

Supporting family historians in the South Puget Sound since 1974



OLYMPIA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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DEC 2025

UPCOMING DATES

- GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING: Join us Saturday, Dec 13th, 1-3pm for OGS Holiday Party
SIG MEETINGS - throughout Dec; SIG Family Search will NOT meet in December
Newsletter articles due December 15th
OGS Board Meeting Dec 16th, 6:30-7:45pm

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Table with 2 columns: Article Title and Page Number. Includes Holiday Party (1), Upcoming (1), Spring Seminar (2-3), Genealogy 101 (4-5), Book Reviews (5), and Community News (6).

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.

OGS Holiday Party



Program: We will have our annual OGS Holiday Party this year on Saturday, Dec. 13, 1-3pm, at Capital Vision Christian Church, 1775 Yew St. SE, Olympia. This year we will also have live music at the beginning of the party provided by musicians Jeff Anderson and Jane Johnson, both self-taught, as they provide us with tradi-

tional Scandinavian music. According to Fiddler magazine: "Jeff is a stellar example of Norwegian American music that was once played across the northern United States but is now dying out." Bring your savory and sweet snacks, but please, nothing that requires electricity. OGS will provide paper goods, cutlery and beverage-

es or bring your own.

Our February speaker (Billie Stone Fogarty) wants to know what states OGS members are interested in for doing research in school census records. Tell Diana Bargmann at or before the party of any states you'd be interested in hearing about.



Upcoming programs

January: J. Mark Lowe "Finding Uncle John's Grist Mill, His Neighbors And That Cemetery Using Maps, Records & Stories" (Zoom only)

\*February: Billie Stone Fogarty "School Censuses: What, When, Where" (Zoom only)

March: Karen Wallace Staley "Bounders, Bigamists, and Grass Widows-

Using Divorce Records in Genealogical Research" (Hybrid)

April: Roxanne Lowe "Researching in the Evergreen State" (Hybrid)

May: Billie Stone Fogarty "Introduction to Researching American Indian Ancestry" (Hybrid)

June: Crystal Hicks "Researching in the

Washington State Library" (Hybrid)

\*Please let Dianna Bargmann know by December 13th if there are states you would prefer to hear about during this presentation.

## 2026 Seminar

Cyndi Ingle, a genealogist for more than 45 years, is the creator and innovator behind the award-winning and globally recognized [Cyndis-List.com](https://www.cyndislist.com). Cyndi is an expert in using technology for genealogy, research in the U. S. and bringing together traditional methodology with organization, computers, software, and the Internet. She is an internationally known guest lecturer, and she has authored numerous articles, two magazine columns, and three books. Cyndi is the Executive Director for the Institute of Genealogy and Historical Research.

### Seminar Sessions

**1. The Path to Digital Libraries and Archives:** Today every nook and cranny of the Internet is filled with hidden gems in digital library and archive collections. Often part of a special project or a larger web site, these collec-

tions aren't always easy to find and explore. We will discuss methods for locating them and, once found, methods for using them to answer specific research questions.

**2. Coordinating to the Cloud: Collaboration with Genealogists Online:** Cloud-based tools for our research include options for file storage, note-taking, tree building, and more. Each of these tools make it easy to access your research from any device with an online connection. One of the best uses of cloud-based research is the ability to share your research with others and work together no matter where you are in the world.

**3. Pin Your Ancestors Down with Google Maps & Google Earth:** Google Maps and Google Earth provide two wonderful sources for geo-

graphical assistance in tracking your ancestors and pinning them down for your research. Combined with other mapping resources online we will demonstrate how using these Google tools can give you a visual aid for your research. Follow migration paths, historical routes, and your own family's path, marking them on the maps with information, photos and documentation.

**4. Be Your Own Digital Archivist: Preserve Your Research:** Are you doing everything you can to safeguard your genealogical research? Your documents? Your data? Your scanned images? We will talk about the importance of taking charge of your own materials and making sure they aren't going to disappear.



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## 2026 OGS Virtual Seminar

# DECODING YOUR ANCESTORS: THE TECH EDITION

with Cyndi Ingle

Saturday, February 7, 2026  
9:00 am to 3:00 pm



Cyndi Ingle, a genealogist for more than 45 years, is the creator of CyndisList.com and the author of numerous articles and three books. She is an expert in using technology for genealogy, research in the US, and organizational methodology. She is the Executive Director for the Institute of Genealogy & Historical Research.

### 4 One-hour Sessions on Technology Tools for Genealogy

- ✓ The Path to Digital Libraries and Archives
- ✓ Collaboration with Genealogists Online
- ✓ Pin Your Ancestors Down with Google Maps & Google Earth
- ✓ Be Your Own Digital Archivist: Preserve Your Research

**\$35 OGS Members**  
**\$45 Non-Members**  
**\$100 Sponsor**

Watch our website for  
registration information  
**WWW.OLYGENSOC.ORG**

# Genealogy 101

## Family Search Part 2

I am continuing with the introduction to Family Search and what you can do with it. Last time I left with the search in the Catalog. Now I will do more searching, still on the opening page and using the top bar of “Family Search, Family Tree, Search, Memories, Get Involved, Activities.”

Clicking on “Search” and opening up the menu gives you 10 items, as I said last time. Today I will explore the Records tab. There are many records which are unindexed on the website; this tab lets you explore and find them. Remember, someone has to index anything to make the record easily accessible, and there just aren’t that many people willing to do it, or who have the time. I used to do indexing, but I have run out of time and energy. This tab will allow you to find fabulous information. (IA has its uses!)

Clicking on the Records tab will open a new page “Search Historical Records” with a search box similar to so many on [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) asking for first name, last name, place and birth or death year. There are also options which will allow you to give more information and narrow your search. Instead of using that, though, scroll down to “Find A Collection.” If you know exactly what you are looking for enter it here.

Otherwise, go to “Browse All Collections.” There are right now 3,405 collections listed. You should be able to find something there. On the right hand side of this page are boxes to check which will limit the collections seen by type and below that by place.

There are two discrete options in searching these Collections. The first is the normal way using names and dates along with the various Collection titles. The second is for the unindexed records; you can tell which ones they are because they will be listed under “records” as “Browse Records” rather than giving the number of records available. In the unindexed records you have to go page by page through the different record collections to search for your person. Otherwise you can search by name and see what you can find.

Before you begin searching, however, there is a new (to me) resource on the “Search Historical Records” page on the right of “Find A Collection.” This is “Search By Place” which will open up new sources for you. I am trying to get myself to look for my Thomas Wiley and his daughter Mary Ann (b. 1833) so I put in Ireland for this column.

It opened up to a “Welcome to our Ireland research page” filled with information. There are 26 different learning courses to help research Ireland and there are also many collec-

tions. First listed are 32 indexed collections. (I did not find my lady there in a quick look, but there are more places on this page to look. I’ve only been looking for 40 years.) I am also looking for a John Quinn who married a Catherine Kennedy; they were from County Kerry. When I did a search 65 people came up for me to explore originally; I narrowed it down some by adding more information. I might find something there.

In addition to the Indexed Collections, below that listing and on the right hand side of the page are some more things to look at – Genealogies and Image Only Historical Records. In addition to my Irish connections, I have a Ukraine connection for my great-grandson. Putting in Ukraine I was amazed at how much is there. There are 19 indexed collections, over 4,000 genealogies and I am afraid only 1 Image-only collections – Sumy Civil Registers 1918-1922 which will not help me at all. There are also almost 600 catalog entries which are for Austria, Hungary, and even a part of France is mentioned. I think there should be some German entries, also, from what I know of the history, which is not a lot. Some are in Cyrillic, which will

# Genealogy 101

not help me much unless I can find translations, but that is a possibility, also. There are a lot of things to explore for me. And for you too, if you think of a place.

Keep clicking on things. I just clicked at random on one Cyrillic item which turned out to be (taken from the explanation of the item): Public records (personnel service records from various governmental and school departments, lists of residents and social classes, family

lists, lists of Jewish population, extracts from all-national census, correspondence) for Bessarabia, Russia; later in Romania; now in Moldova and Ukraine. Text in Russian. The time period was 1796-1917.

This is enough to get you started.

Next month I will delve more into other things on Family Search.

- Carolyn Gibbons



**\*\*\*SIG Family search will not meet in December and will reconvene in January. Carolyn is available for questions during this time.**

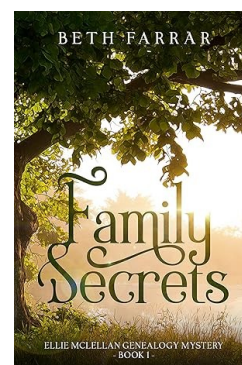
## Book Reviews by Kerry McHugh Upton

I just finished a fairly new genealogical mystery series by Beth Farrar. She bases her stories out of Canada, primarily the Quebec and Montreal areas. This series features Ellie McLellan as the genealogist who was orphaned at age 11 when her parents were killed in a car wreck. She was raised by her aunt and uncle alongside her cousin. She lives in a small rural community on a parcel of land that she and her husband purchased from two spinster sisters, Ruth and Shirley. Ellie's husband and daughter are killed in a car wreck, leaving her once again alone. Through Ellie's aunt and cousin, along with Ruth, Ellie finds solace in helping others with their own family histories, writing children's books and how to books on family history. Ellie's best friend Maggie lives across the highway

from Ellie's little farm, having started a bakery where a lot of the stories unfold. This is all the backstory before the mystery series begins. They consume a lot of cookies and tea throughout this series, so grab a cookie and "cuppa" tea and enjoy this simple get away, all while learning about researching family history in Canada.

Family Secrets (Ellie McLellan Mystery 1) by Beth Farrar  
During a health crisis with Ellie's aunt who is hospitalized, her cousin discovers that she doesn't share the same blood type as either of her parents. Distraught at this bit of news, the girls start to delve into possible theories, some of them not so good. As Ellie takes a break from the hospital and heads to a store, she sees a young boy chase a ball onto the street in

front of an oncoming truck. Ellie rushes to save the boy, putting her in harm's way and into the arms of the young boy's uncle who was to be watching the boy. This also caught the news media who also happened to be in the area, putting Ellie in the spotlight. Follow along with the beginning of this series as Ellie uncovers why her cousin has a different blood type from her parents. You'll learn about different records available in searching for birth records in Quebec.



## Community News

1. **America 250!:** Kathy Erlandson and Diana Bargmann will chair this committee. If you are interested in help-



ing, please email Kathy at [kathyerlandson@yahoo.com](mailto:kathyerlandson@yahoo.com) or Diana at [barbourgenealogist@yahoo.com](mailto:barbourgenealogist@yahoo.com).

2. The New Lacey Museum: Free private guided tours start Thursday, December 4. Pre-registration is required. Register through Lacey Parks and Rec [website](#).
3. Lacey Timberland Library is closed for repairs until December 10. You are still able to

access e-books, audiobooks and other digital resources online. Other locations are open for service during this time.

4. Joseph Kerry of Bible Rescue, a non-profit organization dedicated to rescuing family bibles is reaching out to us. If you come across family Bibles—or if your members have any they'd like to donate—we would be honored to receive them. We can often reimburse shipping costs (especially via USPS Media Mail). Our mission is to recover these Bibles, preserve the records inside, and reconnect them with living descendants or provide them with a new, respectful home.

You can learn more about us and search our growing online database

at [biblerescue.org](http://biblerescue.org). Joseph Kerry

610.329.1244 or

[joe@biblerescue.org](mailto:joe@biblerescue.org)

5. Registration is open for **RootsTech 2026**. Register online at <https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/?cid=EM-00052929&lid=uqbfsxxnt8yj>
6. **Reclaim the records** has available the entire [New York State Death Index](#) from 1880-2017 available through their website after many years of legal battles to make this information available.

## Thomas MacEntee and Chat GPT Memory option

In Thomas MacEntee's most recent Newsletter [Genealogy Bargains](#) "Why Should Turn Off the Memory Feature for Accurate Search", MacEntee discusses ChatGPT 5.1 and a new memory feature that remembers details of past conversations with the software. While this feature does have advantages such as remembering details, MacEntee points out that it may also remember inaccurate information that influence responses to conversations. Also, genealogical data is constantly being updated. If the same information memory feature is used to train other AI models



### Special Interest Groups and Facilitators:

- ANCESTRY - Greg Nordlund; meets 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday 11:00 am – 12:30 pm
- DNA - Nancy Cordell; meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday (previously Tuesday) 6:30 pm
- FAMILY HISTORY WRITING - Laura Carroll meets 1<sup>st</sup> 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; **\*\*Not meeting in December\*\***
- GENEALOGY CHAT - Peggy Cooley; meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday 1:00 - 2:30 pm, in person at Peggy's home!
- LEGACY FAMILY TREE - Jerri McCoy; meets 3<sup>rd</sup> 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—Diana Bargmann

### Community Partners

City of Lacey — Erin Quinn Valcho

Timberland Library — Agatha Burstein

### November General Membership Meeting

**Helen Edwards** presented "Transcribing My Father-in-law's Naval Journals". Helen Edwards is a historian, author, and speaker with lifelong roots in Victoria, BC. With decades of experience in family history research, she has extensively explored her own heritage as well as that of her late husband's family. Helen is passionate about sharing her knowledge through public speaking engagements and has mentored numerous emerging researchers and authors. She is the author of six books and is currently working on her autobiography.

A recording and handout of the meeting is now available to OGS members, log onto website; see Community Events / Recordings\*. Corresponding handout is available by clicking on Publications/Files; Downloadable Files; Program Materials - OGS Only\*; Edwards. Handout and Recording are available through 22 December 2025.

### OGS NOVEMBER 2025 MEMBERSHIP MEETING November 13, 2025

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

#### **Business Meeting:**

**Programs:** Diana Bargmann invited the members to the Holiday Party on December 13, from 1-3, at Capital Vision Church. Please bring savory or sweet snacks to share. OGS will supply the drinks.

The January program will be J. Mark Lowe "Using Maps and Records to Find Ancestral Places". In February, Ellie Fogarty will speak on "School Census Records". In March, Karen Steely will present "Divorces and Divorce Records".

**Membership:** **Two** new members joined this month.

**Website:** The new format should be live before the end of the year.

**Seminar:** The virtual seminar will be held February 7, 2026. Registration will begin around the holidays. Cyndi Engle of "Cyndi's List" is presenting "Decoding Your Ancestors: The Tech Edition".

**SIGs:** All are active, check the website for times.

**Program:** Diana Bargmann introduced Helen Edwards who presented "Transcribing My Father-in-Laws Naval Journals".

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 pm. Approximately 29 were in attendance.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristin Retlin, Secretary