

Roots & Branches
Tuscaloosa Genealogical Society Morning Group



Roots & Branches

Tuscaloosa Genealogical Society
The Morning Group
NEWSLETTER

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President: Charles Sewell; 1st VP: Ray Hamer; Secretary: Jane Drake; Treasurer: Lillie May Clary; Corresponding Secretary: Ruby Sutton; Historian: Cubell Stell; Parliamentarian: Gracie O. Swartz;

Message from:

Charles E. Sewell, President
Morning Genealogy Group
P.O. Box 20565
Tuscaloosa, AL 35402

The following web sites may be of interest to you for adding color and depth to your family history.

<http://www.alabamafolklife.org/>

http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa4113

<http://www.alabamaheritage.com/>

<http://www.folkstreams.net/film.83>

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs> Get birth, death, marriage, and divorce certificates from any state.

<http://www.american-digital.com/prodsite/category.asp?c=51> for Mitsui Gold CD's.

This last web site is a location for purchasing the CD's my brother and the Virginia Polytechnical Institute computer center recommend.

Be cautious about ordering birth, death, marriage or divorce certificates from electronic sources for a lot more that is would cost you to go by the Health Department.

Charles E. Sewell

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Alabama Vital Records

Birth Certificates:

By law, Alabama Birth Certificates are confidential records. To comply with federal Homeland Security directives, access is restricted for 125 years after the date of birth. The cost is \$12.00, which includes one certified copy of the birth certificate or a "Certificate of Failure to Find". Each additional copy of this certificate, if ordered at the same time, is \$4.00, payable by check or money order. Make payable to "Vital Records". Do not send cash. Fees are not refundable and additional fees are required for expedited service.

Upon payment of the proper fee, the following persons may obtain the current records. The Person Named on the Certificate, his/her Mother or Father (or legal guardian), the Husband or Wife, the Son or Daughter, the Sister or Brother, or a Legal Representative of an Authorized Person.

If you are not listed in the preceding paragraph, you can not obtain records of persons born less than 125 years ago.

Required information:

1. Full name of person at birth
2. Date of birth
3. Sex
4. City or county of birth
5. Hospital of birth – if not in home state "home"
6. Full maiden name of mother
7. Full name of father
8. Your name
9. Your signature
10. Your relationship to the person whose certificate you are requesting
11. Address where certificate may be mailed
12. Your daytime phone number

Mailing address:
Alabama Vital Records
P. O. Box 5625
Montgomery, AL 36103-5625

Questions?: call (334) 206-5418

In Person in Alabama:

Most birth certificates can be issued while you wait at any county health department in the State of Alabama.

To order electronically: You may use a credit card to order certificates through a service provider called VitalChek. There are additional fees for using this service.

Not lucky enough to be born in Alabama, The National Center for Health Statistics has information on vital records for all states.

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Adoption or other legal action:

Alabama law directs the State Registrar to establish a new birth certificate after an adoption, legitimation or paternity determination takes place. The new birth certificate is substituted for the original birth certificate in the files, and the original birth certificate and evidence of adoption, legitimation or paternity determination are placed in a "sealed file". The birth parent(s) can include contact information, medical history, and if they want to be contacted by the adoptee.

An adoptee at least 19 years old may request an un-certified copy of their original birth certificate and copies of the other documents in the "sealed file".

Marriage certificates:

The Alabama Center for Health Statistics began filing marriage certificates in 1936 for marriages that occurred in Alabama. (Information for marriages prior to 1936 may be obtained from the probate office in the county where the marriage license was issued.)

By Alabama law, marriage certificates are not confidential and may be obtained by any individual upon payment of the proper fee.

The fee for the search for a marriage license is \$12.00. This includes one certified copy of the marriage certificate or a "Certified Failure to Find." Each additional copy of the certificate, ordered at the same time, is \$4.00. Checks or Money Orders should be made payable to "Vital Records." Please do not send cash. Fees are non refundable. Additional fees are required for expedited service.

Please provide as much of the following information as possible to help in locating the marriage certificate:

1. Full name of husband
2. Full maiden name of wife
3. Date of marriage
4. County where the marriage license was issued
5. Your name
6. Your signature
7. Address where the certificate is to be mailed
8. A daytime phone number

Send the above information and the appropriate fee to the above address.

You can go to any county health department in the State of Alabama to obtain a certified copy of an Alabama marriage certificate. Most marriage certificates can be issued while you wait.

If you were not married in Alabama, the National Center for Health Statistics has information on vital records for all states.

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Death Certificates:

The Alabama Center for Health Statistics began filing death certificates in 1908 for persons who died in Alabama.

Death certificates are confidential records with restricted access for 25 years from the date of death. Death certificates over 25 years old may be obtained by anyone upon payment of the proper fee. As with birth certificates, the following persons can obtain death certificates less than 25 years old. The Father or Mother, the Husband or Wife, Son or Daughter, Grandchildren, Sister or Brother, Legal Representative of Family or Estate, or person listed as providing information can obtain the certificate.

The fee to search for a death certificate is \$12.00, which includes one certified copy of the death certificate or a "Certificate of Failure to Find." Each additional copy of the certificate is \$4.00, if ordered at the same time. Checks or Money Orders should be made payable to "Vital Records". Please do not send cash. Fees are not refundable.

Please provide as much of the following information as possible:

1. Full legal name of the deceased
2. Date of death
3. County or city where they died
4. Sex
5. Social Security number
6. Date of birth or age at death
7. Race
8. Name of Spouse
9. Names of parents
10. Your name
11. Your signature
12. Your relationship to the person whose certificate you are requesting
13. Address where the certificate is to be mailed
14. Your daytime phone number

Send the appropriate fees and as much of the above information as you have to the above address. Questions can be answered at (334) 206-5418.

Death certificates can be obtained at any county health department in the State of Alabama. Most death certificates can be issued while you wait.

Corrections or changes to death certificates may be made through an amendment process and changes may be made by the certifier to the medical certification.

The above information can be obtained from the official state web site: Alabama.gov. All of the information on death certificates may not be considered primary sources. The provider of information on the death certificate may not have personal knowledge of the parents names or even the correct date of birth.

USE ONLY FOR A VITAL EVENT WHICH OCCURRED IN ALABAMA

The fee for a birth, death, marriage or divorce record search is \$12.00, which includes the cost of one certified copy OR Certificate of Failure to Find. For additional copies of the same record ordered at the same time, the fee is \$4.00 each. For information on how to expedite a document, call 334-206-5418. Amendments, adoptions, legitimations, and delayed certificates must be processed through the Center for Health Statistics. The fee is \$15.00 to amend a record, \$20.00 to prepare a new certificate of birth after adoption or legitimation or to file a delayed certificate, which also covers the cost of one certified copy of the record. Make check or money order payable to the "State Board of Health." Fees are non-refundable. Do not request two different types of certificates on the same form. **PRINT ALL INFORMATION LEGIBLY.** You must complete & sign the applicant section or your request cannot be processed.

TAKE THIS FORM TO ANY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT IN ALABAMA OR MAIL THIS FORM TO:
Alabama Department of Public Health, Center for Health Statistics, P.O. Box 5625, Montgomery, Alabama 36103-5625
For information on ordering a vital record via the Internet, visit our web site at: <http://www.adph.org>

APPLICANT SECTION (THIS SECTION MUST BE COMPLETED) Birth certificates less than 125 years old and death certificates less than 25 years old are restricted records. You must be an immediate family member OR demonstrate a legal right to the record in order to obtain a copy of the record (§ 22-9A-21). Anyone falsely applying for a record is subject to a penalty upon conviction of up to three months in the county jail or a fine of up to \$500. Code of Ala. 1975, § 13A-10-109. By signing, you are certifying you have a legal right to the record requested.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Print Your Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Daytime Phone () _____

Your Relationship to Person Whose Record is Being Requested _____

Reason for Request (if not immediate family) _____

I allow the following individual to pick up the certificate (s) _____

BIRTH: NUMBER OF COPIES _____ AMOUNT PAID \$ _____

FULL NAME AS ON BIRTH CERTIFICATE _____
FIRST MIDDLE LAST

DATE OF BIRTH _____ SEX _____

COUNTY OF BIRTH _____ HOSPITAL _____

FULL MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER _____
FIRST MIDDLE LAST

FULL NAME OF FATHER _____
FIRST MIDDLE LAST

DEATH: NUMBER OF COPIES _____ AMOUNT PAID \$ _____

LEGAL NAME OF DECEASED _____
FIRST MIDDLE LAST

DATE OF DEATH _____ COUNTY OF DEATH _____ SEX _____

SSN _____ DATE OF BIRTH OR AGE _____ RACE _____

NAME OF SPOUSE _____
FIRST MIDDLE LAST

NAME OF PARENTS _____

STARTING WITH 1991 DEATHS, CERTIFICATES MAY BE ISSUED WITHOUT A CAUSE OF DEATH. Indicate the number of copies of each type of certificate you want: _____ WITH CAUSE OF DEATH _____ WITHOUT CAUSE OF DEATH

MARRIAGE OR DIVORCE: NUMBER OF COPIES _____ AMOUNT PAID \$ _____

FULL NAME OF HUSBAND _____
FIRST MIDDLE LAST

FULL MAIDEN NAME OF WIFE _____
FIRST MIDDLE LAST

DATE OF MARRIAGE _____ (OR) DATE OF DIVORCE _____

IF MARRIAGE, COUNTY WHERE LICENSE WAS ISSUED _____

IF DIVORCE, COUNTY OF DIVORCE _____

COUNTY REGISTRAR SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____ COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT RECEIPT NO. _____

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Writing About Your Family History

Most of the family genealogists that I know are also interested in history. Do you remember history in high school as being boring? Just knowing or reading dry facts about history and relatives does bore most people. History can be interesting.

The following information comes from the web site of Robert Sewell, also known as Canada Bob. Robert is a retired science teacher from Ontario, Canada and is unreachable in the months of May through August.

His web site is available at any time: <http://robertsewell.tripod.com> or <http://www3.sympatico.ca/robert.sewell/sewell.html#gen1>. While writing this column, I was unable to use the site map. Robert has information on many English family lines and I recommend these sites.

Eleanor of Aquitaine was born about 1123 and died either March 31 or April, 1204. Boring! Eleanor was perhaps the most powerful and influential person of her time. Before I started genealogy, I had never heard of her.

On July 25, 1137, she married Louis VII or Louis the Young. He was the son of Louis VI also known as "Louis the Fat". At the age of 17, Louis the Young became King of France and at 15, Eleanor was Queen of France. I don't remember my history teacher sharing these nicknames.

Louis the Young took Eleanor on the Second Crusade in the late 1140's. This was very unusual; but, that did not stop Eleanor. The Second Crusade is remembered historically as being a flop. Eleanor had a jolly time anyway. She is rumored to have engaged in "affairs" with other men, including her uncle Raymond. I don't remember anything about women going on Crusades.

After the Crusade, Louis the Young is reported to have become an old sourpuss. Eleanor's conduct may have had something to do with that. Louis and Eleanor had two daughters, Mary Capet, born in 1145 and Alisa Capet, born in 1150. Louis had the marriage annulled early in the year 1152.

On May 18, 1152, Eleanor married 20 year old Henry "Curtmantle". Two years later, on December 19, 1154, at Westminster Abbey, Henry became King Henry II of England. Eleanor was 30 and had a bad reputation. Henry's father advised against the marriage. They had eight children and a rough marriage due to Henry's affairs with other women. These eight children included King Richard "The Lionhearted", who died after being shot with a crossbow, and King John, who had almost as many illegitimate children as his father.

Henry Plantagenet was known as Curtmantle because of his fondness for short hunting style coats instead of long robes.

His son was known as John "Lackland" because of his small holdings. King John is best known as the enemy of Robin Hood. He inherited England and most of France when his brother Richard died. John later lost most of his French possessions.

Another fact passed over in my history books is that John had a disagreement with Pope Innocent III over the appointment of Stephen Langton as Archbishop of Canterbury. John refused to accept Langton and the Pope excommunicated him in 1209. John sent two knights and a priest to the Islamic Emir Al Mounenim also known as Mohammed Al Nassar. They proposed a deal whereby John switched to the Islamic faith if the Emir would support John as King of England. Of course, John likely intended to waltz on the deal and the Emir declined the offer anyway.

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What is your opinion of Eleanor? Did you know that she helped both Richard and John when they ruled England? When Richard was captured during the Third Crusade, Eleanor helped raise his ransom. She also helped John during his rule. Whatever you think of their morals, Henry and Eleanor loved their children.

Here Eleanor and her family have a story, not just dry facts and dates. This is the kind of history that makes modern television look tame. And you wondered where television writers came up with those twisted plots.

While most of us have not traced our ancestry back that far, our ancestors still have stories to tell.

My great great-grandfather crossed the Coosa River at Sewell's Ferry on Christmas day 1877 and his children later told of walking in the snow to a new home. John Asbury Sewell had moved by train, steamboat, mules and wagon, and horse and buggy from Cowetta County, Georgia to Cherokee County, Alabama. He was looking for water with a high lime content, hard water. We are not sure why; but, he found it.

Family history also says that John Asbury Sewell met his wife, Martha N. Polk when she was visiting her cousin in Franklin County, Georgia. Her cousin's family ran the local grain mill. John's family brought their corn to the mill in horse or mule drawn wagons. Martha was 15 when they married in Madison County, Georgia and they had 12 children before she died at forty years of age. Her sister, Sarah married John's brother, Francis Marion Sewell. Martha Norissa Polk was the second cousin of U. S. President James Knox Polk, (documentation available).

Religion was also a big part of their lives. The name Asbury or Asberry is very common in the Sewell family. There was a Bishop Asbury, Methodist circuit rider, in North Georgia and the Carolinas. He stayed regularly with the John N. Sewell family at their home in Banks County, Georgia. He used their roll top desk to write his sermons and the desk is now in a local museum of the Methodist faith. John N. Sewell was also a Methodist minister. His limestone church is still standing; but, the church is no longer safe to use. The simple wood frame house was still in the family as recently as a couple of years ago.

I mentioned in the last newsletter that members of my Mother's family, were Lutheran and helped found one of the oldest Lutheran Churches in continuous use. My great-grandfather Tom McJunkins was a Presbyterian and given a gold watch for fifty years service.

In another family line, a Revolutionary War era sea captain, Isaiah Quimby agreed to the marriage of his daughter if their descendants would include his family name in each generation. "Old man Quimby requested that each offspring name a child "Quimby" in each generation, down the ages, to tell kinship."

How and why are names handed down in your family. The name Chester Clay Carter is now in the fourth generation. The oldest male with the name is "Big Chester" and his son "Little Chester".

This kind of story makes the people real. It gives them substance. Why did your ancestors move from place to place? Was there flood or famine?

Did your ancestors move for land? It was common for large families to move because of the division of the family estate was too small to live on. Other families moved because the land had to be sold to pay debts. Those who had performed military service could be entered into the land lotteries. As new land opened up the family would move in, improve the land and often end up in debt, again. The land would be seized or sold and the family would move on. During the Georgia land lottery, the state gave away more acreage than the state contained.

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Other families gained land by marrying an Indian woman. Among the Indians, the women owned the land. The husband would register the land in his name, per European custom, and then kill his wife. This happened all too frequently.

Tell your family's story. Use what you know and label the unsupported portion as a story told at family reunions and holiday celebrations. Document your sources.

In many families, there are family legends of 3, 5 or 7 brothers that came to this country together. Some of these can be documented, some can not.

Does the family homestead still stand? Do you have photographs, descriptions, copies of deeds or maps? The family home can also have a story to tell. Did it survive a storm or flood?

I know of one family who built on a room each time they had a child. The community kidded them about how soon the house would reach the river. The home still stands and is a log cabin with rough cut planks for the additions. This home is still in use with vinyl siding.

My father grew up in a large family. As a child he slept in part of the original kitchen. When he was about 15 years old, he built himself a room off this kitchen. The home place is falling down now and has been unoccupied for many years. We have pictures and a drawing my mother did for use on stationary. Our family may not own the farm much longer; but, we just can't make ourselves tear down the house.

How about your family home? Where was the barn and what adventures did you have there? Did you ever jump out of the loft into piles of hay? Did you have a hand cranked corn sheller? Did your barn shelter animals or farm equipment? Did you ever play in a cotton wagon in late September or October, burying yourself under the cotton? Did you throw hay up on the wagon or into the loft? Can you remember the smell of the barn or fresh hay?

Did your family own or work at a business that still stands? Do you have photographs of your family cutting hair? How about clerking in a grocery store or working in the fields planting or harvesting? There may be old ads from the newspaper or circulars that include your ancestors.

Did your family have a garden? What did you grow and what was your favorite food? Did you have apple, peach or pear trees? Can you still remember the juice of ripe peaches running down your forearm and chin? How about the smell or taste of homemade jelly or preserves? Did you ever pick blackberries and eat more than you put in the bucket? Maybe you picked blueberries, strawberries, or other fruit fresh from the fields.

How about your neighbors? Did they have kids your age? What kind of fun did you have? Did you live close to a river, lake or ocean?

My uncles told me about going to the river and bending a hickory sapling over and climbing on. The other kids would let go and one kid would be thrown into the river. This continued until a smaller kid was thrown almost all the way across the river. That was the story and they stuck to it. How about tying two syrup buckets together to use as floats?

One night they had a party. The outhouse was the other side of a drainage ditch. Some of the kids removed the plank used to cross the ditch and several people in need almost fell into the ditch. They were hiding nearby and the laughter led to their being caught. The plank was replaced and the punishment followed.

Joe Sewell, the baseball player, told of carrying a stick with him all the time. He also carried a pocket full of rocks or bottle tops. He was always throwing them into the air and hitting them with the stick. This is where he developed his timing and aim.

The stories from your family can be lost forever if you do not record them. These stories and memories make the family history a treasure that dry facts can never equal.

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Things to do This Summer

Is your summer planned around your genealogy? Here are some suggestions.

Keep activities with children on their level. Work in increments that keep the children interested. Offer rewards for obtainable goals. Don't try to get it all done in one day. This applies to you as well as the children or other assistants.

Take your children or grandchildren to parks, monuments, museums or other places. Tell them the stories of their ancestors that served in the military. Maybe their parents or other family members served their country.

Sort the family photographs into albums or by family or other groupings. Label the photographs with archival quality pens that will not damage the photographs.

Have the kids make their own albums with their photographs or pictures they cut out of magazines.

Get them to write a short story of something they have done and do the same thing yourself. Organizing their thoughts is a good habit to learn early.

If you watch a movie together, tell them a family story about your experiences or visits to that area or a similar area.

Scan photographs onto disks or other media. Kids love a chance to use electronic equipment. Doing this with someone will allow you a chance to tell a story about each person.

If you have internet access, this is a good time to surf the web with them. Show them how to do searches. They need to know how to limit a search to appropriate areas. Maybe you can have them print out a pedigree chart for their own project or for later class credit at school. They may help you expand your knowledge of the web.

How about a trip to the library? The library has historical fiction that may interest your child or you. The family history section may have something you can use to interest them in the family history. Your family may be interested in biographies. Some are sure to be on their level or about someone they are interested in learning about.

Organize your short stories about your life into one article or chapter. This can be by subject or using your own time line. You may want to compare your life with the history of our time. Where were you when Kennedy was assassinated, when Elvis died, did you watch the NASA space launches, were you living near floods, tornados or other newsworthy events?

Make space for storing your data. Organize your notebooks, notes or copies.

Look through home movies. Can they be copied on disks or cassettes to be shared?

Pick pictures to be copied and shared at holiday celebrations or reunions. Sharing is a good way to make sure they survive. Can an original be replaced with a copy for display?

Will you attend class reunions this year? What will you be able to share with your friends?

Record the summer holiday memories of your past. They will be sharper as the holiday approaches.

Back to school memories for your children or yourself. Do you have school pictures to organize, copy or share?

Memories of days before air conditioning can be appreciated if you have time to spend outside. How did your ancestors keep cool? Did you have shade trees and rope swings?

If you visit cemeteries, take appropriate clothing. Plan for insects and sun. Take water to drink or use for cooling. Take someone with you in case of accident or medical distress.

Bring a friend or family member to the Morning Group meeting on the first Thursday of each month at your Tuscaloosa Public Library.

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2006 Membership/Renewal Application

\$8.00 Single Membership: ()

New Member: ()

\$14.00 Two Member Household: ()

Renewal: ()

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: (____) _____-_____ Email: _____

Surnames you are researching (up to eight): _____

Make checks payable to: "**Morning Group, T.G.S.**" and mail to P.O. Box 20565, Tuscaloosa, AL 35402

Please invite friends and family. Growth is essential.

THE MORNING GROUP
TUSCALOOSA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Mr. Charles E. Sewell – President
P.O. Box 20565
Tuscaloosa, AL 35402

