

Database Integrity Project Report to Board - 2014

Report from Project Manager – Sue Sheldon

History

In August 2011, Marvin Parsons, acting in the role of de facto Database Administrator, began work on the SFA database file for the Data Conversion Project. This project was completed in November 2013 when the file was successfully converted from Access to Gedcom, and then imported into RootsMagic.

In November 2013, Sue Sheldon, acting in the role of de facto Database Administrator, began work on the SFA database file for the Database Integrity Project. Jeanne Jeffries, SFA Board President, directed her to recruit members of SFA to assist her in this cleanup effort. Jeanne sent out a query to all SFA members, who had a current email address, to respond if they were interested in helping with the cleanup effort. The names of the interested parties were then forwarded to Sue Sheldon.

The following is a report from Sue Sheldon, de facto Database Administrator and Database Integrity Project Manager.

Status Report

We began this exciting project in November of 2013. Ten SFA members were recruited to assist the Project Manager as the official cleanup crew and in addition, we have Rose Newton, Genealogist assisting with some research tasks.

The 11 crew members are:

Sue Sheldon	Frank Sheldon	Bob Halstead	Gary Butler
Marvin Parsons	Jeanne Jeffries	Marit Taylor	Susan Owens
	Jeanne Sheldon	Sandy Gianni	Gwendolyn Sheldon

The Database Integrity Project - **Phase 1** - consists of the following:

#	Status	Description of item to be accomplished
1	Ongoing	RootsMagic identified "problems" - 74 pages (research and correct or tag discrepancies)
2	Completed	DOB - accurate dates (eliminate text from date fields)*
3	Completed	DOD - accurate dates (eliminate text from date fields)*
4	Completed	Merge duplicate records
5	Completed	Multiple DOB records - 67 pages (delete duplicates, tag discrepancies)
6	Completed	Multiple DOD records - 20 pages (delete duplicates, tag discrepancies)
7	Not Started	Multiple SheldNo - 27 pages (delete duplicates, report on multiple lines)*
8	Not Started	Multiple Compno - 138 pages (delete duplicates, tag discrepancies)*
9	Completed	Multiple sets of parents - (delete duplicates, tag discrepancies)
10	Ongoing	Place names - 391 pages - (use standardized place names/GeoCode, research unknown places, transfer other info to event fact note field, merge duplicates)
11	Not Started	Run CountyCheck - 251 pages - (check to see if county in existence at time of event, correct errors) to be done after Item #10 is complete

*DOB = Date of Birth

*DOD = Date of Death

*SheldNo - Sheldon Number

*CompNo - Computer Number

Database Integrity Project Report to Board - 2014

From November 2013 to March 2014, the main concentration was on Item #1: resolving the 74 pages of errors reported by RootsMagic. From March 2014 to present, the main concentration has been on items #2,#3,#4,#5,#6,& #9; and attempting the massive #10 Place Names issue, involving over 22,000 records.

The first tasks to tackle were nearly 4,000 people that RootsMagic identified as having date errors that needed research and possible correcting such as:

- 3 years old when married
- Parents married after person's birth (possible that this is accurate)
- Mother 77 years old when person was born
- Father 7 years old when person was born
- Mother born after person's birth
- 125 years old when died (possible that this is accurate)
- 112 years old when married
- Born after mother's death
- Born after marriage
- Born after death
- Marriage after death

These approximately 4,000 people were divided alphabetically among nine of the crew members. All but the Sheldon/Shelden/Shelton names were researched by the crew members. Rose Newton was assigned to the Sheldon/Shelden/Shelton names.

Any "problems" that RootsMagic found were then researched using logic and/or online resources.

A "logical" resolution to a "died before born" problem might be:

Person born 1948, killed in Viet Nam in 1874.

Logic would dictate that the death date was a typo and should have been 1974 instead of 1874.

The database file was exported from RootsMagic to Gedcom and imported into Ancestry. This was done for additional help to resolve the "problems". Sue Sheldon's Ancestry subscription was used, which consists of the World Edition and therefore has access to everything Ancestry has. The database was imported as a "private" member tree. The file is not only unable to be viewed by anyone not invited, but is also hidden from any searches.

The 10 other crew members plus Rose Newton and Wayne Nelson were sent an "invitation" to view and edit the Ancestry tree. Only the 10 crew members accepted their invitations and began work on the project.

Ancestry is a virtual goldmine of information with 32,299 databases to help resolve the problems in our database, and includes the following records:

- Census & voter lists
- Vital - birth, marriage & death
- Social Security
- Find-A-Grave memorials including photos of headstones
- Military
- Immigration & travel
- Newspaper & publications
- Pictures, stories, memories & histories

Database Integrity Project Report to Board - 2014

- Maps, Atlases & Gazetteers
- Schools, Directories & Church histories
- Tax, criminal , land and wills
- Reference, dictionaries & almanacs

In addition to these 32,299 databases, Ancestry has a database of over 2.1 billion Public Member Trees. Often descendants of our common ancestors have spent years researching their line and have much more up-to-date and accurate information than the SFA; much of it well documented and sourced. Another benefit to accessing the Public Member Trees is that we can also be in contact with the people who have our common ancestors in their trees if they have a current Ancestry subscription.

Crew members also used other online resources at their disposal - using their own subscriptions to sites such as:

FamilySearch.org

MyHeritage.org

Archives.com

Genealogy.com

Genealogy Bank

Fold3, etc.

Crew members created text files with the results of their research and sent the files to Sue Sheldon. Both Sue and Marvin updated the RootsMagic database to reflect the corrected information. This was accomplished using a strict version control protocol; checking the Master out to only one person at a time and checking it back in again with the new corrections. Backups were stored both on hard drives and in the cloud for added security.

About 2/3 of the changes have been input into RootsMagic. The remaining 1/3 will be input in the summer and fall of 2014.

The Place names part of the project is very complex and very large! The original data that was input into the SFGS database was FULL of typos, inconsistencies and errors. There was no error checking or validations and people were able to put anything they wanted into the Places fields. I have summed it up in the following examples: Place List Cleanup

1. First take any record that is not really a City, County, State or Country (actual "Place") and research "who" has that incorrect place in their record. Put the information into a fact note field instead. Such as: ashes at sea, died after wife, died young, cremated
2. Let RootsMagic try to determine if the place is a real place - if so, use the "standardized place name" and GeoCode.
For instance, Aberdine,, Wa is really
Aberdeen, Grays Harbor, Washington, United States (46° 58' 32.02" N, 123° 48' 51.98" W)
3. Send list of questionable places to cleanup crew members to research. They will return corrected location information and GeoCode coordinates.
4. Go into individual records and try to determine the actual place location of cemeteries. This involves looking at whatever information might exist for death or last place of residence. The data might just say Acacia Cemetery with no valid Place information. Researching census records of SSDI for a last known residence could help give an idea where this cemetery might be found.
5. Combine duplicate places.

Database Integrity Project Report to Board - 2014

The following is part of the first page from the Places list prior to cleaning. The only correct Place is the one I did as an example (Aberdeen, Washington) to show that a valid Place Name includes only the City, County, State, Country and GeoCode.

City, County, State, Country (GeoCode location)

"Five Points" Cem., Genoa, NY (cemetery name)
(Ashes) Emerald Grove, WI (mixture of cremation information and place)
(Ashes) San Marcial, NM
(Soldier's Burial) Miami, FL
OR (spelled with a ZERO instead of an O)
1 October 1929 (this is a date - not a place)
100 Mile House, B.C., CN
15 Forsyth St., NYC, , NY
1-8-1994 Pine Grove Cem. (date and a cemetery name)
1972 re bur Spokane, WA
1st Cong. Ch. Cem. Suffield, CT
1st Cong. Ch. Cem., Plot 43E
1st Cong. Ch. Cem., Suffield, CT
1st-on the farm;2nd-Forest, IL
266 Division St., NYC, NY (this is an address)
35 Esplanade St.New Orlns, LA
7th Day Baptist Cem Cortlad Co
Abbotsford, BC Canada (spelled wrong, no commas)
Abbeville, GA (no county or country)
Abbie, Butler County, NE (no country)
Abbotsford, BC, Can.
Abbotsford, British Columbia
Abbotsford, Quebec Prov., CN
Abbottabad, Pakistan
Abbyville, Reno Co., KS
Aberdeen, Scotland
Aberdeen, Brown Co., SD
Aberdeen, Grays Harbor, Washington, United States (46° 58' 32.02" N, 123° 48' 51.98" W)
Aberdeen, MD
Aberdeen, Scotland
Aberdeen, SD
Aberdine, MD
Abernathy, Hale Co., TX
Abilene, Kansas
Abilene, Kansas.
Abilene, Taylor Co., TX
Abilene, TX
Abingdon, MA
Abington Twp. Lackawana Co., PA (7 different ways to input Abington)
Abington Twp. Lackawanna Co., PA
Abington Twp., Lackawanna Co., PA
Abington Twp.Lackawana Co, PA
Abington, Lackawana Co., PA
Abington, MA
Abington, Montgomery Co., PA
Abington, PA

Database Integrity Project Report to Board - 2014

The following is part of the first page from the Places list after some cleaning has been done to show that a valid Place Name includes only the City, County, State, Country and GeoCode.

The places in **RED** are ones that will need to be researched by a crew member because RootsMagic does not believe it is a valid location.

The items in **GREEN** are items that need to be researched by using the individual's record to see if a valid Place can be determined.

The items in **PURPLE** will be merged to eliminate duplicates when the project is nearing completion.

City, County, State, Country (GeoCode location)

100 Mile House, British Columbia, Canada

Abbeville, Wilcox, Georgia, United States (31° 59' 30.98" N, 83° 18' 24.98" W)

Abbie, Butler County, Nebraska

Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada (49° 3' 30.00" N, 122° 15' 0.00" W)

Abbotsford, Quebec, Canada (45° 26' 16.00" N, 72° 53' 2.00" W)

Abbottabad, North-West Frontier, Pakistan (34° 9' 0.00" N, 73° 13' 0.00" E)

Abbyville, Reno, Kansas, United States (37° 58' 14.99" N, 98° 12' 14.00" W)

Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, United Kingdom (57° 8' 42.13" N, 2° 5' 56.99" W)

Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, United Kingdom (57° 8' 42.13" N, 2° 5' 56.99" W)

Aberdeen, Brown, South Dakota, United States (45° 27' 52.99" N, 98° 29' 10.00" W)

Aberdeen, Brown, South Dakota, United States (45° 27' 52.99" N, 98° 29' 10.00" W)

Aberdeen, Grays Harbor, Washington, United States (46° 58' 32.02" N, 123° 48' 51.98" W)

Aberdeen, Grays Harbor, Washington, United States (46° 58' 32.02" N, 123° 48' 51.98" W)

Aberdeen, Harford, Maryland, United States (39° 30' 33.98" N, 76° 9' 51.98" W)

Aberdeen, Harford, Maryland, United States (39° 30' 33.98" N, 76° 9' 51.98" W)

Abernathy, Hale County, Texas

Abilene, Dickinson, Kansas, United States (38° 55' 1.99" N, 97° 12' 49.00" W)

Abilene, Dickinson, Kansas, United States (38° 55' 1.99" N, 97° 12' 49.00" W)

Abilene, Taylor, Texas, United States (32° 26' 55.00" N, 99° 43' 58.01" W)

Abilene, Taylor, Texas, United States (32° 26' 55.00" N, 99° 43' 58.01" W)

Abington Township, Lackawanna, Pennsylvania, United States (41° 31' 0.28" N, 75° 41' 58.69" W)

Abington Township, Lackawanna, Pennsylvania, United States (41° 31' 0.28" N, 75° 41' 58.69" W)

Abington Township, Lackawanna, Pennsylvania, United States (41° 31' 0.28" N, 75° 41' 58.69" W)

Abington Township, Lackawanna, Pennsylvania, United States (41° 31' 0.28" N, 75° 41' 58.69" W)

Abington Township, Lackawanna, Pennsylvania, United States (41° 31' 0.28" N, 75° 41' 58.69" W)

Abington, Massachusetts, United States

Abington, Montgomery, Pennsylvania, United States (40° 7' 14.02" N, 75° 7' 5.99" W)

Abington, Montgomery, Pennsylvania, United States (40° 7' 14.02" N, 75° 7' 5.99" W)

Abington, Plymouth, Massachusetts, United States (42° 6' 16.99" N, 70° 56' 44.99" W)

Abington, Plymouth, Massachusetts, United States (42° 6' 16.99" N, 70° 56' 44.99" W)

Absarokee, Stillwater, Montana, United States (45° 31' 14.02" N, 109° 26' 31.99" W)

Acacia Cemetery

Acacia Cemetery, Clearwater

Accord, Ulster, New York, United States (41° 47' 8.02" N, 74° 13' 45.98" W)

Ackley, Hardin, Iowa, United States (42° 33' 15.01" N, 93° 3' 11.02" W)

Acote Hill In Chepachet, Rhode Island

Acton, Hood, Texas, United States (32° 26' 48.01" N, 97° 41' 24.00" W)

Acton, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (42° 29' 6.00" N, 71° 25' 59.99" W)

Acton, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (42° 29' 6.00" N, 71° 25' 59.99" W)

Acton, Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States (42° 29' 6.00" N, 71° 25' 59.99" W)

Acton, Ontario, Canada (43° 37' 53.00" N, 80° 2' 20.00" W)

Acton, Ontario, Canada (43° 37' 53.00" N, 80° 2' 20.00" W)

Acworth, Sullivan, New Hampshire, United States (43° 13' 4.01" N, 72° 17' 33.00" W)

Ada, Hardin, Ohio, United States (40° 46' 9.98" N, 83° 49' 22.01" W)

Ada, Hardin, Ohio, United States (40° 46' 9.98" N, 83° 49' 22.01" W)

Database Integrity Project Report to Board - 2014

Summary and Recommendations to the Board

I would like to begin by sharing with the Board members a little of my work history so they might have a better understanding of my qualifications to make certain recommendations.

For eight years, I was a Senior Systems Analyst and Database Application Developer for Boeing Computer Services in Seattle, Washington. It was my job to work with the Boeing Aerospace customers to help them improve their work systems and processes.

I have the expertise to look at the big picture of an operation and see where things are working, where processes could be streamlined and where systems need a complete overhaul. Then I will typically devise and implement the necessary process improvements.

At Boeing, I was paid to help the company make improvements. They sincerely wanted to find better ways to do business, and although some of my recommendations were difficult to hear, they trusted my judgment and expertise. As a result, all of my customers ended up with much better systems in the long run.

I received 13 Special Achievement and Customer Appreciation awards during my eight years with Boeing. I share this with the Board members, not as a braggart, but as a prelude to the recommendations I make below.

Marvin and I have both been told on numerous occasions that the SFA has wanted our kind of help for many years. We have heard a number of stories about how SFA tried to get different people to help with the database, but none were able to take on the project.

I am operating under the assumption that the SFA is really eager to:

- 1) protect their valuable paper archives,
- 2) protect their valuable database,
- 3) have new members join,
- 4) give all members access to their ancestral records,
- 5) have efficiently operating committees,
- 6) when possible, honor and appreciate members by accepting their offers to help the organization, and
- 7) operate within the mission and by-laws of the organization.

With these assumptions, I offer my critical analysis, suggestions and recommendations to the SFA Board.

The Database Integrity Project has been active for nine months. In early 2012, when we first began having meetings and discussions about the enormity and complexity of the entire SFA database issue, it was anticipated that the cleanup portion of the project would probably take two years. It is my opinion that this is an accurate guesstimate and I feel we are right on track with our progress.

Many battles have been fought and many lessons have been learned since I assumed the de facto position of Database Administrator and took on the Database Integrity Project for SFA. After three years of working with the database, I offer the following recommendations to the SFA Board for a vote.

Database Integrity Project Report to Board - 2014

Clarification of the two separate aspects of the project and official creation of Database Administrator position

- 1) Ensure that everyone understands the two very separate aspects of the Database work by splitting the projects out into two separate parts;

Database Conversion Project - Marvin Parsons acting as Database Administrator

Database Integrity Project - Sue Sheldon acting as Database Administrator

Everyone should use these two project names when referencing the database work and votes should accurately reflect these names.

- 2) By allowing the digital files of the organization to be managed, converted, maintained and changed by both Marvin Parsons and Sue Sheldon, SFA has informally designated both of these people as Database Administrators at separate times during 2011 to present. The work cannot effectively continue on this "unofficial" basis. The digital file containing nearly 123,000 records is too significant to the Sheldon Family Association and its mission to continue to be treated as just another part of the SFA "files".

The position of Database Administrator needs to be formally and officially adopted by the Board.

The position needs to report directly to the Board of Directors.

Sue Sheldon should be voted in as the current Database Administrator at least until the Database Integrity Project is completed.

Responsibility of Database Administrator

- 1) The Master copy of the RootsMagic database should remain in the care of the Database Administrator. All new records and all changes to current records should be input into the Master copy of the RootsMagic database by the Database Administrator or designee. This will insure the present and future integrity of the data. The Genealogical Committee should send their additions and corrections directly to the Database Administrator.
- 2) A read-only copy of the Master database file should be distributed to everyone on the Genealogical Committee with updates distributed periodically throughout the year.

Clarification of responsibility of the SFA Organization, SFA Genealogist and Genealogical Committee according to the by-laws

<http://www.sheldonfamily.org/bylaws.htm>

CORPORATE BYLAWS

SHELDON FAMILY ASSOCIATION

Adopted August 3, 2002

Amended through August, 2011 up dated 8 2013

Article 2. Purpose

This Corporation is organized and shall be operated exclusively for pleasure, recreation and other nonprofit purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(7) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as amended (the Code). In furtherance of these purposes, the activities of the Corporation shall support the development of a general repository of information concerning Sheldon family lineage in the United States and include the promotion and advancement **of a central source of information and study for Sheldon lineage researchers**. *If the SFA Genealogist is the only person who can see the information in the database, or see the files in the archives, then we are not operating within the spirit or the intention of the organization's by-laws!!!*

Article 3. Members

3.1 Qualification for Membership: Persons shall be eligible for membership if they can document family descentance from a Sheldon or Sheldon family who came to New England prior to 1660 or have come

Database Integrity Project Report to Board - 2014

into these families through marriage or adoption. Applicants must be approved and certified to the Treasurer by the Genealogist of this Corporation. *This is currently being done as per the by-laws.*

3.2 Classes of Members; The members of the Corporation shall be divided into four defined classes as follows:

a. Regular - persons who have authenticated their descent from a recognized Sheldon ancestor and are therefore entitled to all lineage information available from the Genealogist; *I believe this should more accurately read that descendants are entitled to all lineage information available from the **organization**. It is the **organization's** responsibility to give that information to the descendants by whatever means it can. This is currently a task that falls all on the shoulders of one person: the Genealogist. I believe the by-laws should be changed to read "**organization**" rather than "Genealogist".*

b. Members at large - persons who have come into a Sheldon family by marriage or adoption or who have not yet completed the documentation of their descent from a recognized Sheldon; *It is my understanding, that an email vote was taken in May of 2012, which created a pathway for an unconnected person to be able to join the SFA. The by-laws have not been changed to reflect that vote. The by-laws need to be changed to include unconnected people. Suggested revision: Members at large – persons who are unconnected, have come into a Sheldon family by marriage or adoption, or who have not yet completed the documentation of their descent from a recognized Sheldon;*

Article 5. Officers

5.6 Powers and Duties: The several Officers shall have the following powers and duties and shall perform such other duties as may from time to time be specified in resolutions or other directives of the board of Directors.

3) Genealogist: The Genealogist shall serve as Chair of the Genealogical Committee. *This is currently being done as per the by-laws.*

Article 6. Committees

6.1 Standing Committees:

a. Genealogical Committee: The Genealogical Committee shall act on all applications for membership in the Corporation. *Currently, the Genealogist is the only person acting on the applications for membership. The new member applicant procedures need to be changed so that the "committee" acts on all applications as specified in the by-laws. Committee members do not have any knowledge of who has applied for membership or even how many new members have been added until the following year at the next annual meeting. The Genealogist should email the committee each time an application is received and then email them again when the application has been approved and the member has been accepted into the organization. In the case where there is a question as to a member's qualifications to join, a discussion needs to occur among committee members so that everyone is aware of the applicant and the issues involved. Also, applicants should be able to apply for membership to any of the committee members. The Genealogist is only needed for the final approval and certification. I believe that the Genealogical Committee needs to convene and enact a plan for dealing with new applicants that will be in accordance with the by-laws. This committee shall maintain and keep available for inspection and use its files and records to all members in good standing and assist applicants for membership to develop their genealogical lines. The Committee has not been, and is not now, maintaining the files for inspection and use by members in good standing. The paper files are ONLY being maintained by, and are ONLY available to, the Genealogist. All attempts by Genealogical Committee members and other SFA members in good standing to access, digitize, and/or move the files have been blocked. Only members in good standing shall be provided full access to the genealogical records. The records are currently not accessible to anyone except the Genealogist.*

Database Integrity Project Report to Board - 2014

The Genealogist shall serve as Chair of the Genealogical Committee and other members of the Committee shall be appointed by the chair. *This is currently being done as per the by-laws.*

Because of issues with the SFA files not being accessible to the membership, as directed in the by-laws, it is recommended to the Board *that a plan be enacted immediately to digitize the records of the organization.* When the files have been digitized, the individual records can then be attached to the individuals in the database as viewable sources. This digitizing project should be approved and should commence in 2014.

In addition, it has already been voted on and approved at a previous annual meeting, to move the files out of one individual's garage and into the Allen County Public Library system. *The plan to move the files needs to be enacted immediately.*

Points for consideration:

- Every day that the files remain in a home garage is another day that the risks of loss due to fire, natural disaster or ill health and/or death of the homeowner are incurred.
- There are currently members in good standing of SFA who are technologically adept, immensely experienced, and who are eager to undertake the digitizing project.
- Every day that goes by without allowing these people to move forward with the project is another day that the SFA incurs the risk of losing those individuals and their incredible talent for one reason or another.
- No member of the SFA is getting any younger and it is irresponsible for an organization and its membership to not take immediate advantage of the generous offer from volunteers within the organization to undertake a project that will insure the continued health of the organization and the safekeeping of the source documents from which the entire database was created.

Summary of Recommendations:

- A. Everyone should use these two project names when referencing the database work and votes should accurately reflect these names:
Database Conversion Project - Marvin Parsons acting as Database Administrator
Database Integrity Project - Sue Sheldon acting as Database Administrator
- B. A position of Database Administrator needs to be formally and officially adopted by the Board. The position needs to report directly to the Board of Directors.
- C. Sue Sheldon should be voted in as the current Database Administrator at least until the Database Integrity Project is completed.
- D. The Master copy of the RootsMagic database should remain in the care of the Database Administrator.
- E. All new records and all changes to current records should be input into the Master copy of the RootsMagic database by the Database Administrator or designee.
- F. A read-only copy of the Master database file should be distributed to everyone on the Genealogical Committee.
- G. Section 3.2.a should be changed - remove Genealogist and substitute organization
- H. Section 3.2.b should be changed to include unconnected people as members at large.
- I. Change the procedures for new members so that the "Genealogical Committee" acts on all applications as indicated in the by-laws, not just the Genealogist.
- J. Enact a plan that will make the files of the organization available to all its members. This should include digitizing the records of the organization and transferring them to the Allen County Public Library.