

Volume 25 Issue 3

March 2014

SILICON VALLEY COMPUTER GENEALOGY GROUP

PastFinder

Watching the Industry gear up

By Janet Brigham

RootsTech, a massive gathering in Utah of genealogy enthusiasts, might be the largest such assembly in the world. We have never seen one larger. Nor slicker, nor more expansive.

This year's RootsTech, held in early February by FamilySearch (now calling itself FamilySearch International) in downtown Salt Lake City, Utah, was large, slick, and expansive.

Again, the Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group had a booth, and once again, the group was represented among the speakers.

In the conference's three previous years, the support and influence of large genealogy companies have been evident. Each day of the conference has been sponsored by a large company. This year, their presence was reified with the announcement of a partnership among FamilySearch, Ancestry.com, MyHeritage.com, and FindMyPast.com. One goal of the partnership is to bring millions of new, indexed records to family historians online.

Following an announcement in 2013, FamilySearch President Dennis Brimhall announced the partnership's plans to digitize, index, and make available 100 million obituaries. Details have not been forthcoming, but FamilySearch is preparing a new browser-based FamilySearch Indexing interface to be released later in 2014. It will replace the Java-based software currently used for Indexing projects.

Entrepreneurship large and small was everywhere at RootsTech, from companies building genealogy-themed overlays to Google Earth to new ways

to build and maintain online trees.

Most stars of the keynote addresses were bloggers. In fact, some bloggers with no discernible tie to family history

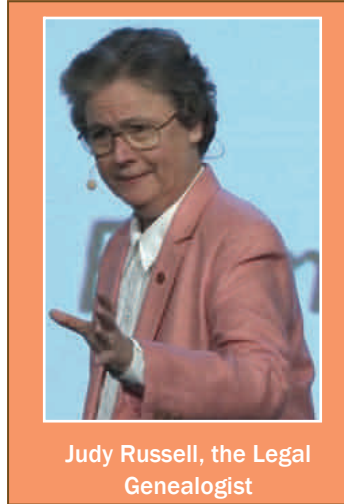
were keynote speakers, presumably to draw in a wider audience. One of the best speakers was genealogist Judy Russell (pictured at left), the Legal Genealogist, a popular blogger and speaker. She described how she debunked inaccurate ancestral information that had been published in a family book.

Another popular keynote speaker was population geneticist Spencer Wells of National Geographic's Genographic Project. The

author of books and star of documentaries described migrations of early humans, based on DNA testing of hundreds of thousands of volunteers around the world.

RootsTech was sponsored by FamilySearch (International), which is a department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon), the same group that operates the Family History Library and about 5,000 Family History (FamilySearch) Centers around the world. Even so, the conference was designed not to feel specifically Mormon, or even religious. Conference sessions were not opened or closed with public prayers, and little content

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Judy Russell, the Legal Genealogist

Outside and Inside

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Watching the Industry *(continued)*

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targeted Mormons or other religious groups. The conference was designed to welcome more than 10,000 DIVERSE participants from 49 U.S. states and dozens of countries.

A term new to RootsTech this year was *the Industry*, describing both for-profit and non-profit organizations promoting and furthering family history research.

Popular newcomers to the Industry included photo- and story-capturing methodologies. A mobile app designed to help capture images and oral histories won top prize in a contest for developers. What is unknown is whether a subscription app can build a client base at \$4/month or \$40/year (savingmemoriesforever.com). The app is free to try.

Clearly, mobile app-making is an important direction for family history. The term *mobile* refers to all portable electronic devices, including cell phones (feature phones and smartphones) and tablets. In this direction, FamilySearch announced new mobile apps coming out later this year. This was consistent with the class taught by SVCGG member and teacher Pamela Brigham, whose RootsTech presentation was on doing family research on a mobile tablet.

A focus of RootsTech 2013 (last year) was the FamilySearch online offering FamilyTree. This year, Family Tree received less attention overall, although some programs that interface with Family Tree generated happy buzz.

A pedigree mapping service, Puzzilla.org, now in-

terfaces with Family Tree (go to Puzzilla.org, log into FamilySearch; see review by blogger James Tanner: genealogysstar.blogspot.com/2013/12/puzzillaorg-is-now-tree-access.html).

Another popular tie-in to Family Tree was the RootsMapper website (rootsmapper.com). I did try this service, only to see that it mapped my great-grandmother as being born in Africa, rather than Utah. After I furiously and repeatedly corrected her Family Tree entry (it didn't "take" the first few times), Rootsmapper did map it correctly.

Which is to say, Rootsmapper may help you find incorrect information entered by others in Family Tree. It can't fix the problems, but it



Family history enthusiasts at RootsTech watched large screens in keynote sessions and major classes, such as this. (FamilySearch image.)


might illuminate them.

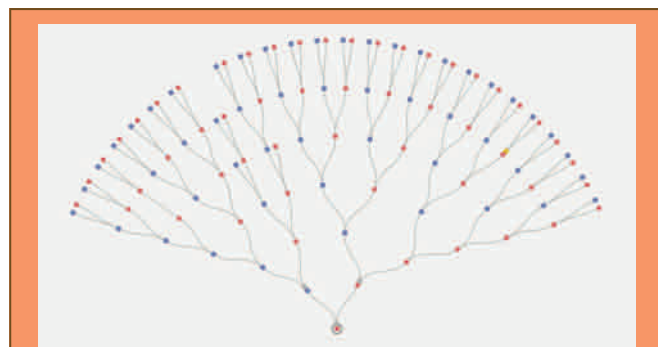
Among the highlights of RootsTech 2014 were enhancements and innovations of accessibility. For example, the longstanding **PERSI** (Periodical Source Index), created by the Allen County Public Library of

Fort Wayne, Indiana, will be searchable at FindMyPast.com. The content — which previously could be accessed by ordering a photocopy of the original periodical pages — will be digitized and available at FindMyPast.com, a commercial website that is available for free access at Family History (FamilySearch) centers.

Anyone with a computer and broad band can watch parts of RootsTech 2014 and 2013 at this website:

www.rootstech.org/about/videos/

A note: Keep trying if the RootsTech server doesn't respond immediately. It's getting a lot of traffic. 



Puzzilla.org generated this chart based on the author's data at FamilySearch Family Tree. A mouse-over on a dot generates a hover box of an individual's genealogy information; clicking on the dot generates a chart of the individual's descendants.

Facebook for Family History

By Lesly Klippel

Social media was not an area I connected with genealogy until one of my students informed me about what I was missing.

I understand that the younger crowd has migrated from Facebook to sites like Snapchat and Instagram, but being a grandmother, I do use Facebook to keep in touch with family members and friends, and I love seeing pictures and learning about the activities of my children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

When one of my students mentioned that Facebook has genealogy pages, I was surprised and intrigued. To investigate, I searched for the word *genealogy* on my Facebook page.

I noticed that almost 300,000 people “liked” this topic. I searched for *Alabama genealogy* and found several sites where I could learn about research in Alabama and post questions and problems I might have in my research.

I tried this with several other states with the same results. I found literally hundreds of exciting sites that provide connections to helpful local genealogists.

I decided to see what FamilySearch said about Facebook. At familysearch.org, I clicked on Search and then on Wiki. Searching for *Facebook*, I found a long list of results, one of which was Research Communities on Facebook, an article explaining FamilySearch activities on Facebook since May 2011.

FamilySearch has created 106 community pages, which cover 49 countries, all 50 states, and topics such as American Indian and Hispanic research.

Since a friend was having difficulty interpreting a Slovakian baptism record, I clicked on the *Slovakia and Czech Republic* link and

found a site filled with pictures, questions asked and answered, research information, and connections to people eager to help with Slovakian research. A gold mine of information! I am chagrined that I didn’t know about this wonderful resource sooner.

I found a similar result when I clicked on other harder-to-research countries, including Italy, Poland, Ireland, and Russia.

One listing in the results for Facebook on the Wiki that surprised me was a link to Popular Social Networks for Genealogy. This is a list of genealogy-related blogs covering a wide range of subjects including African American Genealogy, Scottish Genealogy News and Events, Small-Leaved Shamrock, Our Georgia Roots, and Runaway Slave (advertisements in Tennessee newspapers pre-1865).

Also included were links to popular blogs like DearMYRTLE, Cyndi’s List, Renee’s Genealogy Blog, and Eastman’s Online Genealogy Newsletter. I found links to blogs I’d never heard of, including Chicagogenealogy.blogspot.com (help with the Windy City) and Midwesternmicrohistory.blogspot.com (Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Michigan).

Blog list

I also found a list of nearly 3,000 blogs registered on Geneablogger.com. I found people looking for their birth parents, a movie of a blizzard in New York City 100 years ago, and a series of research lessons for beginners (Kim’s Genealogy).

One blog (100 Years in America) offered quick research guides for Catholic genealogy, Croatia genealogy, and Hungarian genealogy, PDF downloads in the Legacy Family Tree store for less than \$5

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From a Facebook genealogy page



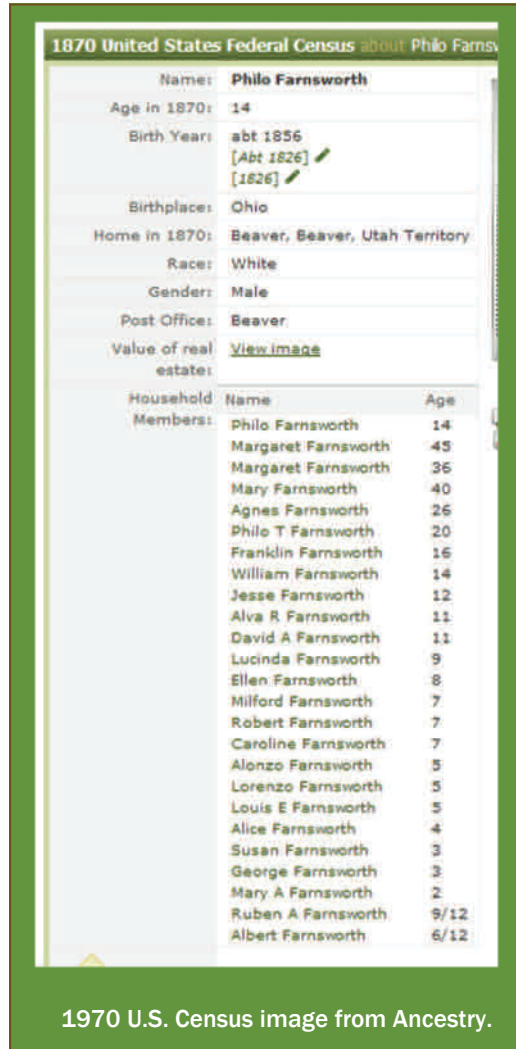
How I found it Or rather, how I missed it

By Richard Rands

This issue's How I Found It could more appropriately be titled How I Missed It; it is a great illustration of how crucial it is to be thorough when examining old documents.

This experience was part of a project to review old records associated with the lineage of Philo T. Farnsworth (1906-1971), the man who invented the first electronic television. My goal was to verify the accuracy of the information posted to online trees and pedigrees.

It turns out that Philo T. Farnsworth was the grandson of Philo Taylor Farnsworth, Sr. (1826-1887), an early Mormon convert at a time when some church members were invited to practice polygamy. Working with civil documents that recorded the large polygamous families can be especially challenging, because rarely were the multitude of children associated with their specific mothers.



This is especially true of the census records for the elder Farnsworth. According to the U.S. censuses from 1850 to 1880, he eventually had four wives who gave birth to at least 30 children.

Additional research among church records turned up a 31st child, Reuben, who had been born in 1851, shortly after the 1850 U.S. Census, and who died in 1855, before the 1860 U.S. Census, which meant that he was recorded in neither census.

So far so good, but when I tallied up all the children for a census analysis, I came up with 32 unique children! Some people might question what difference one child makes when we are dealing with so many.

For me, that is an unacceptable way to overlook a real individual in your family history. Excluding one child could mean dropping the heritage of perhaps dozens of descendants who could be living next door or across town.

This instance was likely to involve discovering a child who had simply

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Facebook for Family History (continued)

(Continued from page 3)

each. Clicking on that site brought up a long list of Quick Guides offering help with subjects such as Moravian genealogy, Ukrainian genealogy, Quaker genealogy, and Czech genealogy.

Other listed blogs offered specific research help such as Tennessee Methodist History, Ang Aming Angkan (Filipino), and my favorite title, "Irish Genealogy: Help! The Faery Folk Hid My Ancestors!" A search field helps users find a locality of interest.

Searching on *Tennessee* brought up a list of 19 blogs, each of which offers help with Tennessee re-

search. Learning how other researchers found information in a locality of interest can give you hints and clues.

I was glad to learn that search engines such as Google.com and Bing.com catalog these blogs; to see if any of them have information on your family members, enter the ancestors' names, enclosed in quotation marks, in a search engine. You might strike gold!

You are guaranteed to learn more about researching your area of interest from the experiences of others and the local expertise offered by the genealogy community through social media.

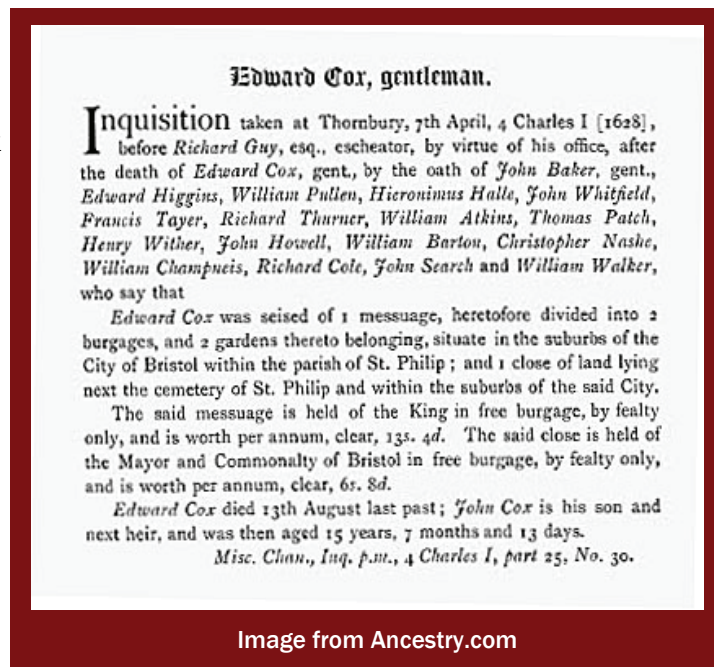


Whaddya think this is?

We continue here a feature in the *PastFinder*, “Whaddya think this is?” Each issue includes an item, fact, photo, or document that is significant for genealogical and family history research. So, whaddya think this is?

- A. A record of a court of Inquisition to determine if Edward Cox should be granted the right to be buried in the local church cemetery.
- B. A list of all the jurors who would examine Edward Cox's dead body to look for signs of insanity, drunkenness, or other undesirable behavior.
- C. A record of the process instigated by King Charles of England to determine whether any of Edward Cox's property might actually belong to the king.
- D. A method that the English king used to try to cheat, or escheat, subjects out of private property.

(For the correct answer, see page 8.)



How I found it *(continued)*

(Continued from page 4)

been overlooked in later generations of a family rich with history. I resolved to sort out the children count.

The evidence for this mystery child came from an entry in the 1870 U.S. Census for the remote community of Beaver, in the southern reaches of Utah Territory. Even though Utah was not admitted to the Union until 1896, the census records indicated that Beaver was part of a county-like jurisdiction also called Beaver.

The original census documents are quite faint, making it difficult to reproduce in this publication, so I have included here the index record (see image on page 4). Philo was incorrectly indexed as 14 years old. He actually was 54 years old; you can see the four wives whose names followed his name: two Margarets, Mary, and Agnes. Then came 20 children, who, of course, did not include Reuben, who had died in 1855.

Some of you might never have seen a polygamous family's entry in a census. This is a prime example, with several children of the same age, listed chronologically as was standard practice, not distinguish-

ing which children belonged to which wife. The eldest child was named after his father, Philo, followed by Franklin, William, Jesse, Alva, and so on.

The fourth child, Jesse, was the mystery child in my inquiry. In the 1870 U.S. Census, Jesse Farnsworth was 12 years old. That would imply that he should have been listed in the 1860 U.S. census as a two-year-old. But he was not. William was there, age four, and Alva was there, age one. But not Jesse. By carefully checking the birth dates of each of the children and the marriage dates for each of the four wives, I saw that Jesse most likely would have to be a child of the first wife, Margaret Yates. Regardless of which wife Jesse belonged to, a careful search of public, church, and family records failed to turn up any mention of a child named Jesse Farnsworth.

More than 700 family trees on Ancestry.com mentioned Philo Farnsworth; most of them appeared to have been copied from one another. I found several such entries on FamilySearch Family Tree, family cemetery plots, and dozens of books online about the Philo T. Farnsworth family. None contained any mention of a Jesse. I checked with my client, who had several overflowing binders of material about the family.

(Continued on page 6)

How I found it (continued)

10	-9	914	Jesse Farnsworth	34	m		Par	140	1500	Ohio
11			Mary	34	f					Eng
12			Mary	20	"					Ind
13			Agnes	16	"					"
14			Mary	30	"					Eng
15			Jesse	10	m					U.S.
16			Franklin	6	"					"
17			Wm	14	"					"
18			Abby C	1	"					"
19			David	7	"					"
20			Wm Moyes	19	"		to Labor			Eng
21			Jesse Willis	2	"					U.S.

1860 U.S. Census image from Ancestry.com

(Continued from page 5)

We found no mention of a Jesse Farnsworth in the available materials.

But there he was, as plain as he could be, in the 1870 U.S. Census. In the 1880 U.S. Census, he was not listed, but by then he would have been 22 years old and capable of being on his own as an adult.

Undeterred, I began to hypothesize possible explanations for this mystery child. Could he have been adopted? Was he part of the extended family? Was he a neighbor child who happened to be visiting at the time of the census enumeration and happened to be included with the children being listed? I imagined plenty of possible explanations, most of which could never be verified.

Then came the breakthrough. My client called to tell me about a tiny, scribbled note on a back page in one of her binders, indicating that Philo's fourth wife, Mary, had been previously married (somewhat unusual in Mormon polygamous marriages) to a William Willes, by whom she had a son named Jesse. While putting away the various binders and other material, she had noticed the comment and thought it might be the solution to my dilemma.


By searching for a Jesse Willes/Willis, rather than Jesse Farnsworth, I soon had records falling into place, giving rise to Jesse Willes's considerable pos-

terity, some of which led to families who settled in California. One grandchild of Jesse was the postmaster for the nearby town of Santa Cruz.

Although Jesse was recorded as a Farnsworth in the 1870 U.S. Census, he maintained his birth surname when he left the Farnsworth household by 1880, moved northward in Utah, and sired ten children of his own by one wife (polygamy was on its way out as a common practice). He died in 1933.

An important aspect of this situation had bothered me. If Jesse had been brought into the household from a previous marriage, why didn't he appear in the 1860 U.S. Census as a two-year-old? Philo had married Mary Priscilla Griffiths in June 1860, just before the census enumerator visited the Farnsworth family. Jesse should have been listed at the time. I went back and revisited the 1860 census (image displayed above).

An empty gap separated William and Alva, but what I missed the first time was the name listed at the bottom of the entry, after the farm laborer, William Moyes — that name is clearly *Jesse Willis*, a two-year-old male, born in Utah Territory.

I had stopped my census analysis at the end of the Farnsworths, causing myself hours of needless searching, when I could have been following the lead that was right there in front of me. 



Ask the Doctor

When no one else is

Q No matter how hard I try, I cannot seem to get any of my children or grandchildren interested in the family's genealogy or family history. I don't know what to do with all the material I have worked so hard to put together. What do you recommend?

Unless you are on your deathbed, you shouldn't panic yet. Countless unexpected events still could trigger the beginning of what may turn into a full-fledged passion for family history. It may be a grandchild's school project, the discovery of a famous ancestor, or the fascinating story of a strange event in the family's lore that pushes someone in the family to ask you for the information you have.

Unfortunately, genealogy has a reputation for being complex, time-consuming, and difficult to pursue, making it something that younger people cannot devote much time to. When the next generation begins to disconnect from the more time-consuming aspects of their lives, their thoughts begin to turn to their ancestors.

You can do two things. First, take every possible opportunity to make the more fascinating aspects of your research known to your family. Tell the stories any way you can — in family letters, blogs, a family newsletter, shared photos, and family reunions. Be light-handed about it. Keep it simple, and don't hide your work in your closet, attic, garage, or basement. Make it so that no one in your family can someday say, "I never knew so much information was available, and that you had it."

Second, be diligent about organizing your research results into a well-thought-out and engaging format. Use something that will be meaningful to the next generation. Rows and rows of gigantic binders full of old pedigree charts, family group sheets, and other traditional documents might not interest your descendants. Drawers stuffed with strangely organized folders are unlikely to capture the imagination of those who come after you.

It may be difficult to anticipate what such a format might be, but if you involve your family in transferring your research into an up-to-date structure, you will be more likely to engage their interest.

We live in the era of the search engine. Virtually every time you sit down at your computer, you turn to one form or another of a search engine to locate something you are looking for. From Google to

FamilySearch, from eBay to Amazon, you interact with search engines.

By organizing your collection of photos, documents, and other family history material into a digitally searchable format, you eliminate the need to maintain intricate manual filing systems.

Building and maintaining a personal genealogical database on a personal compute is the best way to provide family with a searchable family record. Nearly every item in your family history collection can be tied to an individual or to individuals with unique records in your database.

Cataloging each item inside each individual's record makes it possible to search the database for references to the items in your collection. This is but one way to simplify and modernize what you have amassed in your home, plus this approach makes it shareable to those who access your family legacy.

Another way to feel connected to people who actually care about your research is to participate in online trees and forums (calm down; the Doctor knows that purists would write *fora* as the plural of *forum*, but the Doctor is a pragmatist. Aren't you?)

What you may find is that you begin connecting to more distant relatives who do care about family history. The Doctor has encountered multiple distant cousins who are invested in genealogy, which has been a source of comfort, considering the general lack of interest among some of the Doctor's closer relatives. The Doctor enjoys finding compatriots enthused about genealogical endeavors.

A case in point: the Doctor and the Doctor's faithful sidekick had been unable to figure out the ancestry of one of the Doctor's great-grandparents. It is frustrating that some lines go back nearly to Medieval times, and other lines stop somewhere in the Midwest in the mid-1800s. This was one such line. One lovely day, the Doctor encountered a distant cousin whose family had long ago solved the puzzle of the great-grandmother's ancestry, thanks to some handwritten family documents.

The take-home message is to avoid making prematurely permanent decisions about your family history collection. To quote a couplet the Doctor learned in sixth grade (yes, the Doctor was once a child — a child who did not care about family history!):

My soul, sit thou a patient looker-on;

Judge not the play before the play is done.



What didja think it was? And were ya right?

ANSWER to question posed on page 5: C. A record of the process to determine whether the property belonged to the king.

This is a document known as an Inquisition Post Mortem.

By English tradition, all the land in England was ultimately owned by the Crown. At this point in England's history, whenever someone died who owned land in freehold, meaning their property was "privately owned," the King sent out an officer known as an *escheator*.

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.

8 March 2014, 9–11 A.M.

- The Best of RootsTech 2014 (Janet Brigham)
- A Simplified Approach to Backing Up (Richard Rands)
- Reunion 10 for Mac Users (Martha Wallace)
- Reunion for Mac, Basics (Pat Solomon)
- Research with Lesly (Klippel)
- Getting Started in Genealogy (Carleen Foster)


12 April 2014, 9–11 A.M.

- Military Records – Case by Case
- Organizing Your Stuff
- Reunion 10 for Mac Users
- Reunion for Mac, Basics
- Research with Lesly (Klippel)
- Getting Started in Genealogy

The escheator would temporarily take possession of the property in the name of the King, and then would establish a jury that would examine the ownership documents to determine if the dead man's heirs had a legitimate right to inherit the land.

If everything was in order, the land passed to the heir or heirs. If not, then all or some portion would be escheated, or taken back into the King's possession.


In this case, Edward Cox's son, John, was not yet of age (21), so the escheator would have named a guardian to managed the property on behalf of the king until John reached 21 years of age. If something happened to John before he turned 21, his property would be escheated back to the King.

Clearly, such documents can be useful for genealogy. 

Sites to try

These are a couple of sites that may be useful to you:

dmarie.com/timecap/
An "on this day in history" website with full coverage of 1875-2002.

familychartmasters.com
Many family historians wonder where to get a colorful, wall-size family chart printed. This is one place to ask that question. 

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-

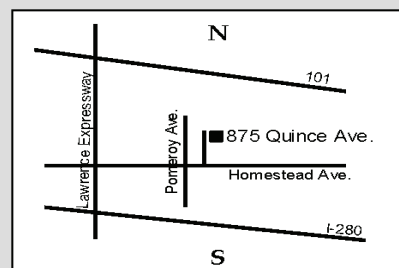
PastFinder
First place, Major Society Newsletter, 2013
First place, Local Society Newsletter, 2012
National Genealogical Society

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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. 