, image 6

Whadya think this is?



Whadya think this is? (Answer is on page 8.)

- A. A vest from a Presbyterian youth group c. 1930
- B. Auxiliary member's outerwear from the Independent Order of Odd Fellows in Montana
- C. Haute couture from Papua, New Guinea
- D. A vintage Camp Fire Girls vest
- E. A Native American marriage garment from the Nez Perce tribe
- F. Part of the Florida State University's mascot costume for Sammy Seminole, c. 1950s

How I found it *(continued)*

(Continued from page 5)

1908. I have yet to uncover a death record for Frances. Now, back to the focus of the story – the missing child.

Over the past year I have been trying to obtain access to a family Bible belonging to another branch of the family. As it turns out, the home in Oakland where one of Joseph Finney's younger brothers had lived recently, was purchased by someone who was doing extensive remodeling. In the process, the new owner discovered an old Bible that clearly had useful family information. He diligently traced it to an Ad-

ams cousin, who gave it to the widow of the man that I had known through discussions about the other family Bible. Sadly the gentleman died during the summer of 2014.

The "new" old Bible at one time belonged to Joseph Finney. The widow who now owned it sent me copies of the pages containing Adams family information. Most of the handwriting was old and difficult to read. The pages were water-stained and moldy. Even so, the pages contained dozens of details that I had not known – marriage dates and places, spouses' maiden names, and more.

Near the bottom of the last page, in a different hand, written in pencil, was a series of names that turned out to be the mention of Joseph's marriage to Frances Stewart, and their children. There between Gertrude and Dorothy, is a son named Bertram. Born 29 November 1890 in Texas, died April 1891.

There was the missing child, who would not have been listed in the 1900 U.S. Census. Oh, the joy!

It made sense. Bertram was a family name. I gleefully added Bertram to the family history chart. The Adamses were happy to know that Joseph had not abandoned his family, but I was far happier to bring young Bertram back into existence.

Joseph Finney Adams was married to
Frances Jessie Stewart Dec. 31 at 1887
at Milwaukee.
Frances Jessie Stewart born Oct. 13th
Born Gertrude Edith Adams - Sept 23-
1888 - Sunday 4 P.M.
Bertram Adams born Nov. 29-1890-
died April -1891- Orange Texas
Dorothy Adams born March 5-1892 - Sa
Orange Texas
Frances Florida Adams born Panasoffk
Jan. Friday - 5 P.M. Jan 8 - 1897.

Family of Joseph Finney Adams listed in the "new" old family Bible





Ask the Doctor *I started with a tree*

Q I know that the Doctor has said that to get started in genealogy, we should begin by building a database of information we have at hand. I wasn't reading the Doctor's advice when I started in genealogy, and I started with building a tree online. Now I want to put the tree information in other places, and I want to have a database that I can use for printing charts and lists. What can I do to avoid having to enter all that information again by hand?

This question comes up more often than you can imagine. On a recent Sunday morning, while the Doctor was still asleep, someone telephoned to ask this very question. The individual wanted to know if, to get started doing research, she should take advantage of a discount price for an online tree service.

The Doctor's first question was, "Do you have your information in a database?" To which the person replied, "No, I'm just getting started." To which the Doctor replied that she should first build a database, then import the information into an online tree. You

can export it into a GEDCOM file from your database and use the GEDCOM to create an online tree at most online tree sites. To make this easier, the Doctor has built a table (below) that lists five popular online tree sites, their cost, and their pros and cons (from the Doctor's point of view, of course).

The biggest drawback to starting by building an online tree is that you'll want to move it to your desktop or laptop (or tablet) computer before long so that you can have flexibility in what you do with the information. If you're just getting started, you might not know what I mean. If you're experienced, you'll understand all too well the need for creating things like error reports, and for printing other types of lists and charts so you know what you have.

Two great features of online trees is that they are abundant and they may provide valuable hints as they disseminate information. The downsides to trees are that they are abundant and they often are copied, knots and all, by dozens if not hundreds of people, perpetuating whatever problems the first

(Continued on page 8)

Site	Cost	Upside	Downside
Ancestry.com*	Subscription (\$99 - \$299) Free trials	Popular You own your info Hints GEDCOM-friendly	Cost Some copying and junk Hints
FamilySearch.org Family Tree (cf. wikiTree.com)	Free to anyone	Popular, free, Hints Stories, photos GEDCOM-import only	Wiki; you don't own it Merge, copy = possible mess
FindMyPast.com*	Subscription (\$8.29 [x12] - \$9.95/mo)	You own your info GEDCOM-friendly	Some copying and junk
Geni.com	Subscription (\$119.40/yr) Free version Free 2-wk Pro trial	Free limited use You own your info Photos, stories Research links (Pro)	No GEDCOM import Some copying and junk Now owned by MyHeritage.com
MyHeritage.com*	Subscription (\$0 - \$9.95/month; cost varies)	You own your info GEDCOM-friendly	Some copying and junk

What didja think it was? And were ya right?

Answer: D. A Camp Fire Girls vest, c. 1950s.

The various beads and badges, affixed to the felt vest by girls participating in Camp Fire Girls, represented the completion of various projects. Created in 1911, Camp Fire since has opened its membership to boys and has revised its membership groups. 

Ask the Doctor *(continued)*

(Continued from page 7)

tree created. As with all things genealogical, documentation matters..

Some of these sites have free trials, and many offer occasional discounts, such as a holiday special or rate for conference attendees.

Through a process of creating a GEDCOM, it is possible to move in-

Upcoming meetings

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

10 January 2015, 9–11 A.M.

- U.S. Church Records
- Legacy Family Tree software
- Reunion 10 for the Mac
- Reunion for the Mac Basics
- Research with Lesly
- Getting started in genealogy

14 February 2015, 9–11 A.M.

- Portuguese Research
- Genealogy database software
- Reunion 10 for the Mac
- Reunion for the Mac Basics
- Research with Lesly
- Getting started in genealogy



formation between different brands of databases and online trees, including some in the table on page 7. Online tree sites abound.

To import from a database to a “GEDCOM-friendly” online tree, export a GEDCOM from the database, then import it into the tree site using whatever mechanism the tree service provides.

To export from a tree to a database or another tree site, you may need to do a Web search to find instructions. Some trees, such as Geni.com and Ancestry.com, do not make this simple, although it is possible. You can find instructions through a site’s help feature, online search, or by contacting the site’s customer service.

The free site FamilySearch.org allows GEDCOM imports (see familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/GEDCOM), but does not have a GEDCOM download feature.



About the Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group

SVC GG, the former Silicon Valley PAF Users Group, is a nonprofit group of more than 500 genealogy users. We are based in Silicon Valley in the Bay Area of northern California; members live all over the world.

SVC GG offers classes, seminars, and publications to help family his-

PastFinder

First place, Major Society Newsletter, 2013-14

First place, Local Society Newsletter, 2012

National Genealogical Society

Website: www.svcgg.org

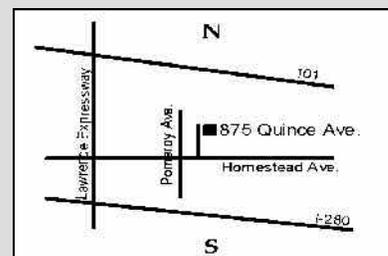
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Meeting site has ample free off-street parking, with a wheelchair-accessible entrance at the front.

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. 