

# Thanks to cemetery ‘readers’

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SILICON VALLEY COMPUTER GENEALOGY GROUP

# PastFinder

By Janet Brigham

You’ll see them mainly in cemeteries — those genealogy enthusiasts whose avocation is to make research easier for the living. They have websites, Facebook pages, and many, many fans. When the rest of us are snoozing on a Saturday morning, they are out walking through cemeteries, reading headstones and snapping photos. They then upload the photos and gravestone information to websites that make the information available to all of us.

I first became aware of them in 2001, when entering a great-grandparent’s name in a web search yielded an Interment.net page for a family cemetery in Latah County, Idaho, that had only recently been recorded by a woman named Maggie Rail, a cemetery “reader” from Washington state.

Maggie describes her cemetery experiences on her own website:

“I started reading cemeteries in the summer of 1998. My first one I got permission to copy Sexton files from a book (later did read that cemetery myself). Somehow from a book did not do it, so I proceeded to find out where all the cemeteries were in Spokane County [Washington], and in short order I caught the disease. After I would finish one cemetery, I had to go find and read another.

“At one point I started helping on Washington State Genweb.... Then it seemed they did not want my work



Google Earth view (above) of a small cemetery “read” by Maggie Rail in Latah County, Idaho, and listed soon afterward in Interment.net. Gravestone image of the author’s paternal grandfather’s grave in the cemetery (below), from FindaGrave.com, added by “reader” Duane Wessels,



and I was not needed, so I started looking [in 1999].”

What Maggie found was a need for cemetery walkers who would read and record information from headstones. She soon offered the results of her “reading” to Interment.net, and by 2006 she had “read” cemeteries in Australia, British Columbia, Idaho, Montana,

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## Outside and Inside

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# Thanks to those who walk and read cemeteries

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South Dakota, Wyoming, and Oregon. Maggie now is the editor of Interment.net.

Recording and disseminating information from cemeteries has become easier than ever. In addition to the existing sites — private sites and pages in Genweb.org, Interment.net, and FindaGrave.com — the site BillionGraves.com has captured interest.

Before visiting cemeteries and recording information, including taking photographs, visit the top cemetery websites, including Interment.net, FindaGrave.com, and BillionGraves.com. Check out their requirements and recommendations to prevent making mistakes and overlooking necessary information on a once-in-a-lifetime trip to a far-away cemetery.


To contribute a cemetery transcription to the noncommercial **Interment.net**, visit the site and review the terms of use and the requirements for transcription submission. The service is free, and all transcriptions on Interment.net are made available to the browsing public at no cost. About a half million site visitors access Interment each month, making it one of the most popular free genealogy sites.

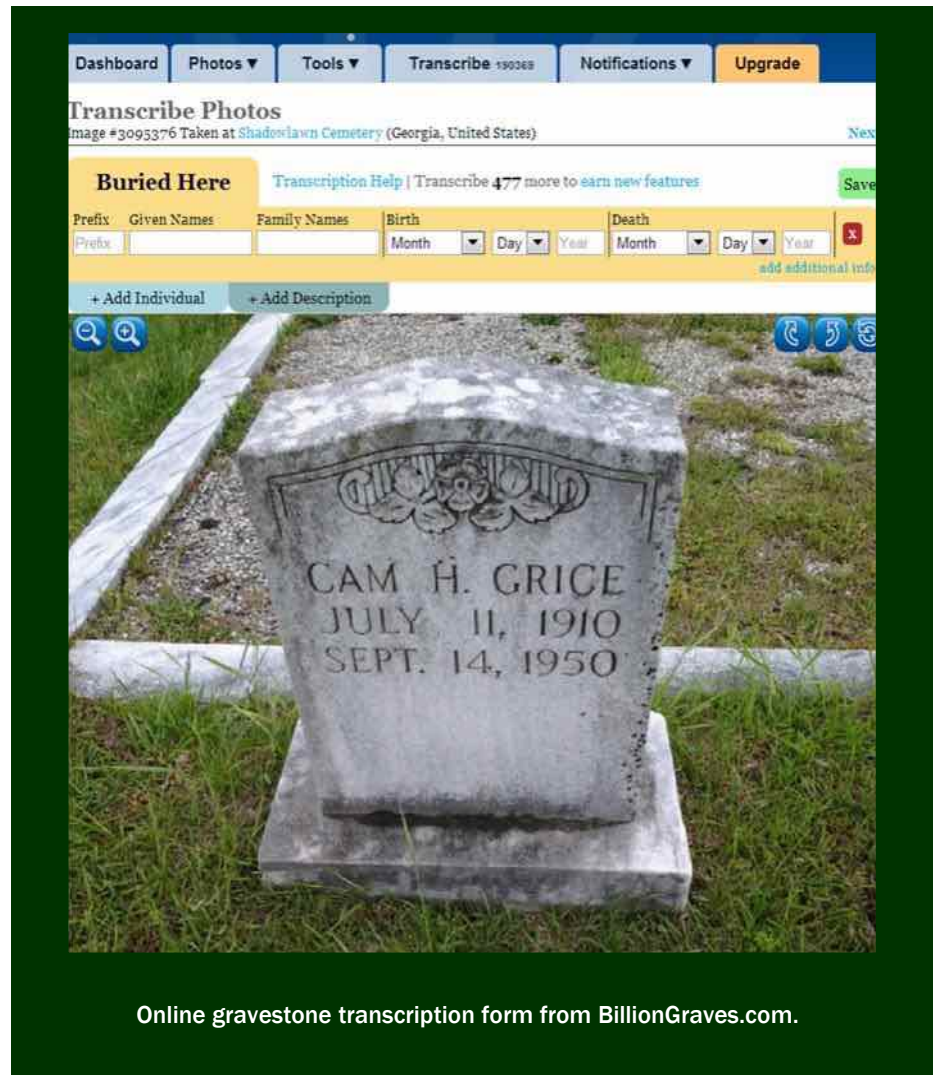
**FindaGrave.com** is a popular site that often shows up in web searches for individual ancestors. More than a million contributors have submitted photos and biographical information to the site. The top contributors of photos and biographical “memorials” have submitted at last 100,000 entries each, some submitting several times that number.

Establishing a free account at **BillionGraves.com** allows you to “pay it forward” and earn credits by transcribing grave records (see illustration, right), which then are indexed and searchable on the site. A mobile app for iPhone/iPad or Android also allows you to upload

photos and gravestone information as you become a cemetery “reader.”

BillionGraves, a commercial entity recently acquired by Otter Creek Holdings of Ogden, Utah, also allows users to upload photos to FamilySearch.org’s Family Tree through a Transconnect feature.

Those of us still in withdrawal from the successful and rapid conclusion of the 1940 U.S. Census indexing might find cemetery reading rewarding. Whether or not a cemetery contains the remains and records of *your* ancestors, it might hold useful information for others who are unable to visit the cemetery. The careful, thorough recording of cemetery information can bring new hope and life to someone else’s genealogical “dead end.” 



The screenshot displays the BillionGraves.com transcription interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: Dashboard, Photos, Tools, Transcribe (190368), Notifications, and Upgrade. Below this is the 'Transcribe Photos' section, showing 'Image #3095376 Taken at Shadoklawn Cemetery (Georgia, United States)'. A yellow banner reads 'Buried Here' with a link to 'Transcription Help | Transcribe 477 more to earn new features'. Below the banner is a form with fields for 'Prefix', 'Given Names', 'Family Names', 'Birth' (Month, Day, Year), and 'Death' (Month, Day, Year). There are also buttons for '+ Add Individual' and '+ Add Description'. The main part of the image is a photograph of a gravestone for 'CAM H. GRICE', dated 'JULY 11, 1910' and 'SEPT. 14, 1950'. The gravestone is made of light-colored stone and has a decorative arch at the top. The background shows a cemetery setting with grass and other graves.

Online gravestone transcription form from BillionGraves.com.



# How I found it

## Thoroughness brings success

By Richard Rands

It usually pays to be extra thorough when analyzing census records, and it is especially useful to make every effort to locate all possible census records in the course of a family's sojourn over time. While working on the ancestry of a Brooke family, I came to the point of needing to locate the parents of William J. Brooke who, according to family records, was born in Maryland about 1839.

The same records claimed he married Catherine Singley in Adams County, Pennsylvania, on 9 February 1864. I arrived at the dead end of William and Catherine Brooke through their son Thomas Edward Brooke, who was born in September 1869, supposedly in West Virginia.

It was not difficult to establish the validity of the above information by starting with a search of the 1870 U.S. Census records for a 31-year-old William Brooke, married to a 28-year-old Catherine, and a one-year-old Thomas, probably living in Pennsylvania. Their record turned up at Ancestry.com on census page 11 for the township of Hamiltonban, Adams County, Pennsylvania. Catherine was listed as Kate, William was 30 and listed as born in Pennsylvania, but Thomas was listed as Thomas E., and the record was located in Adams County, Pennsylvania.

No other record came close to meeting the criteria I was searching for. I now had a good starting point to begin searching for William's parents.

If William had been 30 years old in the 1870 census, it would make sense to search for a Brooke family with a ten-year-old son named William living in Pennsylvania, or possibly Maryland, in the 1850 U.S. Census - the first U.S. census listing all the members of a household.

Given my experience that *Brooke* was often spelled *Brook* or *Brooks*, I used the asterisk wildcard in the surname field for my searches, *Brook\**. My initial search turned up about 20 possible hits for the above criteria. A cursory analysis of each hit allowed me to rank them in order of relevance, and I set about doing a thorough census analysis beginning with the top candidate, using one of my favorite tools, the Census Analysis Worksheet.

The first family was that of Thomas and Hannah

residing in Quincy township, Franklin County, Pennsylvania. Thomas was 50 years old, born in Pennsylvania, a shoemaker, and Hannah was 46 years old, born in Maryland. They listed six children ranging from a son named Joseph, age 28, down to a son named America, age four, including a son named William, age 10, all born in Pennsylvania.

A nine-year gap separated the second and third children, suggesting that some had already left the household, or that some had not survived infancy. So far nothing led me to stop following this potential solution.

Before moving on to the 1860 U.S. Census, I checked the 1840 U.S. Census, which lists only heads of households, and located a Thomas Brooke residing at Liberty Township, Adams County, Pennsylvania, with tally marks that coincided nicely with the ages and sexes of the family members in the 1850 census.

In addition, based on the same 1840 census, I was able to eliminate the next candidate in my priority list because the tally marks did not come close to corresponding to the criteria.

Moving to the 1860 U.S. Census, it was a simple matter to locate Thomas and Hannah Brooke listed on page 15, Hamiltonban Township, Adams County, Pennsylvania--the same location where I had found William and Catherine in 1870. Thomas was still a shoemaker. At this point, sons William and America were the only children still in the household, but the second son, Peter, was listed next door, married to Cassandra, with three sons of his own.

To my pleasant surprise, listed immediately next to Peter's family were Michael and Rachel Singley, with a daughter named Catherine, age 18, who fit nicely as the wife of William found in the original search of the 1870 census. It would appear that William married the girl next door! Thus the preponderance of evidence was building, and there was no reason to stop following this line of research. Besides, as mentioned above, the next most likely candidate has already been eliminated.

The 1870 U.S. Census entry for Thomas and Hannah showed that William was no longer in the house-

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# How I Found It (continued)

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hold, which corresponded to the fact that he was married to Catherine and had started his own family. America was still at home, and a daughter, Hannah, had moved back.


One curious detail was evident on the census analysis worksheet. From 1840 to 1870, Thomas and Hannah had lived alternately in Adams County, Franklyn County, back to Adams county, and then back again to Franklin County. A quick check of the Pennsylvania county map found that the two counties were adjacent to each other, and that the townships involved were on the border between them. Furthermore, Thomas was a shoemaker throughout all the censuses I checked.

Moving to the 1880 U.S. Census, I saw that Thomas and Hannah were still living in Franklin County, but this time an unexpected detail appeared. Listed as married children were a son named C. J. Smith, age 52, and a daughter named Mary Smith, aged 51. Fortunately, the 1880 census indicates where each individual's parents were born; C J's parents were both from Baden (Germany), and the birthplaces of Mary's parents corresponded to the birthplaces of Thomas and Hannah. Calculating Mary's year of birth from her age showed that she easily fit within the nine-year gap mentioned earlier, and she had already left the household at the time of the 1850 census. But why was C. J. listed as a son, rather than

a son-in-law?

This anomaly is explained on a web page, [www.census-helper.co.uk/census-confusions/](http://www.census-helper.co.uk/census-confusions/) which makes this point: "...often when the term 'in-law' would have been applicable it was not used. Hence a wife whose true relationship to the Head should be 'sister-in-law' may only be written as sister, next to her husband. So watch out for random sisters you've never heard of before, who suddenly crop up! (It is easy to spot the reverse of this because the mysterious new brother [could] carry a different surname!)"

Checking the next several potential candidates, showed that none of them came close to the evidence for Thomas and Hannah, but the research still was not sufficiently thorough. I began completing a census analysis worksheet for each of Thomas and Hannah's children to make certain there weren't any unexplainable anomalies. This proved especially useful, since tracing the census records for son America brought up a suggested death record in Ancestry.com that listed his father as Thomas Brook and his mother as Hannah Eyler.

Now I knew William's father's name, and his mother's full name! Had I not followed America's census records, we might never have figured that out. Furthermore, by following the rest of the family's census records, I found additional family details that added much to the Brooke family history. 

Census Analysis Worksheet													Date _____		
Surname	Given Names Relationship	Birth Date Birth Place	Census / Year		1880		1900		1910		1920		Death		Comments
			Age	Birth year	Age	Birth year	Age	Birth year	Age	Birth year	Age	Death year			
BROOK (S)	Americus head W	Apr 1846 PA			35	1849	54	1846	64	1846	73	1847	16	Feb 1928	PAR: PA/PA YRS-MB: 19(1900); 28(1910) d. Lanark, ILL
MACHAFFEY	Sarah 2 <sup>d</sup> wife	Mar 1859 PA			-	-	41	1859	51	1859	61	1859			PAR: PA/PA CHILD: 2/2 (1900); 3/3 (1910)
Children	Marriage date	~1881													Marr. place:
	Martha dau	Jan 1873 PA			8	1872	27	1873							
	Mary dau	PA			6	1874	-								
	Sarah dau	PA			5	1875	-								
	Margaret dau	PA			3	1877	-								
	Sadie E dau	PA			-	-	32	1878	40	1880					school teacher
	Rebecca	PA			1	1879	-								

Part of a Census Analysis Worksheet for the extended Brooke family.

# Make a pedigree matching game for youngsters

By Lesly Klippel

Quite a while ago I read about a game for children that involves a pedigree chart, names on cards, and the challenge for the children to place the names in the proper position on the chart. I decided to make my own version of the game, and this is how I did it.

At the fabric store, I purchased a yard of heavy Pellon (interfacing), a package of wide bias tape, several packages of small, round sticky Velcro (hooks-and-loops) sets, and an apple tree applique. I sewed the bias tape around the Pellon for a border. I located pictures of six generations of the ancestors of one set of grandchildren, some from my collection and some from the children's mother. For the ancestors for whom photos were not available, I chose something related to the person such as a picture of the church in their home village or something associated with their occupation. Google Images supplied some needed occupational pictures. I printed the pictures along with the name and birth and death dates of each person on cardstock. Each picture with the name and dates measures between 1-1/4 x 1-1/2 inches and 2 x 2-1/2 inches. I covered the pictures on both sides with clear contact paper and cut them apart, leaving a tiny border of contact paper around each picture to fully enclose it.

I next laid out the pictures on the pellon in a pedigree chart format. To fit all six generations on the chart, I used a slightly different layout from what we usually use. The sixth generation couple was placed vertically (the husband above the wife). Using a yardstick and pencil,

I drew the connecting lines from one generation to the next. Once the lines were the way I wanted them, I went over the lines with a pen to darken them. I printed *Father* and *Mother* in the appropriate places to mark where the pictures belonged.

The hook part of the sticky Velcro set went on the back of each picture, and the soft loop part of the Velcro set went on the chart in the proper place. The children's pictures were at the bottom of the chart (there are seven in that family, and even the little ones can put their own family in order!). Their father went above them to the left, their mother fit above them on the right, and the generations spread up from there.

I also made a biography booklet with something interesting about each person, so that when the child places an ancestor in the correct position, the short biography about that ancestor can be read. For example: "Bennetts, John Arthur - started working in a tin mine in Cornwall, England, at the age of 10 years; moved to Amador County, California, where he worked in the gold mines."



A family pedigree matching game made for the seven children in a family. .

## *How many days until the holidays? Not enough!*



A family quilt, with fabric-printed photos and family information, is a longer-term project that may take months to complete. A project such as a child's framed handprint (held by Pam Fujii, at right) can be produced more quickly. Family book projects can be published quickly, but assembly may take time.



When the weather is warm and birds are nesting in your planter box, your thoughts might not automatically fly to the winter gift-giving holidays. Nonetheless, that's the best time to start thinking about genealogically themed presents you may want to start preparing for your family.

Now is the time to be thinking about collecting and digitally retouching photos for a family photo book, or making a child's name in wooden blocks. In 2012, SVC GG crafting and gifting expert Pam Fujii presented a class on genealogy-themed holiday presents (handout: [svcgg.org/documents/GenealogyChristmasGifts.pdf](http://svcgg.org/documents/GenealogyChristmasGifts.pdf)).

For family books or photo albums, which you can have printed through services such as Shutterfly.com, Snapfish.com, Costco.com, or MyPublisher.com, you may need to start collecting, scanning, and digitally preparing photographs now to meet an end-of-year deadline and take advantage of online holiday sales.

A photo book can include ample text to become a biography, tell the story of a courtship, record a vacation, document the early years of siblings, pre-

sent a photo tour of a family residence, or showcase military service. Family cookbooks are a way to save favorite family recipes and tips. Pieces of old quilts and lacework can be incorporated into wall hangings and framed photos.

Another option is to use remnants of ancestors' creations to make presents. Lace doilies crocheted, tatted, or knitted by an ancestor can be backed with fabric and stuffed to become small pillows. They also can be mounted on fabric and framed.

Holiday gifts can incorporate old photographs taken by family members decades ago. Home movies, typically recorded on film such as 8mm or Super8, can be converted to digital format and shared on portable media such as DVD. This process may take weeks, however, so be sure to allow adequate time to collect the movies and have their content transferred to digital format. This process could cost hundreds of dollars but is likely to be worth the cost.

Mid-year also is a good time to collect oral histories and records from family members, particularly those who are older. 



# Ask the doctor Is PAF actually RIP?

**Q** We notice that FamilySearch has announced that as of 15 July 2013, PAF will no longer be available for download at FamilySearch.org, and there will no longer be any help from the FamilySearch support team. What, if any, are the Doctor's recommendations for the millions of us who love this wonderful, solid genealogy program? Do we really have to learn a new program?

Both the Doctor and the Doctor's Better Half feel your pain. We continue to keep PAF as part of our genealogy tool boxes because it is such a great program, easy to use, contains everything essential to maintaining a genealogy database, and is virtually bug-free. For those reasons, it may not be necessary for most users to purchase and learn a new program immediately. Furthermore, we have not heard many rumblings that FamilySearch will prevent other sites, such as CNET.com from providing free downloadable copies of the latest version of PAF. Finally, there are at least two highly active PAF5 user groups on the Internet (Rootsweb and Yahoo), that provide quicker and better support than FamilySearch has offered in decades. If you post a question to one of these groups, within minutes you will have several answers from friendly fellow users.

So unless you have a very specific pressing need or needs, we suggest that you give yourself a break and

stick with PAF5 until you need to change. If you have yet to upgrade to PAF5 (version 5.2.18), we recommend you do so soon.

Now as for the specific pressing needs that make it necessary for a PAF user to convert to a different product, we offer the following suggestions. For PC users who wish to take advantage of the direct synchronizing link from a genealogy program to FamilySearch Family Tree, products such as Ancestral Quest, Legacy, and RootsMagic are recommended at this time by FamilySearch. All three are solid programs with many added bells and whistles to attract

PAF users have several excellent options, in addition to simply keeping PAF on a PC, RootsMagic (top) has PAF incentives, and Ancestral Quest (above) has a PAF add-in. Legacy Family Tree (right) also offers many features not available in PAF.

(and perhaps sometimes confuse) new users. Each has a free trial version to help you evaluate how well it meets your needs beyond what PAF provides. Ancestral Quest is the closest to the PAF user interface and may be the easiest for a long-time PAF user to learn. It will automatically convert your PAF file.

In any case, many LDS users already will have switched to one of the other programs for reasons

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# Ask the Doctor (continued)

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mentioned above. Others have been attracted by one or several special features offered by the commercial products, or may have switched to Mac computers that do not support PAF unless an emulation system is used. Also, several mobile products allow access to your genealogy database on smartphones, iPads, and the like.

Finally, you can maintain your genealogy information on the Internet (in the Cloud) privately, or where it can be readily shared. However, we very strongly recommend that you avoid making an Internet version your primary


## Upcoming meetings

The group meets monthly except December, on the second Saturday of the month from 9 to 11 A.M. at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 875 Quince Ave., Santa Clara, California (see map at right). The group is not affiliated with any church or other group.

### 13 July 2013, 9–11 A.M.

- Introduction to Irish research (Richard Rands)
- Digital image editing for computers big and little (Janet Brigham)
- Mac Family Tree for the Mac (Pamela Brigham)
- Reunion 10 for Mac Basics (Debbie Callan)
- Research help with Lesly (Lesly Klippel)


### 10 August 2013, 9–11 A.M.

- Immigration records comparison (Richard Rands)
- Data storage/backup (Morris Jones)
- Reunion 10 for Mac (Pat Burrow)
- Reunion 10 for Mac Basics (Debbie Callan)
- Getting started 

genealogy database. There are many reasons to maintain your family genealogy on your own computer with a good software program, such as those described above. We recommend you read some of the articles previously published in this newsletter to understand why.

A primary reason for maintaining your own database is so that you will always have it for ready reference and updates. Even if other family members help you expand and improve it, you have control over it and can determine what changes to make, based on the quality of the source information.

The top genealogy programs have various collaboration options you can use, should you be fortunate enough to have helpful relatives and other collaborators. FamilySearch Family Tree allows others to make changes affecting your tree.

Another reason to maintain your own database is that it can serve as a central organizing place for your family information. You can attach photographs, documents in PDF, and other information to a genealogy database, allowing you to use the database like an infinitely expandable file cabinet containing information for each entry. 

## About the Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group

SVCGG is the former Silicon Valley PAF Users Group, a nonprofit group of some 600 genealogy enthusiasts. We are based in Silicon Valley in the Bay Area of northern California; members live all over the world.

SVCGG offers classes, seminars, and publications to help family his-

**PastFinder**  
First place, Major Society Newsletter, 2013  
First place, Local Society Newsletter, 2012  
National Genealogical Society

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Meeting site has ample free off-street parking, with a wheelchair-accessible entrance at the front.

torians improve their skills in using technology for genealogy research.

*PastFinder* is published monthly except December. It is distributed at meetings to members and mailed to others after the meetings. Members can receive the newsletter digitally by emailed link. 