

# The Rotarian Genealogist

NOVEMBER, 2023 | SECOND QUARTER 2023-2024

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## Notes from our President

With the change of seasons and the cooler weather soon to arrive, it's the perfect time to sort through your photos. In August, Connie Knox, shared with us how photo identification has taken on a new role in the world of genealogy. You can compare photo clues to census records and other genealogical data. So there is no time like the present. Grab that drawer or that dusty covered box filled with pictures! The holidays are approaching so don't miss the opportunity to pass the photos around to get help identifying the details of the photo. And don't forget to take new photos!



Margaret Smythe Wilson



Sue Wilson, age 6



Sue Wilson, age 8

*Why don't witches like to ride their brooms when they're angry?  
Because they're afraid of flying off the handle!*

*That big dent in my cheek bone is from running into the fireplace hearth when I was 2: I broke my cheekbone*

*Author note: most grandchildren think they are the favorite. Not me. Oh no, not even close. I drove my grandmother crazy because I couldn't sit still - I wanted to know what everyone was doing and help. I ran everywhere in every direction (she wanted me to walk in the house) - but I didn't want to miss anything and I got there faster by running. When my cousin sent me this photo of my grandmother, I was surprised at how much I look like her.*

**contest**

Who do you resemble the most in your family. Please submit your entries by 11/30/23 to me at [Sailorsue02@gmail.com](mailto:Sailorsue02@gmail.com)



## FORG Calendar

- 1 November Newsletter Published
- 11 November Quarterly Business Meeting/Reunion
- 1 February Newsletter Published
- 10 February Quarterly Business Meeting/Reunion

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# FORG Family Reunion Meeting

## French-Canadian Research

Saturday, November 11, 2023

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



## 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

# 500 Years of Sweden or Different, but Beautiful!

Dirk Weissleder, Member

The great country in the north is celebrating 500 years as a modern state this year, after electing Gustav Wasa as king in June 1523 and leaving the Kalmar Union with Denmark and Norway. 500 years later, in 2023, the country remains a monarchy (albeit with strong republican features) and has a population of around 10.5 million.

Not the jubilee, but the annual Swedish Genealogy Day was the reason to finally accept an invitation of the Swedish umbrella organization, which had existed for years, and to get a personal impression. The mutual interest in both directions is great, and there has been over centuries an active exchange between our countries. This exchange is genealogically reflected, as a considerable number of today's Swedes have German ancestors.

The target of the joint visit with Christian Kirchner was the Swedish Genealogy Day (släktforskardagarna, actually family research days) from 26 to 27 August 2023 in Östersund in the central Swedish province of Jämtland. Around 50,000 inhabitants live in beautiful Östersund (pronounced, as it is read in German, Österschund in dialect), and the city's coat of arms shows a silver moose head on a blue background. One is here in the midst of nature.

The venue was the so-called Folket Hus (People's House), where associations large and small presented their research work and publications at booths, or in the form of extremely well attended lectures. The DAGV had, together with our member groups AGoFF, AGT, and Archion, a united "German" booth (in the program booklet: booth V106 g-gruppen, Tyskland), which was well frequented.

Inside the building, the crowd was usually so large that one was glad to be provided with food (also on rustic grill) outside the building or to be offered smaller handicraft goods for sale. The 2nd meeting of genealogists in Östersund was somewhat smaller and thus deviated from the usual participant numbers of up to 5,000 visitors, but this did not mean lesser interest and commitment. The conversations at the individual stands developed smoothly, with the display of sweets being an excellent occasion to actually talk with one another in an unagitated and calm manner — after first grabbing them! The natural exchange pleased this observer extremely well. Likewise, the many costumes from different areas of the kingdom.



[continued](#)

# Broken Brick Wall That I Didn't Know Was There ...

M Gordon Seyffert, Member

When I was a boy, my father told me with some emphasis that the spelling of our name had not changed in our coming to America. Later I thought this must have been a reference to the idea that many names were “changed at Ellis Island” (or some-such. Myths, because if they got changed it was by the families themselves.)

And then when I first reached out to an ancestral church in Germany (in Saxony, south of Leipzig, to be more specific), where my father had said we were from, I was told that my Seyffert 3rd great grandfather had come there “from Görlitz.” Half of that pre-1945 city is now in Poland, making it harder to check out such a clue, and thus when I could find nothing I concluded there must be some mistake. Then, crickets....

Now, in this past summer season, I had a chance to visit that church in person — with Dirk Weissleder, whom you know! — and to ask the (new) church archivist for more information. What I found out was that my Seyffert 3rd great grandfather had come from the town of Rauscha, in Kreis Görlitz, Regierungsbezirk Liegnitz of Silesia (Schlesien).

And when we looked into that tidbit after getting to a good library, we found that my name — which had tended to be spelled in other ways in Saxony during the 1830s and earlier — was found in several instances to have the same spelling in Silesia, and also in the Bohemian Sudetenland to the south of there. Because I had not been looking for it in those locales, I did not realize that the spelling of my name might find matches outside today's Germany, in areas that had had definite Germanic settlement (whether part of the 1871-1918 Empire, or not).

So, what I'm now realizing is something I feel that my father didn't even suspect: That our immigrant ancestor, my Seyffert 2nd great grandfather, may have been fighting to restore the spelling of the family name to its original spelling “back east” before leaving for America — and then taking that “correct” spelling with him to America instead of the “Germanized” (or at least “Saxonized”) spelling he'd had to fight all of his life.

Dirk does not like the term “brick wall,” but much prefers “fog wall.” Because with fog, there's really no barrier at all if you could only know that the “wall” is an illusion brought about by our own limited knowledge. Sometimes, we just have to cast our nets a little farther out to catch something we desire! And now this finding binds me still closer to my immigrant ancestor, with whom I began to strongly identify in 2019 (when I finally began to fully understand his complex reasons for leaving Germany). We both have sought to uncover our lost family history, and to make it known....



# Myth or Fact? "Three brothers came to America..."

The story goes that three brothers (not four brothers, or two brothers and a sister) arrived in the United States, where one went north, one went south and one went west, giving rise to families with their surname across the country. But how much of this popular tale is true?

*13 Genealogy Myths and Misconceptions  
By Editors of Family Tree Magazine*

Myth 1: Surnames were changed at Ellis Island.

Myth 2: It's in print. It must be true!

Myth 3: All the records you need about your family history are online.

Myth 4: This is most definitely my ancestor, according to these 423 online trees.

Myth 5: We descend from a Cherokee princess.

Myth 6: The courthouse burned and the records are gone.

Myth 7: Same surname—must be a relative.

Myth 8: Hey look, it's our family crest!

Myth 9: Three brothers came to America...

Myth 11: Our ancestors were much shorter than we are.

Myth 12: Our ancestors died young.

Myth 13: Our ancestors were mostly illiterate.

[Click here for the entire article.](#)

## New York City Street Map Lets You Look at Historical Streets

[Eastman's Online Genealogy Blog](#)

Do you have New York City ancestors or other relatives and you have the street where they lived? Only the streets have changed over the years. A new tool may be able to help you find the original location. New York City's vast and intricate web of streets, with its rich history, is now accessible through an updated app, NYC Street Map.

The Department of City Planning (DCP) has rolled out an updated version of the NYC Street Map tool, providing users with a record of not just the altered streets but also the original ones dating back to the early 20th century. The tool offers a digital compilation of the entire history of New York City's 32,000-plus streets.

[Check out the map here.](#)



# 23 & Me DNA Data Breach ...

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On October 16, 2023, 23andMe announced that it had experienced a data breach. The breach exposed the personal information of approximately 1 million customers, including their names, email addresses, and genetic data.

23andMe said that the breach was caused by a vulnerability in its website that allowed hackers to steal user credentials. The company said that it was working with law enforcement to investigate the breach and that it had taken steps to secure its systems.

The breach has raised concerns about the security of genetic data. 23andMe is one of the largest genetic testing companies, and its customers have shared their genetic information with the company in the belief that it would be safe and secure. The breach shows that even companies with strong security measures in place can be vulnerable to hackers.

The breach is also a reminder of the importance of data privacy. Genetic data is sensitive information that can be used to identify individuals and reveal information about their health and ancestry. This data should be protected from unauthorized access.

23andMe has said that it is committed to protecting its customers' data. The company has taken steps to improve the security of its website and has offered its customers free credit monitoring services. The breach is a reminder that data breaches can happen to anyone. Individuals should be careful about the information they share online and should take steps to protect their personal information.

## What You Can Do to Protect Yourself

There are a few things you can do to protect yourself from data breaches:

- Use strong passwords and don't reuse them across websites.
- Be careful about what information you share online.
- Enable two-factor authentication where available.
- Keep your software up to date.
- Use a firewall and antivirus software.
- Be aware of the signs of data breaches.
- If you think you have been affected by a data breach, change your passwords immediately and contact the company involved.

## Other articles for DNA Breach

[Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter 1](#)

[Eastman Online Genealogy Newsletter 2](#)

[ARS Technia](#)

[Family Tree Magazine](#)

[Sassy Jane's Newsletter](#)

# How I Became Interested in Genealogy

Rob Black, Member

My interest in genealogy began with a picture. I was going through some family photos when I came across this picture. I asked my mother who the four people were. She told me the woman seated was her grandmother, Lizzie Cleveland. The baby was Lizzie's daughter, my grandmother's oldest sister. Her name was Elizabeth "Bessie" Cleveland. Bessie was born in 1887. The picture is of her with her mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. However, we didn't know the names of the older women.



So, I thought I would start searching to see if I could find out. I joined Ancestry.com and began the search.

I started with my mother, Susan Sternberg Black, and her mother Margaret Cleveland Sternberg. On the back of the picture, someone had written "Soule". When I entered this, I picked up several other trees having the name Soule. I incorporated all the "hints", and the tree began to take shape.

By bringing in more trees I was able to trace my lineage back to a George Soule. I found out George was a passenger on the Mayflower and a signer of the Mayflower Compact. He was about 19 years old at the time and was an indentured servant/apprentice to Edward Winslow.

This was a surprise to me and the entire family as we had no knowledge of our ancestry back to the Mayflower. No papers, family Bibles, or other documents showing any connection to the "Plimoth Colony," save for the name Soule on the back of a picture.

This intrigued me, so I have continued to branch out the Tree on both my maternal and paternal lines and have enjoyed discovering many other genealogical revelations along the way. Mom said there was some mention of a "Peregrine" in the family. I discovered that as well, but I'll save that story for another time.

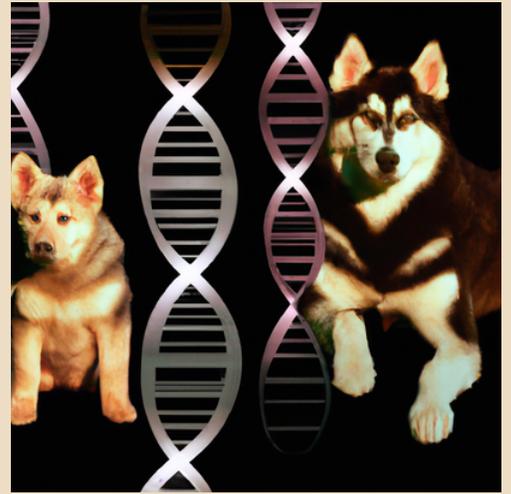
Wishing you the best of luck in your genealogical pursuits,

Robert Cleveland Black  
October 1, 2023

# How Accurate are Pet DNA Tests?

The I-Team from WBZ News in Boston interviewed an individual who tested the system.

[Click here to find out her shocking results.](#)



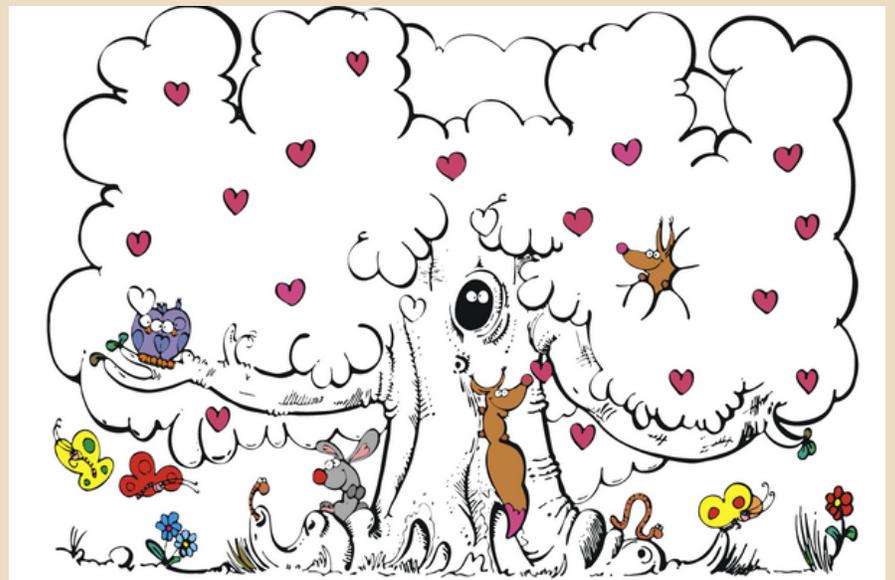
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## Ancestry Just Released a Dog DNA Test

Aimee Cross



If you want to check your Dog's DNA anyway, check out Aimee Cross's video [Learn All About It.](#)



# Dating & Identifying Old Photos with Photo Detective Maureen Taylor

(used with permission from Connie Knox)



Member Connie Knox's [Genealogy TV](#) YouTube channel invited [The Photo Detective Maureen Taylor](#) on her show to help date and identify old photos. [Check out the video!](#)

## You Can Do This: Photo Organizing and Preservation

*Thomas MacEntee, of Abundant Genealogy*

<http://abundantgenealogy.com> [abundantgenealogy@gmail.com](mailto:abundantgenealogy@gmail.com)

One of the biggest challenges when it comes to family history projects is how to handle years of photos, slides, and negatives. These are valuable assets for genealogy research and preserving family stories. Many of us find organizing and preserving family photos so daunting that we throw up our hands and tell ourselves we'll get to it "sometime." That sometime is NOW and this is the year you finally get this monster tamed!

### Creating a Photo Digitization and Preservation Plan

Ever heard the phrase "Make No Small Plans"? This was the motto of my ancestors, but it can be one you also use when starting a photo organizing and preservation project. The ideal plan allows you to make real progress and continue working on organizing and preserving images going forward. Here are the basic elements of a solid plan:

- **Take Inventory.** Create a list of items that need to be scanned. Include all photos, slides, negatives, movies etc. Also list photo sizes as well as media formats; remember that negatives can be 110 and other sizes! The same goes for slides . . . you don't want to purchase the wrong type of slide scanner, right?
- **Evaluate Equipment.** For those taking the DIY approach, research available technology in terms of types of scanners, storage media, etc. Collect information and determine which device is best for your project.

[Click here for rest of article](#)

# 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](#)

## Upcoming Conferences

**November 3-5, 2023: WikiTree Day**: To celebrate its 15th birthday – and this year’s one-million member milestone – the WikiTree community is hosting three days of **free events**, November 3-5, 2023. Everything is completely free and open to anyone interested in family history or genealogy.

The fun begins with a 36-hour virtual genealogy symposium, starting at 8am EDT (Noon UTC) on **November 3**. This virtual conference features popular genealogy speakers including Melanie McComb, AJ Jacobs, Thomas MacEntee, Mags Gaulden, Sara Cochran, Peggy Clemens Lauritzen, Marian Burk Wood, David Ryan, GenFriends, the DNAChef, and more.

A wide variety of genealogy-related topics will be covered including DNA tools, Irish research, preserving family history memorabilia, Google Maps and other online tools, Appalachia research, military pensions, tech troubleshooting, the 1890 US Census, passenger manifests, research checklists, and ... genealogy trivia.

The second part of the event, the “WikiTree Day” birthday party, kicks off at 8am EDT (noon UTC) on **November 5**. Have some fun with fellow genealogists and casual family historians, and find out why the WikiTree community has become so popular.

There will be research parties, games, and open chats via Zoom and Discord. The day will also include a special panel discussion about genealogy and artificial intelligence (AI) with Steve Little, Drew Smith, Thomas MacEntee and others.

[Register Here.](#)

**[November 2-4 2023 New York State Family History Conference:](#)** Join the NYG&B and other genealogy experts Nov. 2–4 for New York’s largest statewide family history conference. This year's theme is ***Navigating New York: From Queens to the Queen City*** and will feature in-person and virtual programs and events in New York City and Buffalo as well as on-demand sessions to watch at your own pace. Can't join us in person? No problem! All in-person events will be livestreamed and subsequently made available on demand.

From the peopling of New York State via its canals to finding American women’s voices in documents to navigating court and land records, the conference offers a rich array of sessions to help participants hone their skills.

Some of the top voices and experts in the genealogy field will lead sessions and be on hand to answer your questions, including Blaine Bettinger, Skip Duett, Annette Burke Lyttle, Jane E. Wilcox, and more. [Access the full program schedule.](#)

**[November 4, 2023 Southwest Iowa Regional Genealogy Conference featuring Alice Hoyt Veen](#)**

Online via Zoom and in-person at Southwest Iowa Community College, 1501 West Townline St, Creston, Iowa. Presented by Union County Genealogical Society. Topics include:\

- Making Sense of the SShambles: Organizational Tools for Genealogy
- Tools of the Trade Timelines, Templates, and More!
- Defending the Nation: Federal Military Records
- Staking Their Claims: Female Homesteaders on the American Frontier:

**[November 4, 2023 Michigan Genealogical Council Fall Family History Event](#)**, Michigan Library and Historical Center, 702 W Kalamazoo St, Lansing, MI (hybrid): Michigan Genealogical Council, Lansing, Michigan-presents Michael Strauss and several speakers from the Archives of Michigan and the Library of Michigan.

Michael L. Strauss, AG is employed as a Research Manager and Senior Genealogist for Ancestry ProGenealogists. He is a native of Pennsylvania and a veteran of the United States Coast Guard. He is a published author and national genealogical lecturer, instructor and faculty member at the Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy (SLIG), Genealogical Research Institute of Pittsburgh (GRIP), and the Institute of Genealogical and Historical Research (IGHR) where he coordinates the military history courses. Michael has been involved in Civil War and Mexican-American War reenacting for more than twenty-five years.

22-26 Jan 2024: *Elevate Your Genealogical Education to New Heights*, [Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy](#).

For more conference information, check out [Conference Keeper](#).

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29 February–2 March 2024

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RootsTech Worldwide Conference • 29 February–2 March 2024 In person in Salt Lake City, Utah, or online worldwide.

Learn more about your options here:

In-Person Event

Online Event

[register here](#)



*Chance*

**Just met a new 2nd  
cousin at a genealogy  
conference.**

**Knock down a brick wall  
and add two new  
branches to your family  
tree!**



Twisted Twigs  
on gnarled branches

# Cream of Coconut Cake

## Ingredients

- 1 (18.25 ounce) package white cake mix
- 1 (14 ounce) can cream of coconut
- 1 (14 ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 (16 ounce) package frozen whipped topping, thawed
- 1 (8 ounce) package flaked coconut

## Directions

1. Prepare and bake white cake mix according to package directions.
2. Remove cake from oven.
3. While still hot, using a utility fork, poke holes all over the top of the cake.
4. Mix cream of coconut and sweetened condensed milk together.
5. Pour over the top of the still-hot cake.
6. Let cake cool completely then frost with the whipped topping and top with the flaked coconut.

Keep cake refrigerated.



*AI generated image*

*President Sue Weber  
My husband's favorite.*

# Tri-Bean Salad

- 1 can drained green beans
- 1 can drained wax beans
- 1 can drained kidney beans
- 1 onion
- 1/3 c salad oil
- 2/3 c apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 c sugar

1. Chop onion.
2. Add salad oil, apple cider vinegar, and sugar.
3. Salt and pepper to taste

Celery can be added



*AI generated image*

*Secretary Sue Beety*

*My roommate in college, Diane Carlson, gave me this recipe when we went to school in Mankato 1970. This was brought to many gatherings in the 70's.*