

Supporting family historians in the South Puget Sound since 1974



OLYMPIA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

VOL. 36, NO 2

OCT 2025

UPCOMING DATES

- GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING: Thursday, Oct 9th, 7-8:30pm Zoom and in-person
- SIG MEETINGS - throughout Oct
- Newsletter articles due October 15th
- OGS Board Meeting Oct 14th, 6:30-7:45pm

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Newsletter team: Peggy Cooley, Carolyn Gibbons, and Mandy Stahre
Contact us: newsletter@olygensoc.org

WEBSITE LINK:

olygensoc.org

FOLLOW US:



This newsletter is free to the community.

Program Year for OGS

This program year there are changes in the location for OGS meetings. The OGS Board felt that in-person meetings in the darker months is difficult for many of our members to attend. The following months will be Zoom (online) only Novem-

ber, January and February. The decision was made to have hybrid online and in-person Zoom meetings in October, March, April, May and June. December (our Holiday Party) is in-person (and on a weekend). Just a reminder: all of our meetings can be viewed

with Zoom. The link is on the main page of the OGS website (www.olygensoc.org). Please check the schedule on the website or in this newsletter. If you plan to come in person, print out the speaker handouts before you come, as OGS will not print out the handouts.

Even in the Best Families: How to Research and Share the Skeletons in Your Family Closet

Finding skeletons in your family history may be disconcerting, but can also provide an opportunity to uncover new information about your ancestors. We will discuss a variety of less common record sources which may be created when an ancestor behaves badly, as well as the challenges of deciding how to handle

those skeletons in family histories and research reports. Three short case studies will be included, highlighting specific

strategies that can be used to uncover and use these uncommon records. Karen is the principal genealogist for The Past Matters® LLC (www.ThePastMatters.com) and specializes in researching old photographs. She has served on the board of



directors for the Association of Professional

Genealogists (APG) and the Genealogical Speakers Guild, and is a member of the Dagherreian Society and the DAR.



Photo: Karen Wallace Steely

Karen lives in Vancouver, Washington with her husband and three cats.

OGS News

1. Rebel Romero, who has cataloged and cared for the books that OGS owns and stores for the past 9 years, has decided to “retire”. She has cataloged every single book in our possession that is held in **68 boxes** at our storage unit. She also fetches and assesses potential donations from members and maintains a list of the other items held in our storage locker. We need a member or members of OGS to step up and take on this position. Organization-

al skills and database competency would be needed. Please send inquiries to info@olygensoc.org.

2. America 250! is just around the corner on July 4, 2026. OGS plans to partner with the Washington State Historical Society to celebrate this momentous occasion. We are asking for a committee to be formed soon, so if you are interested, please send an email specifying interest in America 250! to info@olygensoc.org. Sign up



for more information on Washington State’s plans for America’s 250th at their website: Washington State America 250 - Washington State Semiquincentennial Committee WA

Membership news

Don’t forget to renew your membership now; the program year started September 1. Renewal is easy on our website via PayPal, or you can print and complete the form and mail it with your check to OGS. Please welcome **Dee McNeely** (Olympia) who joined OGS this past month. Also please

welcome back **Steven Morrison**, a former president of OGS who rejoined after having not been a member for a number of years. Steven is a professional genealogist who spoke to OGS this past January. Thanks to everyone who has renewed their OGS membership for 2025-2026, and a very special thanks to

James Haran, Sandra Johnson, Julia Miller, Linda Spaulding, Durina Taylor, and Trina Young for their generous donations to OGS.

As always, if you have any questions about membership or logging in to the OGS website, please contact us at membership@olygensoc.org.

Community News

1. Volunteer 'Scribes' are needed to transcribe and index historically important records for the WA State Archives. Visit their website to learn how: <https://www.sos.wa.gov/archives/be-involved/historical-records-project>
2. The American Revolution, a film by Ken Burns, Sarah Botstein, and David Schmidt is premiering on PBS November 16 in a six-part, 12-hour documentary.



 Sacajawea Chapter, NSDAR presents,

Talking Headstones

at Union Pioneer Calvary Cemetery.

Join us to hear stories about our founders buried in this Tumwater cemetery. October 5, 2025, at 1-3 pm.
Location: 5700 Littlerock Road, Tumwater, WA.



It is recommended
that you access the cemetery by parking at the
south end of Mills and Mills Memorial Park and walk through
the Littlerock Road streetside opening in the cemetery fence.

Genealogy 101

Last month I talked about one of the new things at www.familysearch.org and this month I am going back to the basics and introduce you as if you never knew anything about it.

I first started with Family Search about 1980, before I got my first computer in 1985. This was way back when to use their information, one had to go to Salt Lake City library or the small, local Family History Center (FHC). There one would look through the catalog, using their computers or later one's own computer, signing into the website. After finding something of interest, the visitor would order a microfilm or sometimes a microfiche, wait a couple of weeks, then get the film or fiche and, using the machines at the FHC, find through the film, copying the information by hand into a notebook. Later print copies would be available. Either way, it is tedious, but so much better than traveling across the country to find the information. I looked at the system as hundreds of little men (and women) running around the world, copying things just for me.

I volunteered at my local

FHC for about 25 years until so many people fell victim to the idea that "everything was online" that I would sit for my shift without seeing anyone to help.

I still think the catalog is one of the best things to start with, even though Family Search now has much more available.

I am going to talk about some of what is there this month and, depending on how much I can cover now, next month and maybe even December.

I will start with the catalog. To use www.familysearch.org one needs an account (free). Easily done – mostly you need an email address, a name and a password. This opens up the millions of items they have, for free, for everyone to use. The only things that are not open to the user is the items, mostly books, under copyright. [As an aside, I am trying to sign permission for my books to have the copyright restriction lifted for the Church to let them be read online.] It is overwhelming to browse through their holdings.

I work mostly in Cumberland County, North Carolina and Mason County Washington. What is available for

these two places is mind-boggling.

Let me walk you through looking for something in Cumberland County. At the home page – what you see when you first sign on – will be different for each person because once you start using the site, the home page will be tailored to you and what you have been looking for previously. Every time at first opening up the page, there will be a menu bar at the top with "Family Tree," "Search," "Memories," "Get Involved," and "Activities." Next time I will go through some of those other items, but today I will concentrate on Search. Clicking on Search with your mouse will open up 10 items to click on for further exploration. For this demonstration, I will click on the sixth item down, "Catalog."

This will open up a new page with a quick explanation of the Catalog items on the left with links to "How to use the catalog" and "See tips and resources." On the right is a box to search by place, surnames, titles, authors, subjects and key-

Genealogy 101

words. Below the search box are two other ways to search, by call number or film/fiche number. If I have been using a specific film, I can use that or just search for a place: I can enter either Cumberland, North Carolina, or North Carolina, United States. If you are following along, note that entering North Carolina will give me two choices – one for North Carolina, United States, 1776 to present or North Carolina, British Colonial America Colony 1712-1776. Just searching North Carolina, United States opens up a new page which has place information and on the top right links to “See: Part of the Southern States” or “See: Places within North Carolina.” There are Tips and Resources, a Print button and 2,471 items in the list. To actually access Cumberland County, I would click on Places within North Carolina, or I could have started with Cumberland, North Carolina, United States in my search box.

The original search I did was for “Any” but if I hit the Online button, I get 1,143.

The “Any” includes books and other items under copyright that you cannot look at without going to the local FHC or Salt Lake City Library. Still, 1,143 is a lot of items. Narrowing the search to Cumberland County gives me 80 items. These include Bible Records, Divorce Records, Court Records and Indexes and Land and Property Records. These last two are the main ones I use.

Some of the records are a little more bizarre; there is one file of 608 pages of film which, though undindexed and in no order that I can see (not surname of father, surname of mother, nor date) has a number of charges of bastardy against a woman and/or the father of said child. I am sure these could be of interest to some. That is on my list of items to abstract now that I have found them.

There are many non-US records, though I have struck out in one area. My great-grandson has ancestors who came from

Ukraine ca 1900-1912. One family was from the Polish Empire part and one family from the Austrian Hungarian Empire part. Although I have a town name for each of the two families, there is absolutely nothing on the one family, and only four entries for the others – in Cyrillic, which I do not read. There are ways around this, but right now, I am moving on to other things.

However, I have one woman in my family who came from County Cork (according to her death certificate) sometime between birth in 1833 and marriage in 1854 in Portsmouth, Scioto, Ohio. There are 52 entries for County Cork, Ireland; I will have to explore them.

This should be enough to get you started in Family Search and give you a hint of the wealth of information in their holdings.

Good hunting!

- Carolyn Gibbons



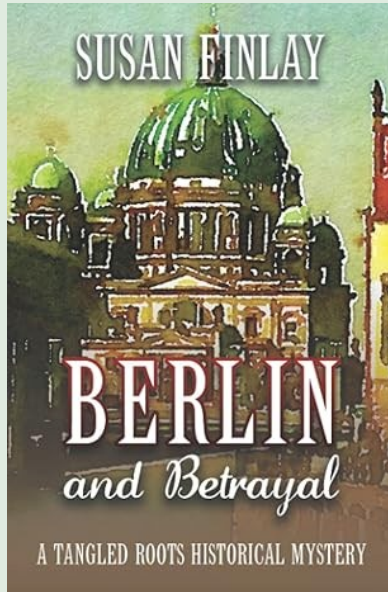
Book Reviews by Kerry McHugh Upton

[Berlin and Betrayal, a Tangled Roots Historical Mystery Book 3](#) by Susan Finlay-

Lucas Landry uproots his family from Sacramento to Germany to research his family in the hopes of getting them all together for a family reunion. Once they got settled in, the pandemic started up and changed their plans. The book runs in dual timelines, present day and WWII. The historical timeline tells the story of the family having to leave their homeland in German controlled Sudetenland, getting split up throughout Europe. Lucas continues to research what happened to his family as he continues uncovering the stories written in old family diaries. A great genealogical mystery adding depth to what our European ancestors went through during WWII. This book is available through booksellers or I have a copy to lend. Please contact me if you are interested in borrowing the series.

[Bohemia and Broken Hearts, a Tangled Roots Historical Mystery Book 4](#) by Susan Finlay-

While Lucas and his family are in Germany, his brother Seth discovers that they have family in the Czech Republic. Lucas ventures to the Czech Republic to see what he can learn about his family, if they really are his family. Lucas, know-

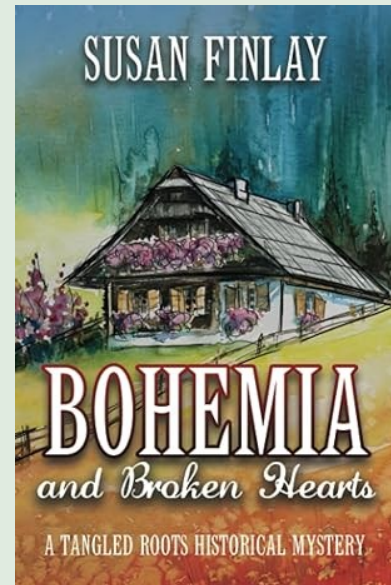


ing nothing about the area or the language navigates the challenges to learn more about researching in the Czech Republic. As the fourth book in the series, this also has a dual timeline taking place in the Sudetenland during WWII. I wasn't sure that I was going to enjoy a series which the timeline is during the second world war. The author Susan weaves the storyline of family struggles during wartime, families divided both politically and geographically, families lost to each other. Most of her resources rely on family diaries and old photographs. In this fourth book, church records provide a wealth of information to tie the families together. I recommend this series to those family historians that have east european family to help

better understand their history. The books are available through Kindle, booksellers or I have the series to lend. If interested please contact me. Next, I am starting Susan Finlay's second historical mystery series. Stay tuned for those upcoming reviews.

I have updated the genealogy mystery / novel book list. It is now over 440 titles!

Take a look and see if you have read them all. Simply log onto OlyGenSoc.org as a member. Click



on Publications/Files, click on Downloadable Files, then click on Genealogy Mysteries & Other. You'll be able to click on the Excel or Adobe links to download either format. This is a perk of being an OGS Member! Enjoy



OLYMPIA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

SAVE THE DATE
FEBRUARY 7, 2026

OGS Annual Virtual Seminar
Decoding Your Ancestors: The Tech Edition
with Cyndi Ingle

Check our website for registration information.
www.olygensoc.org

Special Interest Groups and Facilitators:

- ANCESTRY - Greg Nordlund; meets 4th Saturday 11:00 am – 12:30 pm
- DNA - Nancy Cordell; meets 2nd Wednesday (previously Tuesday) 6:30 pm
- FAMILY HISTORY WRITING - Laura Carroll meets 1st Monday 7:00 - 9:00 pm
- FAMILY TREE MAKER - David Abernathy; meets 1st Tuesday 6:00 - 8:00 pm Via Zoom
- FAMILY SEARCH.org – Carolyn Gibbons; meets 4th Wednesday 6:00 – 8:00 pm
- GENEALOGY CHAT - Peggy Cooley; meets 3rd Wednesday 1:00 - 2:30 pm, in person at Peggy's home!
- LEGACY FAMILY TREE - Jerri McCoy; meets 3rd Saturday 1:00 pm

OGS Elected Officers

President — Andy Carter

Vice President — Terry Church

Secretary — Kris Retlin

Treasurer — Carol Jenner

Past President—Kathy Erlandson

Team Leads

Book Management— Rebel Romero

Membership — Helga Warner

Newsletter — Peggy Cooley

OGS Historian — Cindy Stalnakar

Publicity — vacant

Research — Jerri McCoy

Spring Seminar — Nancy Cordell

SIGs—Kerry McHugh-Upton

Sunshine—Kris Retlin

Technology—Joe Brookshier

Outreach—Daina Bargmann

Community Partners

City of Lacey — Erin Quinn Valcho

Timberland Library — Agatha Burstein

September General Membership Meeting

Dawn Carlile presented "Researching Oregon Trail Ancestors" at our September 11 general meeting. The Oregon Trail extended approximately 2,000 miles from Independence, Missouri, to Oregon City, Oregon, from 1840 to 1869. More than 50,000 people traveled to Oregon, and a great number died on the journey. This talk covered resources for researching people and their lives along the trail. A recording and handout of the meeting is now available to OGS members, log on to website; see Community Events / Recordings*. Corresponding handout is available by clicking on Publications/Files; Downloadable Files; Program Materials - OGS Only*; Carlile. Handout and Recording are available through 16 October 2025.

Olympia Genealogical Society

Membership Meeting Minutes

September 11, 2025

President Andy Carter called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Meetings: For the 2025-2026 meeting year, September, October, March, April, May and June will be combined meetings. November, January and February will be virtual only. The December meeting will be a Christmas party.

Newsletter: The newsletter is full of information. Submissions to the newsletter are always welcome, anything eventful in your genealogy research is welcome.

Outreach: Andy spoke about his positive experiences doing outreach at the Tenino Oregon Trail Days event.

Board Meetings: Andy encouraged anyone interested to attend.

Team Reports:

Genealogy Chat will be focusing on Beginners Genealogy in October.

DNA has been using 2 books for program material. They will be returning to the beginning of each to go through again and see what they have missed. This is a great opportunity for beginners.

Program: Diana Bargemann introduced the speaker, Dawn Carlile, who presented "Researching Oregon Trail Ancestors".

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:41 pm. Approximately 35 members and guests were in attendance.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristin Retlin, Secretary