

Roots & Branches
Tuscaloosa Genealogical Society Morning Group



Roots & Branches

Tuscaloosa Genealogical Society
The Morning Group
NEWSLETTER

Volume: XXX ISSN: 0893-4150 The Morning Group November 2005 Number 3

President: Ray Hamer; Secretary: Jane Drake; Treasurer: Lillie May Clary; Corresponding Secretary: Ruby Sutton; Historian: Cubell Stell; Parlementarian: Gracie O. Swartz;
2nd VP: Charles Sewell

Message from:

Ray Hamer, President
Morning Genealogy Group
P.O. Box 20565
Tuscaloosa, AL 35402

Thank you for supporting our programs this quarter.

We celebrate our 30th Anniversary in December with a combined meeting of both the Morning Group and the Evening Group on December 1st, 2005 at the Tuscaloosa Public Library. Hope to see you there.

Please take a moment and pray for the family of Beasey Hendrix, Jr. and the families of other members that are no longer with us.

As this year ends and the Thanksgiving season approaches, look forward to opportunities to be with family and friends. Share your photographs, memories and family histories. Give thanks for all that we have.

Thank you, again.

Ray Hamer

From the Editor:

Please do not forget to renew your membership. We need YOU!

In December we will meet with the Evening Group for a 30th Anniversary Celebration for the Tuscaloosa Genealogy Society. Much has been planned. If you are a past officer, expect an invitation. All members are hereby invited to attend. Celebrate the history of our Society and the friends

Your assistance is needed to maintain the quality of our newsletter. If you have news or other items of interest, please contact Charles Sewell or Kay Blakeney. Mrs. Blakeney has graciously agreed to help on a regular basis. Please let her know how much you enjoy her contribution to this month's newsletter. Your techniques for solving brick wall problems and finding new family members may help someone else. Good luck hunting ancestors.

Charles E. Sewell

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Digging for Family Roots

Kay Phurrough Blakeney

As far back as I can remember people have always asked me about the origin of my family name: Phurrough. That's how long I have not known. So, it seems appropriate that one day I would try to find the answer, but so far not luck!

Along the way I have learned a lot about many of my father's relatives. In 1999 I acquired my first computer and started searching the web. At about the same time I became acquainted with a distant cousin, Rex, from Talladega County. Rex had been collecting information about the family for many years and was kind enough to share all that he had found. This really brought home the advice to check and see if others have already researched the family. If you are fortunate enough to find such a person, it will save you a great deal of time and effort.

My next break came when my nephew found another family researcher, Debbie, in Louisiana through a web search. She was also in possession of lots of family information relating to the known siblings of my gggrandfather, John B. Thanks to computer sharing Debbie, Rex and I were able to combine our information and get a better listing of all the known/found relatives.

Basically Rex traced the family back to 1839 when John B. Phurrough, my ancestor, was found in the church records of Alpine Baptist Church, Talladega County, Al. As recorded in the church minutes of August 1839 "received into membership of the church by experience" was Jno B. Phurrow. It is also recorded that in July 1840 he was "excluded" from membership. Rex found this information long before the computer age by going through church records held in the Alabama Archives in Montgomery.

Most all other information has been found in the Federal Census records. In 1850 John B. and his siblings are found in Talladega County census. There is also a female, Hester Fleming, who has living with her Ester Furrow, believed to be a sister of John B. So far we have not been able to identify this woman but Debbie thinks she might be the mother and had remarried. Hester Fleming is noted as being born in Virginia. The others are noted as being born in Tennessee or Virginia. This birth information changes on different census reports. We have found one county in Virginia, 1820, that has both Furrow's and Fleming's in the same census. It is my opinion that it will take a personal trip to Virginia to research other records to see if there is a connection. At the present time we all continue to search and follow up any clues.

Early this year one of my cousins let me know that he and my dad's remaining siblings plus other cousins would be coming to Alabama and would like to get together at my home for a mini-reunion. This meeting was to be held July 7, 2005. In March I decided to enter what information I had into a genealogy program to be presented at the reunion.

I discussed this idea with Charles Sewell and he helped me decide to use Family Tree Maker 2005. I promptly obtained the program, installed it and immediately realized that I needed help. Charles came out and helped me get started and helped me understand how the program worked.

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I also obtained the instruction manual, which was some help. This program proved to be a little more complicated than I had anticipated.

In addition to deciding on the genealogy program I found that I had to organize all of my material into the family group sheets. This made it easier to enter the data. Now as I find information I am trying to put it into a useable format. It will save time in the long run. Another result of better organization of data was finding out that I did not have all the information on some individuals that I needed. This meant I had to go back to the original sources again. In some ways this was not bad because it put me in touch with relatives that I had not contacted for some time. I regret that I did not start talking to my aunts and uncles earlier because only two were left for me to interview. My dad's brother went with me to local cemeteries and helped me find burial sites and get information from tombstones. He also shared with me some stories of his experiences during WW 11. My aunt was able, with prodding, to give me information about her deceased siblings and also my paternal grandmother's siblings. Both these individuals are in their 80's and this valuable information was in danger of being lost in time.

One of the most interesting findings was in the 1910 census and was related to a great aunt. Aunt Cindy (1873-1956) was an older woman when I knew her as a young girl and was quiet independent. I think the word was that she was just "too independent" and that her husband had left her many years ago. There is no record that they ever divorced. She was also childless, or so everyone thought. On the 1910 census she was listed as the mother of four with one living child under the age of one and was living with her husband. Her mother, Mary Furr, (the name is found spelled in many ways) also lived with them. Everyone at the reunion was surprised to learn this information and this was what most all of them talked about. In fact I still get comments about this. Fortunately I had a copy of the census record for all to see.

As I continued to work on the family group sheets I also looked for marriage records, visited the courthouse in Talladega County, checked land records and talked to several second cousins. In addition I did research at two libraries in Talladega County and found some information in old newspapers. I also had to go back to Coosa County to check the tombstone records for one of my dad's sisters. Not even her living siblings could remember when she died. My mother, age 91, remembered going to the funeral and could tell me how to get to the cemetery, but did not remember the name of the cemetery. So again, it is important to talk to all the elderly relatives and friends that you can find.

It surprised me at the length of time it took me to pull together the information and enter it in the computer then get it copied. I did very little of anything else from March to the last of June but I got it done. So far I have not put this into a bound format. I have instead placed all my original data in archival safe plastic sleeves and along with the typed data have placed it in a three-ring notebook. In all I ended up with seventeen pages of typed material plus all the original data and this is only for my paternal grandfather's line. Since finishing this part I have not entered another line but I am about ready to start back to work.

Thanks to Mrs. Blakeney for this article. Anyone wishing to write for the Roots & Branches can send the copy to Charles Sewell, phone: 454-3497, at bsewell13698@charter.net or Mrs. Blakeney. Please limit articles to 2 edited pages of 12 point type. Exceptions can be made.

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Records of the Commissioners of Claims, Southern Claims Commission,
1871-1880

Petition of Rebecca (Sewell) O'Dell of Howell's Cross Roads, Cherokee County, Alabama for Horses, Forage, and Farm Produce taken near Gaylesville, Alabama, by U. S. Army, \$1,790.00.

Rebecca Sewell O'Dell is my 3rd great grandmother. During the War of Northern Aggression, she ran the farm and ferry, with her son's help, while raising children by her husband Isaac who had died in 1849. She prospered and we have found 2 deeds for land purchased after the War. The local militia, at one time, wanted to burn down her house because she helped the wounded from both sides. Her neighbors spoke up for her and saved her house. When Sherman's forces moved through the area she buried the family fortune and silverware under the house. A former slave sat on her porch with a rifle across his knees to help her defend the house, family and other women and children living with her.

She remarried after the War; but, her new husband ran off to South Carolina with one of her former slaves. We believe he died there. The Isaac Sewell farm and ferry are now covered by Weis Lake, an Alabama Power Company reservoir. Since we have been unable to locate a burial location, we think she is buried on the home place.

On March 3rd, 1871, Congress passed a bill to reimburse Southern property owners for livestock and produce seized by the Union Army. The record shown on the right came from the Records of the Commissioners of Claims, Southern Claims Commission, 1871-1880, page 4. These records are on microfilm. The ink and paper are deteriorating. The last page was so faded by the time they made the copies that about the only readable image is the amount disallowed, \$1,790.00.

Rebecca had to swear that no member of her immediate family had taken up arms against the Union. There were also statements from some of her neighbors about the items taken and her character. The items taken were itemized and a price assessed for each item.

169

No. 7236

CLAIM

Rebecca "O'dell"

Cherokee County

Alabama

\$1,790.00

APPLICATION

TO HAVE TESTIMONY TAKEN

BY SPECIAL COMMISSIONER

B. P. Baskin

Trusting this to Com-
missioner of Claims
Washington D.C. June 29,
1872

FILED BY

JUSTUS I. McCARTY,

Attorney,

WASHINGTON, D. C.

Printed and Sold by Powell, Clark & Co., 637 F St., Washington.

July 11/72

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Photographing Tombstones

Why photograph tombstones? Photographs provide an inexpensive and laborsaving way to record the information on a tombstone, headstone, footstone or other marker. The beauty of a carved grave marker can not be adequately captured with words. Angels, cherubs, scrolls, and other adornments are usually worth recording. Sometimes a photograph will be easier to read than the actual stone. A photographic record is easy to maintain, store and share with other relatives.

Digital photography is taking this method or record keeping to new levels. Digital cameras are getting easier to use and the image is immediately available to be sure you have what you need. Film photographs require developing before you know if you have what you need or missed an opportunity. The bad shot can be demoralizing if the cemetery is not where you can visit without an extended trip. Some cemetery trips are once in a lifetime chances to gather this information.

Have a plan. Know which relatives you are looking for and make those photographs first. The lucky finds are just icing on the cake. Make sure you have permission to be on the premises and to take pictures. Being arrested and fined for violating trespass or cemetery preservation laws can ruin a trip. Contacting local genealogical and historical societies may save you a trip. They know their area and laws and may provide the information you need.

Extended trips are not the time to try out a new camera. Practice in local cemeteries where techniques can be tried and discarded without great losses of time and money.

Techniques to practice:

1. Time of day – the angle of the sun or other light source may make the stone easier to read or obscure it completely. A high powered flashlight can be enough to make a difference even in daylight.
2. Flash – a polished or white stone may reflect the light from the flash back into the camera obscuring the information. When using a flash, do not stand directly in front of a polished or white marble stone. Take a side step, shot from above or below or check the digital image.
3. Use of reflected light – tin foil on a cookie sheet is an inexpensive reflector. This can direct bright light at an angle to make or diminish shadows. The contrast of shadows can make the raised or engraved letters easier to read. Another good (cheap) reflector is white poster board. This might also be a good time for your companion to cast a shadow on the stone. Kneeling or shooting from a low angle may help.
4. Time exposures – these require a tripod or other method to steady the camera. Extremely cloudy or other low light conditions may make this a necessity if a flash is not available. The bright light from a flash may obscure the information under certain conditions.
5. Zoom – if available this keeps you from moving forward or backward with your attention on the stone instead of your feet and where you are going or standing.
6. Changing your batteries with a digital camera or film on that kind of camera is basic. Know how and when to make these changes. Know if your camera is loaded with film or electronic media. Know how to set it for the resolution needed. There are few things worse than taking photographs with an empty camera. Having a battery die or not enough space on the card or other media is also an ego bruising event.
7. Resolution – the lower the resolution the more photographs that can be taken with the electronic storage device. But; the lower the resolution the fewer the details and the worse the

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finished product will look blow up to eight by ten or larger. Know what you need for your purposes.

8. Film – 35 mm is the most common size film used today with 120 used in the larger format cameras. The 35 mm disposable camera is an excellent back up or even primary camera. The low cost, ease of use and good quality of the photographs make this a good choice. If you are traveling, they are easy to find and usually cost about \$10.00 or less even with a flash. My 4 year old daughter can use these with surprising results. If lost before they are used you are not out much money and they are easily replaced. Some are even waterproof. If you are comfortable with using a camera with automatic or manual settings, go for it. The use of various lenses and exposures can produce beautiful works of art.

The most common film speeds for 35 mm are 200 and 400. The 200 requires more light and has a finer grain and makes the larger prints show details. This is for bright sunlight or partly cloudy days. The 400 speed shows less detail when enlarged; but, requires less light and is more forgiving of small movements in the photographer's hands. The higher film speeds are for moving subjects or very low light.

Another advantage of the 35 mm film is that the images can be purchased on a disk or other electronic media when developed. This makes them easier to share and store.

The use of specialty films is another benefit of the film camera. Infrared film is available; but, it is harder to use. Infrared film can, under certain circumstances, make an otherwise unreadable stone, readable. You must practice with this film which is expensive to buy and have developed. The infrared film does not focus like 35 mm print film. You have to have a manual focus and know where the focus point will be or purchase a camera that requires this film.

What not to do:

Do not use dirt to try to improve the readability. Dirt can introduce microorganisms into the pores of the stone. It also abrades the finish.

Do not press a fragile stone as it might break. This is why photography is replacing rubbings as a method of storing and sharing information.

The use of items such as shaving cream, soap, chemical cleaners and abrasive items such as metal to scrape away stains, lichen or debris may damage the stone. Even mild soaps can damage the surface of a stone making it vulnerable to attack from bacteria, lichens or weather. A soft brush, such as a paint brush, can be used carefully as can a natural sponge and water. Flour and other substances can attract bacterial growth and fungi. A whisk broom can be used to remove bird stains and lichen. Check and make sure that particles of the stone are not being removed. Cornstarch can be sprinkled or thrown onto the surface to bring out information but should be washed off when you are through. Soft drinks should not be used to clean stones. They contain acids which can seriously and permanently damage the stone even when washed off. This is especially true of marble, slate and sandstone. Chalk and charcoal also contain chemicals that can harm the stones.

There are cleaners for tombstones and statues that are commercially available. If you are cleaning and preserving stones, these products will help.

Graphite, a dark substance used in pencils and carbon paper, contains sulphuric acid.

Bleaches kill bacteria, fungi and other organisms but can also damage stone. This is also true of aerosol propellants, and chemicals containing petroleum products, refrigerants and cleaning solvents. CLR, Bam and other products are hydrochloric acids.

If care is taken, your descendants may be able to enjoy the same stones.

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- History of Pickens County**; by Luke E. Tate LH 929.37 58255 Tat
- History of Walnut Grove, Alabama: Etowah County**; by Mattie Cole Stanfield, (Mrs. O. W.) and Norma Self LH 929.37 6167
- Index to Loudoun County, Virginia Chancery Suits, 1759-1915; Marty Hiatt and Craig Roberts Scott LH 929.37 5528 Hia
- Index to Rutherford County Records LH 929.37 6857 Ind
- An Intermediate Short, Short Course in the use of Some North Carolina Records in Genealogical Research; by Margaret Hofmann LH 929.3756 Hoff
- The James Family 1780; researched by John Hester Ward II, indexed and bound by Meredith O'Keene Ward LH 929.2 Jam
- Madison County, North Carolina, Marriage Records, 1852-1868; by Frances T. Ingmire LH 929.37 56875 Ing
- Madison County, Tennessee, County Records on Microfilm; microfilmed by the Restoration and Reproduction section of the Tennessee State Library LH 929.37 6827 Ten
- Maryland Public Service Records, 1775- 1783, a compendium of the men and women of Maryland who rendered aid and support of the American cause against Great Britain during the Revolutionary War; by Henry C. Peden, Jr. LH 929.3752 Ped
- North Carolina County Maps, 1800; by A. B. Pruitt LH 912.756 Pru
- North Carolina Slaves and Free Persons of Color: Iredell County; by William L. Byrd III, John H. Smith LH 929.37 56793 Byr
- The Ogden Family, Elizabethtown Branch: Charts; compiled by Lawrence Van Alstyne LH 929.2 Ogd
- Old Albemarle and its Absentee Landlords; by Worth S. Ray LH 929.37 56144 Ray
- Publications of the Historical Society of Washington County, Virginia; LH 929.37 55725 Was
- Register of Deaths and Register of Births, Tuscaloosa County 1893-1903**; transcribed by June Reese LH 929.37 6184 Ree
- Roots & Branches: Tuscaloosa Genealogical Society newsletter** LH 929.37 6784 Roo
- The Short Course in the use of North Carolina's Early County Level Records in Genealogical Research; by Margaret M. Hofmann LH 929.3756 Hof
- Simpson County, Kentucky Cemeteries; compiled by Simpson County Historical Society LH 929.37 69735 Sim
- Simpson County, Kentucky Records; the Census of 1820 and 1830, Family Bible Records, Cemetery Headstone Inscriptions, Revolutionary War Veteran Pensions Indexed; compiled by Simpson County Historical Society LH 929.37 69735 Sim
- Some Virginia Marriages 1800-1825; compiled by Cecil D. McDonald, Jr. LH 929.3755 McD
- Stokes County, North Carolina Marriage Records, 1783-1868; by Frances T. Ingmire LH 929.37 5664 Ing
- Surry County, North Carolina Marriage Records, 1783-1868; by Frances T. Ingmire LH 929.37 5665 Ing
- Tennessee Soldiers of the Revolution; by Penelope Johnson Allen LH 929.3768 All
- Tombstone Records of Chester County, South Carolina and Vicinity LH 929.37 5747 Cro
- Tuscaloosa County, Alabama Marriage Bonds: May 18, 1859 to December 10, 1863**; copied by Billie T. Lockard and Marine A. Snider, typed and indexed by Marine A. Snider LH 929.37 6184 Tus

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Tuscaloosa County, Alabama Marriage Records: February 1, 1861 to November 24, 1868;
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Tuscaloosa County, Alabama Marriage Records: September 2, 1868 to March 30, 1872;
copied by Billie T. Lockard, Maggie H. Sudduth and Marine A. Snider, typed and
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Tuscaloosa County, Alabama Marriage Records: September 9, 1868 to December 24, 1869;
copied, typed and indexed by Marine A. Snyder

Virginia Court Records in Southeast Pennsylvania: Records of the District of West Augusta and
Ohio and Yohogania Counties, Virginia, 1775-1780;

LH 929.3748 Cru

The Virginia Genealogist;

LH 929.3755 Vir

Wilkes County, Georgia Will Index, 1777-1921; by Ted O. Brooke

LH 929.58172 Bro

Wills of Jefferson County, West Virginia and Other Estate Documents: an Index, 1801-1899;
by Dale Walton Morrow and Deborah Jensen Morrow

LH 929.37 5499 Mor

In Memory of Beasey Henrdrix, Jr.

The members of the Tuscaloosa Genealogy Society, Morning Group are saddened by the loss of Beasey Hendrix, Jr., a long time member. A long time friend and member of the Night Group, Walter Dockery, wrote a touching eulogy for the Night Group newsletter. There is a copy available in the Local History Section.

Cemeteries Can Be Hazardous to Your Health

Most living people do not spend a lot of time in old cemeteries; but, we as genealogists do. Care should be taken in older cemeteries. Stepping into a sunken grave, animal burrow or having a headstone fall on you are not the only hazards.

Before 1910, undertakers used a variety of methods to preserve the bodies of their customers. One of these methods involved the use of from four ounces to twelve pounds of arsenic. Arsenic was banned as an embalming technique because of the deaths of so many undertakers.

Commonly used from 1850 to 1910, arsenic is a naturally occurring element. It can not be destroyed in the environment; but combines with other elements forming inorganic compounds. It can contaminate the ground water under cemeteries.

Other embalming methods included mercury and other dangerous chemicals.

If the cemetery you visit has burials prior to 1910, you should not have excessive contact with the soil with your bare hands or other skin. Good hygiene is recommended before eating or smoking. The use of water from untested sources to wash your hands or other skin surfaces is not advisable. Bring your own water. It is advisable to use latex or other waterproof disposable gloves.

If you have an old cemetery on your property, it is advisable to have your water tested for arsenic and mercury on a regular basis.

Other hazards include ticks, ants and other biting insects, stinging insects and snakes. Be very careful turning over scarp wood, rocks or other hiding places and watch your step. Please take someone with you whenever possible. A cell phone is also a good idea. Another good practice is having someone know where you are and when you will return. Be Careful!

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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. Ray Hamer – President
P.O. Box 20565
Tuscaloosa, AL 35402

