Lecture Topics

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The American West—Publications of the National Archives

Success in finding pertinent information among the millions of records held by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is dependent upon several factors. In the past, the lack of comprehensive finding aids has posed a significant challenge. A recently published NARA subject area guide, *The Trans-Mississippi West, 1804–1912,* unlocks millions of records applicable to the settlement of the West. Many of these records provide genealogically relevant information for the family historian.

Bounty Land Applications: Federal Land Records at the National Archives-Accessing Military Bounty Land Records Remotely

Bounty lands were awarded by the federal government from 1788 to 1855 to encourage and reward service in the military. Nine individual states (Connecticut, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Virginia) also awarded land as part of Revolutionary War compensation. Today more and more of these resources are available online and many records can be easily copied onto disk or digitized by the National Archives.

The Civil War—A Valuable Genealogical Resource

More than 3 million men fought in the Civil War (2,213,363 Union and 1,050,000 Confederate). The eligible military population (ages 18–45) in the 1860 census was about 4.5 million men. When compared to other eighteenth- and nineteenth-century wars the greatest probability of a military-aged individual serving is in the Civil War. The enormous quantity of extant records combined with the broad scope of the war make this event a unique and extraordinarily rich genealogical resource.

Cool Tools for the Cemetery

Discover tools to capture and record headstone information. Locate cemeteries and graves and put them on an appropriate map or digital device. Understand the differences of popular websites - Billion Graves, Find a Grave, and Internment.net. Explore the various websites that record military deaths, to include the Veterans Administration grave locator, the American Battle Monuments Commission, and the new ANC Explorer developed by Arlington National Cemetery.

Finding Individuals in the American State Papers

The *American State Papers* (ASP) were created by Congress to provide selected documentation of the early Congresses. The ASP consists of 6,278 documents from the period of 1789–1838 organized into ten classes or series and published in thirty-eight volumes. The Papers were compiled, printed, and distributed from 1831 to 1861. The papers were selected by the clerks of the House and Senate and published by Gales and Seaton. The *American State Papers*, considered part of the U.S. Serial Set, contain import papers of the Congress and Executive branches of the U.S. Government.

Finding Individuals in the Territorial Papers

In 1911 David W. Parker in his *Calendar of Papers in Washington Archives Relating to the Territories of the United States (to 1873)* described the papers held by various Washington, DC, repositories that pertained to the territorial period. Lobbying by historians persuaded Congress to make these papers more readily available to the public. Congress enacted legislation that required the Secretary of State to have the important papers of the territories "collected, edited, copied, and suitably arranged for publication." Publication began in 1934 with the first volume of the *Territorial Papers of the United States*. The printed volumes, compiled and edited first by Clarence Carter and then by John Bloom, were published from 1934–1975. The volumes, organized by territory, contain transcribed original documents from the territorial period (1787–1845). Over time, resource limitations allowed the effort to continue only as a microfilm project of selected documents from the remaining territories. Further resource limitations led to a decision to conclude the effort with a series of finding aids, *The Trans–Mississippi West, 1804–1912: A Guide to the Records of the Territorial Period*. Though these guides are finding aids, not records, they are of tremendous value to genealogists.

Finding Records of Military Service in Published U.S. Documents, 1776–1945

Typically, military research includes and to a significant degree relies on the manuscript records of the National Archives. However, an underused but extraordinarily rich collection of sources comprise the published records of the federal and state governments. Significant resources to access these records are identified. Many of these resources are online and many are for sale at the Government Printing Office (GPO. This lecture explains how to identify and find the needed resources.

Genealogical Applications of Historical GIS

Learn to use these new tools to expand your research plans. GIS (geographic information systems) is a database of geographic information. Google Earth is an example of a large and very sophisticated GIS application. Essentially, GIS applications are databases of geographic data linked to a myriad of other data. Computer programs allow a variety of options to display and analyze the data. Generally, many applications take the form of a base map display with the ability to overlay data linked to location. A historic GIS essentially links spatial data with historic data. Examples include applications that display census data, boundary information, historic maps, or information from archives. In fact, some specialized genealogical applications already exist, such as Map My Family Tree and Family Atlas.

Introduction to Military Records

Military records offer many opportunities to discover information that supports kinship determinations. Soldiers had requirements to provide next-of-kin information in the event of death or disability, and beneficiaries of military benefits had to establish kinship. Military records are most effective when correlated with other sources. Some examples will be presented that use a variety of records.

Land Entry Papers and Records of the General Land Office

Discover the genealogical value of federal land records, divided between the National Archives and Bureau of Land Management, Eastern States Office (BLM-ESO). Session

explores both the genealogical treasures found in the land entry files and extensive online records of the General Land Office. These documents record the first transfer of federal land and much more.

Mapping the West

From the earliest mapping efforts of Lewis and Clark to the great railroad survey expeditions, the results have provided a rich resource to use in researching our western ancestors. Maps typically include some combination of geographic features, political boundaries, and even property owners. This kind of information makes maps a useful, indeed an essential, tool for conducting effective genealogical research.

Mexican War Research

Precipitated by the acceptance of Texas into the Union, war was declared 13 May 1846. Nearly 80,000 Americans served in this war, many from the South. Thousands gave their lives in combat or died of disease. Many genealogically valuable records were generated, especially those created to gain pension and bounty land benefits. Some online rosters of soldiers and sailors exist, and the many modern tools of the Internet age help in the search.

Military Fraternal Organizations

The genealogical value of these records relates primarily to documenting military service, often from a perspective different than the official records. These records also will often document family relationships and lineal descents. Generally fraternal organization records have two components. The first component is the membership records that document the eligibility to join and record the participation in the organization. The criteria can be as simple as honorable service or hereditary descent from a veteran. In case of those organizations with a hereditary requirement for membership, many generations are documented. The second component consists of memorials that the organization completed to honor their members.

Military Manuscript Collections

For our purposes, manuscript collections refer to the unpublished (often handwritten) documents of the government, organizational records, and personal papers of both officials and private individuals. The range extends from the extensive correspondence files of the War Department to the diaries of individual soldiers and sailors. The genealogical applications are endless. These documents are many times the only original record or source of an event and frequently offer primary information about an event or fact. Records of birth, marriage, and death may be buried in these records and almost always these documents add context and substance to our ancestor's lives.

NARA Website and More

Even if you never go to Washington or one of the regional branches, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has information to help your genealogical search. The NARA website and Fold3.com provide access to NARA's records. The website is a portal to information about records, genealogy research information, and even access to many individual records. We will discuss researching records, researching people, ordering publications, and ordering records. Also we will explore NARA's partnership with Fold3.

A New Guide —The Trans-Mississippi West, 1804–1912: Records of the General Land Office (GLO)

Until this publication, no comprehensive guide has existed that adequately described federal land records. Despite the limitation in time frame and geographic area of this new guide, it describes the activities of the GLO broadly and has relevance to all of the 30 public land states. Among many topics, this guide provides access to, mining claims, private land claims, and the thousands of transactions found in land entry papers that record the transfer of public lands to individuals or other private ownership. Also, this guide describes the extensive correspondence records of the GLO.

Patriotic Society Libraries in the DC Area

The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) has been collecting genealogical information since 1890 to support the application process for membership and to honor the service of patriots. Unique eighteenth-century records and published sources abound at the library of the Society of the Cincinnati. The session discusses both online and onsite offerings for both libraries.

Remote Research in the Databases of the Daughters of the American Revolution Genealogical Research System

The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution has been collecting genealogical information since 1890 to support both the application process for membership and to honor the service of Patriots. The Society operates a marvelous library in Washington, DC. Over the last few years they have scanned and provided public access to extensive online resources.

Researching Government Documents

The Government Printing Office (GPO) has been distributing government documents since about 1815. These documents represent an enormous collection of information that has considerable genealogical research application. In the context of this lecture, the phrase "government documents" refers to publications of the executive branch and the Congress. Some examples include the American State Papers, the Serial Set, patents, and the annual reports of the executive departments.

Researching Revolutionary War Soldiers

Revolutionary War research can be difficult. Despite the enormous amount of research conducted by thousands of individuals seeking their ancestors, many times pursuing membership in lineage societies such as the DAR, thousands of soldiers remain undiscovered. Many modern tools of the internet age help in the search. Online compiled service records and pension applications make "neighborhood searches" possible and practical. Other digitized sources such as bounty land applications at the Library of Virginia provide additional resources. Traditional, newer and obscure resources will be presented in this lecture.

The Serial Set, American State Papers, and the Territorial Papers

Session explores the foundation publications of the United States Government, how to effectively access these documents, and how to use them in an effective research plan.. These

records document the lives of individuals who interacted with the government in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Pensions, petitions, records of government service, and much more are found in these publications.

Soldiers' Homes

The National Home for Volunteer Soldiers, hereafter referred to as the NHDVS, was established by an act of Congress in 1865. The purpose of the home system (initially called the National Asylum) was to provide for the care of the large number of wounded and disabled veterans from the Civil War. The following four branches were established under the initial legislation: Central Branch near Dayton, Ohio (1867), the Eastern Brach in Togus, Maine (1867), the Northwestern Branch in Milwaukee, WI (1867), and the Southern Branch in Hampton, VA (1870). The Southern Branch was chosen to provide a comfortable environment for the Negro soldiers who had fought for the Union, and as a place for the treatment of consumption. The home from its inception was intended to be more like a planned community of today, than a simple home and hospital. Extensive amenities and vocational training were provided. The largest branch and showpiece of the system was the Central Branch at Dayton. Records of next of kin and other treasures abound in these records-over 400,000 records.

Urban Mapping Tools

This presentation will suggest strategies to correlate large amounts of information often developed in urban research, with a significant emphasis on the use of cartographic resources. Generally researchers of urban settings have an abundance of sources to consider. Many times the challenge is to connect and analyze multiple, even overwhelming, amounts of information. Many resources will be discussed, especially, cadastral maps (land ownership), Sanborn fire insurance maps and city directories.

Using Military Maps in Genealogy

Military maps have some obvious value to the family researcher. If our person of interest was in a military unit or fought in a battle we might want to understand the battle or locate his unit, knowing he was there at that time and place. However, even if our research subject was not in the military, we should consider the possibilities. Many military maps are large scale (show a lot of detail), and many show property owners. In the Civil War era it was common to navigate by referring to a location by the owner's name. Your ancestor's house may have been identified on the battlefield map as a reference point, or served as a hospital. A farm may have been turned into a cemetery.

Using Topographic and Other Maps

Topographic maps can be used to help solve genealogical problems. Recently both historical and current topographic maps produced by the United States Geological Survey, have been made available online. The accuracy and detail of these maps support many genealogical applications. For example, topographic maps used with the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) can positively locate a forgotten or abandoned cemetery. A topographic map combined with Global Positions System (GPS) technology can make short work of finding an obscure or remote location. The topography displayed on maps can suggest patterns of settlement. These are just a few of the reasons that genealogists should become familiar with topographic maps.

Washington, DC-Area Map Repositories, Part 1

A survey of both the online and physical map repositories located in the Washington, DC, area. This session examines the holdings of the Library of Congress, both online and the 6 million maps onsite in the Madison Building. Use of maps from the Library of Congress will be illustrated in a genealogical context.

Washington, DC-Area Map Repositories, Part 2

A survey of both the online and physical map repositories located in the Washington, DC, area. This session shifts focus to the National Archives, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Use of maps from these repositories will be illustrated in a genealogical context.