

The Rotarian Genealogist

FEBRUARY, 2024 | THIRD QUARTER 2023-2024

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Notes from our President Sue Webber

I am really looking forward to our next speaker, Judy Nimer Muhn and her presentation on 'No Dead Ends'. Since I have only been researching my ancestors for a few years, I soak up everything the professionals have to share.

I started with my mother's side of my family which was mostly established in the US. I was able to get back to the early 17th century. I am happy with that so far. Then, I switch it up and start on my father's side. Out comes the Tylenol, the late nights, and one puzzle after another.

Our very own Tris, helped me navigate the first hurdle with my great grandmother, Emma. Progress was made. But then the struggle was real. I hit a tangled mess and I just couldn't bring myself back around to it. I was hoping it would fix itself.

I found it disappointing that distant relatives wouldn't share details; I was trying to understand the culture shock that the census records put before me, and trying to read the handwriting of the record keepers and forgiving them for all the misspelled names. It's very challenging and very rewarding. Since there are 'No Dead Ends', it's time to reboot and tackle it.



FORG Calendar

- 10 February Quarterly Business Meeting/Reunion
- 15 April Board Meeting
- 1 May Newsletter
- 11 May FORG Family Reunion Meeting

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QR Code



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to our FB page.

FORG Family Reunion Meeting



Judy Nimer Muhn

FORG Member from Milford, Michigan, United States

Beginning genealogy research at the age of 12, Judy has provided research to clients around the U.S. and Europe, and has presented at national, regional and local conferences. Specializing in Acadian & French-Canadian, Native/Indigenous research, and Michigan, Ontario, and Quebec resources and records. Judy is also a specialist in Scottish research and can translate French and German records. Judy's Indigenous ancestors have been in North America for thousands of years (Lakota/Metisse), her French-Canadian ancestors arrived in 1607 to what became Quebec and Acadia, Scottish ancestors in the 1780s and 1830s, and her Polish and German (Pomeranian) ancestors arrived in the late 1880s.

With lineages to the royal families of Europe, United Empire Loyalists, these families are French-speaking and English-speaking and Judy's research includes the various spelling/phonetic variations that our families use through the years. Somewhere in these families there are also Jewish families in Eastern Europe which is part of what Judy is utilizing DNA to research, as well as the "original" Polish surname that the family changed when they immigrated. With family name variations of Nimer, Niemiec, Niemczyk, Niemczyk, Nemshak, and more, Judy welcomes inquiries of those who are genetically linked with Eastern European family heritage.

Services

Services include lineage studies, specific look-ups in Michigan, Quebec, Scottish and Native American/Indigenous resources. Utilizing online and library research, Judy has an extensive network of contacts that also assist her in finding rare and remote resources.

- Geographic Specialties: MI, MN, SD, WI, Midwest, Detroit, Ontario, Quebec, France, Scotland
- Degrees: M.A. (HR/Human Services), Ed.M. (Marriage, Family, Child Psychology), Ph.D.(hon), Reverend (Unity Church)
- Languages: English, French, German, Lakota

No Dead Ends

Saturday, February 10, 2024

1:30 pm Central USA Time

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81849159352?
pwd=TUZSNytvaU5HaTBSVctzWEI4R0FvQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81849159352?pwd=TUZSNytvaU5HaTBSVctzWEI4R0FvQT09)

Meeting ID: 818 4915 9352

Passcode: 314783



We are pleased to invite you to join
The Officers and General Membership of the
Society of Mayflower Descendants in Europe
for a fine online social gathering via Zoom
On Sunday, 4 February 2024



At 2.00 pm Greenwich Mean Time (London)
Hosted by Governor Carmen Kew

The Mayflower and its European Context

A talk by George English (FORG member)

Q&A to follow

Zoom meeting ID: 839 7395 1141 Passcode: 409455

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83973951141?pwd=p7Cs5huw8ZSKu0Buybsnin5fRTQ80j.1>

To introduce our speaker for this delightful event:

George English

*Society of Mayflower Descendants
(Europe)*

Member-at-Large



Mayflower historian and professional genealogist George English talks on a topic that is close to his heart, and that of millions of others, who had an Ancestor who travelled to the New World on the original *Mayflower* voyage in 1620.

George will deliver a free talk on Zoom on **Sunday 4th February 2024** at 2pm (GMT), 3pm mainland Europe (GMT+1) and 9am EST (GMT-5). This talk has been organised by the **Society of Mayflower Descendants in Europe**.

It is now more than 400 years since the Mayflower made “the voyage that changed the world”. It had its origins more than 100 years before in the Age of Discovery.

George’s talk covers the reordering of religion and the enormous social changes that happened in Europe during the Reformation, which led to the Separatist Pilgrims’ leaving for the New World; the voyage itself; and the impact the Mayflower has had on Western civilisation ever since. He explores the life and times of people like Bradford, Brewster, Cooke, Warren and Winslow, and walking in their footsteps in their homeland.

George is the author of genealogical and historical works about the Mayflower, and many other topics. His recent book ***The Delano and Cooke Ancestors*** tells the extraordinary and fascinating story of these Pilgrims from French-speaking Flanders who were persecuted by their Spanish Catholic rulers. He has organised many tours for those who wish to walk in their ancestors’ footsteps.

George will be including a short video in his talk. If you would like to view it in advance, here is the link:

‘Deconstructing History: Mayflower’

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w59TkoL-tZY>

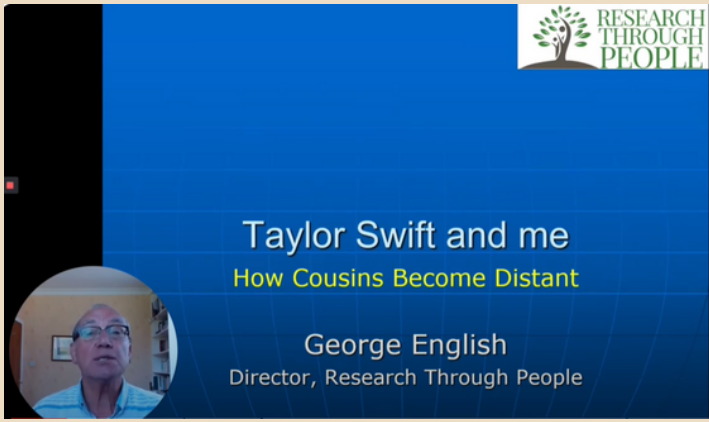
And further, of special note:

This event is open to anyone with an interest in the Mayflower, its voyage and passengers, and the impact that it has had. Please feel free to relay our invitation to others so they know that they are welcome to join us for this occasion.

Please add this date to your diary, plan to pull up a comfortable chair, pour yourself a tippie of your choosing, and enjoy being transported for a short time to the era of our forefathers.

We look forward to seeing you.

George English - Taylor Swift and Me



Check out member George English's video on his distant cousins' relationship with Taylor Swift. Click on the image for his video or [click here for a print version](#).

George also has a YouTube channel entitled [Research Through People](#) and will be speaking at our 10 August 2024 meeting on *Researching your British Ancestors - and Walking in their Footsteps*. **If you have an English surname you would like for him to possibly include in his talk**, please send it directly to him at george1english@gmail.com.

Goerge states: I would be happy to research anyone's ancestry. Send me brief details of what you know - then I will have a look, free of charge, and get back to you with the options that I suggest, plus costs. I offer Rotary members a 10% discount.



NATIONAL GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY®

To find the relationship between two people, first determine the common ancestor you share and your relationship to the common ancestor: grandchild, great grandchild, etc. Pencil in the common ancestor's name, if it helps.

Choose Person #1's relationship to that ancestor from the top row of boxes, e.g. "child."

Choose Person #2's relationship to that ancestor from the left column of boxes, e.g. "grandchild."

The box where the two intersect identifies the relationship between the two people in this case: Niece/Nephew.

Family Relationship Chart

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Common Ancestor	Child	Grandchild	Great Grandchild	Great-Great Grandchild	G-G-Great Grandchild	4th Great Grandchild
1	Child	Sister/Brother	Niece/Nephew	Grandniece/Grandnephew	G-Grandniece/G-Grandnephew	G-G-G-Grandniece/G-G-G-Grandnephew
2	Grandchild	Niece/Nephew	1st Cousin	1st Cousin Once Removed	1st Cousin Twice Removed	1st Cousin Three Times Removed
3	Great Grandchild	Grandniece/Grandnephew	1st Cousin Once Removed	2nd Cousin	2nd Cousin Once Removed	2nd Cousin Twice Removed
4	Great-Great Grandchild	G-Grandniece/G-Grandnephew	1st Cousin Twice Removed	2nd Cousin Once Removed	3rd Cousin	3rd Cousin Twice Removed
5	G-G-Great Grandchild	G-G-Grandniece/G-G-Grandnephew	1st Cousin Three Times Removed	2nd Cousin Twice Removed	3rd Cousin Once Removed	4th Cousin
6	G-G-G-Great Grandchild	G-G-G-Grandniece/G-G-G-Grandnephew	1st Cousin Four Times Removed	2nd Cousin Three Times Removed	3rd Cousin Twice Removed	4th Cousin Once Removed

New Genetic Genealogy Database for Solved Crimes Reveals Startling Trends



Used with permission from [Eastman's Online Genealogy](#).

Genetic genealogy leads to perpetrators being arrested and victims being identified in previously unsolved cold cases going back decades. Now, a company has created the first-ever database to track cases being solved by this technology.

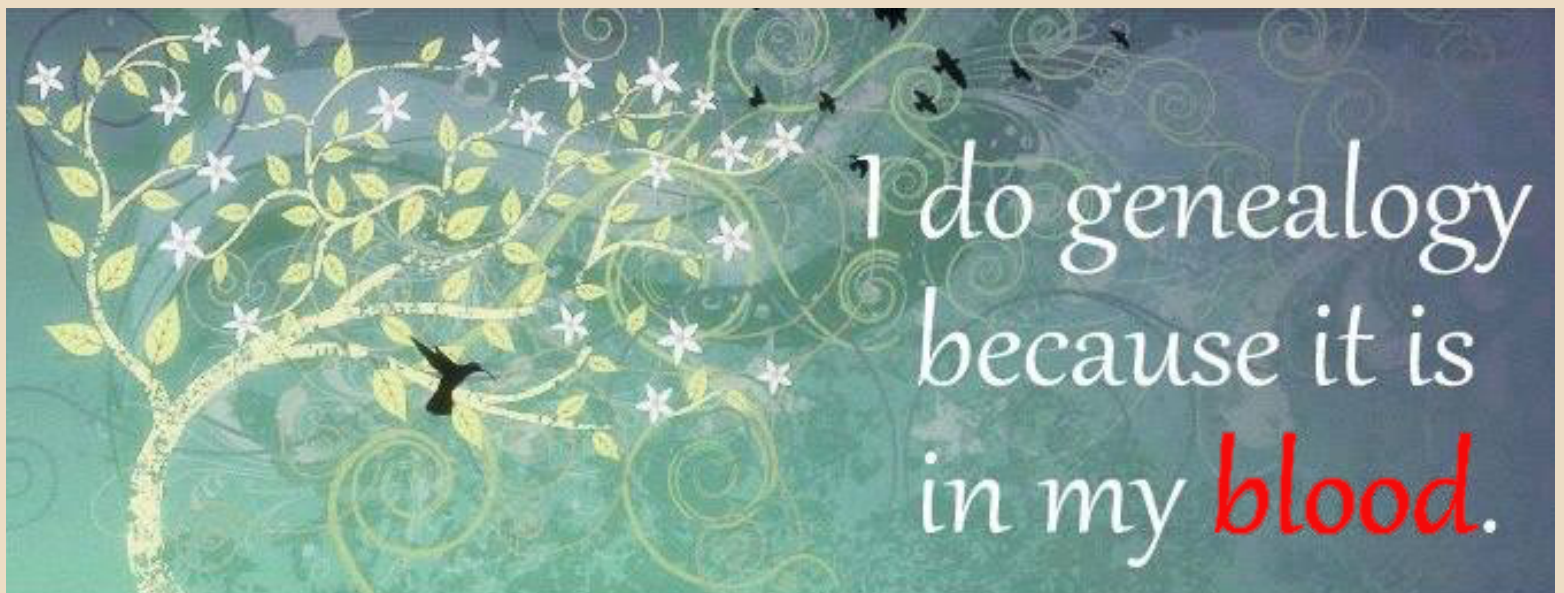
Some of the trends they've already discovered are surprising.

Several cases featured by True Crime Arizona on forensic genetic genealogy have focused on Jane or John Does being identified after years, but not all cases have been fully solved. This new database sheds some light on how many genetic genealogy cases have resulted in arrests, and something pretty startling comes to light from this data.

"It's a treasure trove for anyone wanting to see the real-world impact of DNA and genetic genealogy with crime solving," said Marc McDermott, who founded 'Genealogy Explained.' McDermott created the first searchable online database, 'Genealogy Explained,' detailing cases solved by genetic genealogy, all coming from the Forensic Genetic Genealogy Project.

To date, the database shows 621 criminal cases have been solved involving 293 perpetrators.

You can read more in an article by Briana Whitney published [in the azfamily web site](#).



Bonfire Build

Board Member Martha Stuckey shared the below article: "Sharing this article that I think one of my family surnames is involved in (Laiche family). Right area and right name. Louisiana has the tradition of lighting bonfires for Pere Noel."

BIG BONFIRE BUILDING

Two families work on
15-foot-tall, 50-foot-wide,
movable chain saw

BY WENDY LOUP
Contributing writer

While the Christmas Eve Mississippi River levee bonfires light the way for Papa Noël, two families in Gonzales continue their decadeslong tradition of gathering on New Year's Eve to burn a mammoth memorable structure they've designed and built.

The Laiche and Duplessis families close out each year lighting a structure that a dozen members of the families worked together to construct. The form of the bonfire varies from year to year. The 2023 theme is "Tools of the Trade" and consists of a 15-foot-tall, 50-foot-wide, movable chain saw.

"The families brainstorm ideas," said Courtney Laiche, one of the family builders of the chain saw. "One idea we've kicked around for a few years involved tools like a chain saw."

The families began the annual bonfire 22 years ago to honor family member Luke Villar, who was killed during a 2001 armed robbery in St. Amant when he was 18 years old.

Anywhere from 75 to 100 people gather on New Year's Eve at the Laiche-Duplessis 28-acre property on La. 74 to visit, eat Cajun food and watch the bonfire, according to host Sherry Laiche.

Her husband, Dooney, cooks gumbo and sauce piquante while other family members bring chili and side dishes.

"We've never postponed a bonfire due to rain," Sherry Laiche said. "If it rains, it's still a great night, but we warn people to put on rain boots because there will be lots of mud."

The structures' intricate details are planned by various members of the families who have a knack for creativity. Anywhere from eight to 12 people help build the structures.



STAFF PHOTO BY MICHAEL JOHNSON

Members of the Laiche family build a giant chain saw Saturday for their annual New Year's Eve bonfire in Gonzales.

"None of the family members are engineers," Courtney Laiche laughed. "We work construction, are business owners, car mechanics, and there's one accountant."

The families usually build the structure with a design either to remember someone in their family who has died recently or with a theme on current events.

Past structures honoring family members have included a carousel and guitar. News events have included a replica of the crane-damaged Sunshine Bridge, a dumpster fire for 2020 and a 27-foot airboat to honor the Cajun Navy's work during the 2016 flood.

Part of the tradition for the families is the actual building of the structure, which happens throughout December, mostly on the weekends.

"It feels good to keep up the tradition," Courtney Laiche said. "It's a process, but we all look forward to it. Every day is so fast-paced, so building the bonfire is a way to get together on the weekends and catch up."

"It has been challenging this year with the weather," said Cody Duplessis, one of the builders of the chain saw and previous years' structures. "And then we've been fitting it in with Christmas coming up. You just have to make time for it."

Sherry Laiche said she hopes the families will carry on the creative bonfires to honor their deceased family members, including her father, who died in 2005.

"We hope the next generation will get the hang of this," she said. "We try really hard to continue the tradition."

Cemeteries and You

President Elect [Luanne Newman](#)

Cemeteries. Depending on your age and situation, our experiences with cemeteries may differ. Some families take a trip out often, others would never set foot in one.

As a child, some of us remember going to visit our relatives' graves with our parents and maybe our grandparents. I remember gathering up the gardening utensils and sprinkling can to plant geraniums on grandparents and great-aunts and -uncles' plots. We would scurry to find the water spigot and return with a full sprinkling can to give the flowers a drink. It was a ritual...an annual pilgrimage, if not more often than that.

We find some differences in cemeteries in parts of Europe than American ones. On a 2010 visit to ancestral town cemeteries in northeastern Germany, we did not find our relatives. The 700-year-old church in Gross Wanzer was, as most of these area churches, surrounded by a low brick and wrought iron fence. Within was the church itself and the cemetery. Each cemetery we visited also had a war memorial with names of the fallen and dates. A fifth cousin told us that some cemeteries, especially those in the former East German area, had been buried over or replaced with the more recently deceased.

In Italy, I found oval photos cast in porcelain on many tombstones. How wonderful to see a picture of this person while they were living – a person you may never have found actual photos of. Female names on the stones are usually their maiden name followed by the surname of their husband.

Californian Mary Petite has Scottish roots and found records quite easily on www.deceasedonline.com. She travels to Scotland and can access records on her laptop. On one trip, she visited a church-turned-local-history-center and ran into a relative. With information gleaned from there, she went to the cemetery with map in hand to have a “dead family reunion” of her Innes clan.

In the Chicago area, many of my relatives are buried in Concordia Cemetery located in Forest Park. Over the years, I have visited to learn information on ancestors, mostly the Wille family. Even though I have stopped by my 3rd Great-grandfather Karl Mionske's grave, I've never inquired in the office about it.

A cousin visiting from New Jersey stopped in the office to find the location of his grave. After checking, she was informed that even though the cemetery was founded in 1872 and my ancestor was buried in 1899, the guidelines had changed about putting graves in “cemetery care”. The manager told my cousin that they hoped we would cover fees in arrears for this care of the grave so it would not be considered “abandoned.”

Holding my breath and adding up in my head what the fees could be, multiplied by 116 years, I was a bit nervous. It turned out to be just \$243 and she and I decided to split the cost and be caught up to date.

Do you have particular memories or discoveries similar...or different than this? If you have time, shoot me an email and share your experiences.



NATIONAL GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY®

Guidelines for Sound Genealogical Research

Recommended by the National Genealogical Society

Remembering always that they are engaged in a quest for truth, genealogists and family history researchers consistently:

- recognize that information relevant to answering genealogical questions can come from various types of sources, including but not limited to documents, artifacts, and genetic testing reports.
- record the source for each item of information they collect;
- test every hypothesis against credible evidence, and reject those that the evidence shows are incorrect;
- seek original records as the basis for their research conclusions or reproduced images of original records when there is reasonable assurance the records have not been altered in their reproduction;
- use compilations and published works primarily for their value as guides to locating original records and for analysis of the evidence discussed in them;
- state something as a fact or as a proven conclusion only when it is supported by convincing evidence, and identify the evidence when communicating the fact or conclusion to others;
- limit with words such as “probably” or “possibly” any conclusion not based on convincing evidence, and explain their reasoning;
- avoid distributing or publishing inaccurate information and unsupported conclusions in a way that may mislead other researchers;
- state carefully and honestly the results of their own research, and acknowledge all use of other researchers’ work;
- recognize the collegial nature of genealogical research by making their work available to others through publication, or by placing copies in appropriate libraries or repositories, and by welcoming critical comment;
- consider with open minds new evidence and others’ comments on their work; and become familiar with research and ethical standards set by other genealogical organizations, such as the Board for Certification of Genealogists, the Association of Professional Genealogists, the International Commission for the Accreditation of Professional Genealogists, the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies, and the Genetic Genealogy Standards Committee.

Member Needs Help with Polish Ancestry

I would be very grateful if you could pass along my quest for assistance on documents in Poland related to my great-grandfather, Walter Pasternak (Wladyslaw Pasternak), who was born in Babica, Rzeszów, Poland, to pursue my Polish citizenship through FORG to see if there is anyone in Poland who might be able to assist. Unfortunately, I do not speak Polish and everything I searched was only available in Polish.

Dennis J. Evashenk
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District Board Member
President of The Rotaract Club of Chicago
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A Genealogical Timeline as a Research Tool

Stephen B. Hatton

A genealogical timeline is a written representation of events in a person's life in chronological order. It may also include relevant historical occurrences and geopolitical border changes. National, state, and local historical happenings can provide meaningful context to personal events by explaining the external circumstances of someone's actions. Border changes may help a researcher locate pertinent records, and also disprove geographic moves in cases where boundaries changed but the person remained in the same absolute location. It is a useful tool for genealogists of all experience levels, and is simple but underused.

Reasons to construct a timeline include:

- Organize information known about someone; this is especially useful if many data have been gathered, because it may make accumulated data management easier.
- Assess information about someone, including data gap identification and discovery of inconsistencies.
- Notice patterns leading to deeper knowledge of, and appreciation for, the life of an ancestor.

After briefly summarizing practical approaches to create a timeline, this article will illustrate its usefulness for pointing out opportunities for further research. Most of the case study that follows, however, will focus on using a timeline to explain and understand the interaction among researched life events because that is an advantage previously underemphasized.

This article is compliments of the National Genealogical Society Magazine, April-Jun 2016, pages 49-53. [To read and/or download the entire article, please click here.](#)

Guide to Family Search

(used with permission from Connie Knox)



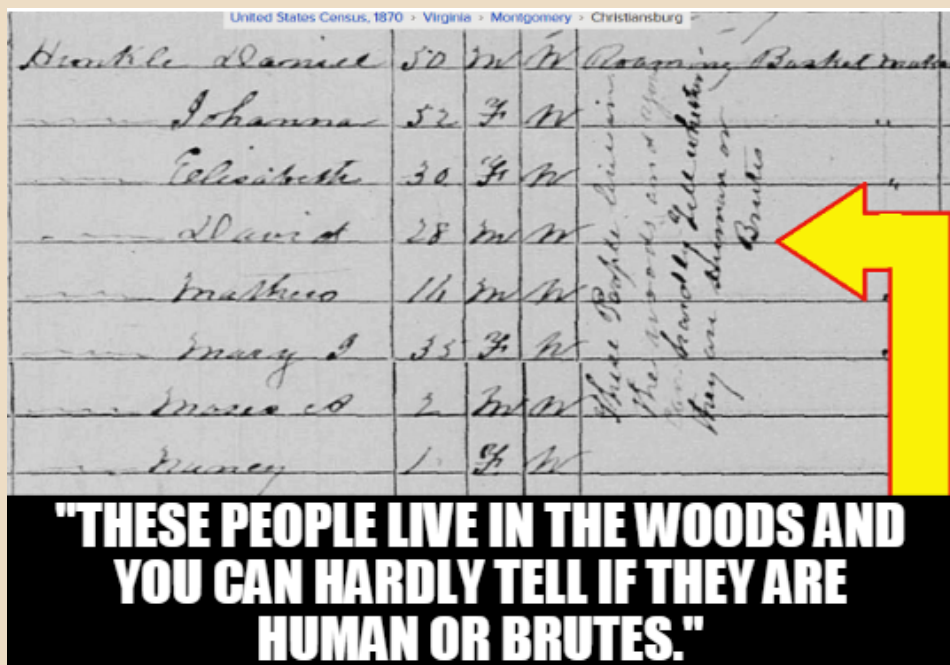
Member Connie Knox shows you how to use Family Tree to research your family.

Creating a Family Tree From Scratch

Aimee Cross



For members new to genealogy, watch Aimee Cross build a family tree in Ancestry.



Conferences, Classes, Webinars

[ConferenceKeeper](#): find genealogical conferences, webinars, etc. Sign up for their newsletter, and you will always have up-to-date information on both in-person and virtual conferences free and for a cost. They also have a [Facebook group](#).

Online Courses from popular genealogical sites are:

[Family Search](#)

[Family Tree Magazine](#)

[Genealogy Guys](#)

[Legacy](#)

[My Heritage](#)

[National Institute for Genealogical Studies](#)



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Fannie Mae Brownies

Brownies:

- 1 stick softened butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup flour
- 4 eggs (beaten)
- 1 (16 oz) can of Hershey's syrup

1. Beat sugar and butter together.
2. Add the rest of the ingredients, beating well.
3. Pour in a greased and floured 9x13 pan.
4. Bake at 350F for 25 minutes or until the toothpick comes out clean. Let cool.



Filling:

- 2 cups of powdered sugar
- 2 Tablespoons of milk
- 1 stick softened butter
- 1 teaspoon (or more if you like) of peppermint extract
- Green food coloring

1. Beat all together.
2. Spread on COOLED brownies.

Topping:

- 1 cup of semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 6 Tablespoons of butter

1. Melt chips and butter in a pan on the stove.
2. Cool and spread over the filling.

Keep brownies refrigerated.

President-Elect Luann Newman

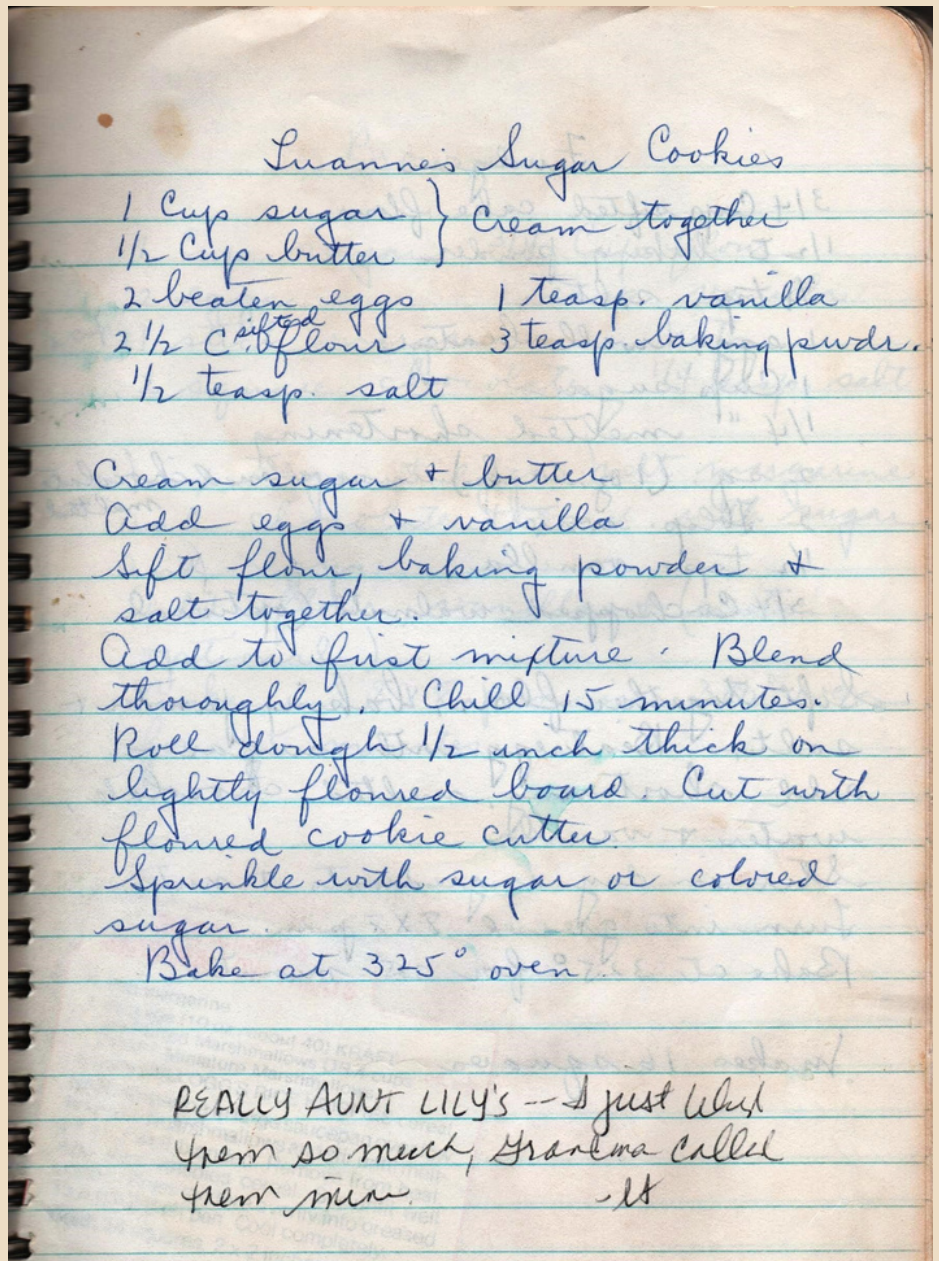
Fannie May is a Chicago, IL USA candy company known for their mint meltaways and more. Since I lived in Chicago 60+ years, it brings back fond memories. This is a takeoff of those candies, which I've made many times, and it came from my friend Linda.

Aunt Lilly's Sugar Cookies

Ingredients:

- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup butter
- 2 eggs (beaten)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 1/2 cups sifted flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3 teaspoons baking powder

1. Cream sugar and butter.
 2. Add eggs and vanilla
 3. Sift flour, baking powder, and salt together.
 4. Add to first mixture.
 5. Blend thoroughly.
 6. Chill 15 minutes.
 7. Roll dough to 1/2 inch thick on lightly floured board.
 8. Cut with floured cookie cutter.
 9. Sprinkle with sugar or colored sugar.
- Bake at 325 degrees.



President-Elect Luann Newman

This recipe for sugar cookies was (Great) Aunt Lily's. She always had some great cookies, with different colored sugars and sometimes chocolate sprinkles and those silver balls. I have great memories of visiting her.