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**Land Agents**



**Realtors of Yesteryear**

The Sheldon Family Association Reunion will be held August 28-September 1 at the Hotel Utica in Utica, NY. To make reservations call (315) 724-7829 and mention the Sheldon Family Association. Room charge should be \$94 plus tax per night. Also see additional Reunion Information , page 1,217.

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As a general repository for Sheldon Family lineage in the U.S.A., SFA serves as a central source of information and study for Sheldon lineage researchers. By means of this publication, members are informed of discoveries in Sheldon lineage research, and dates and locale of the annual meeting.

Information in this publication is obtained by research in major libraries and repositories of public records; by correspondence with Sheldon descendants, and members and independent researchers submission of articles.

The editor reserves the right to edit or excerpt submitted articles to fit space requirements of each issue. Articles should be of general interest to members. Pieces too long for the quarterly may be serialized or considered by the publication sales department to make them available to members.

Since it is not possible for SFA to vouch for the accuracy of the content or opinion, the reader should understand that SFA in no way implies blanket verification and certification of these publications.

Libraries do not have permission to place SFA Quarterlies on the internet without prior approval of SFA.

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**Important Announcement-SFQ Quarterly  
Jim Russell, Editor SFAQ**

If you are receiving paper copies of SFA Quarterly and wish to continue doing so, please send a letter to Jeanne Jeffries, PO Box 933, Walpole NH 03608-0933 and express that desire. This is applicable to all receiving paper copies of SFA Quarterly including Life Members. Otherwise paper copies of SFA Quarterly will be discontinued after this January 2016 SFA Quarterly. If you have already made this request to Jeanne Jeffries or Barbara Gomez, it is not necessary to do it again.

This is important if you wish to continue receiving paper copies of SFAQ. So far, the response from the posting in the October SFAQ has been very minimal.

In the June 2015 SFA Quarterly, it was mentioned that the SFA Board wanted to look at the cost of printing and mailing of paper copies of the SFA Quarterly. Each paper copy of SFA Quarterly costs approximately \$2 to print and mail, and costs SFA approximately \$1,400 per year. This is the largest single expense of SFA.

In the last four years, particularly during 2011 and 2012, approximately half of nearly 400 members responded by electing to receive the SFA Quarterly by internet or by email. Of the remainder, approximately 60 responded to Jeanne Jeffries or Barbara Gomez, saying that they had no access to a computer and wished to continue receiving SFA Quarterly by paper copy. If you have contacted Jeanne Jeffries or Barbara Gomez over this issue in the last four years, there is no need to respond again. Approximately 130 members did not respond at all. SFA decided to wait and address the issue in 2015.

In addition to having 130 members not respond at all, SFA has been contacted several times during the year, indicating that at least some members are not reading SFA Quarterly at all. One recent contact said "Please remove my father from the mailing list. He

died ten years ago.” **Note:** This happens when descendants do not inform SFA of the member’s death.

The Annual Meeting elected to accept the Board recommendations to adopt this procedure to reduce costs. At some point in the future, SFA may need to charge for paper copies of SFAQ.

If you have email, please provide the address to Barbara Gomez [bgomez@umich.edu](mailto:bgomez@umich.edu) and accept SFAQ by email. If you have internet access, current and prior SFA Quarterlies are posted. Again, contact Barbara Gomez [bgomez@umich.edu](mailto:bgomez@umich.edu) and let her know that you can access by internet.

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## **President’s Report-January 2016**

**Jeanne A Jeffries**



As we discover new information about the Sheldon forebears and from member queries, we are adding to the Sheldon Family Database. Information is verified using genealogy research standards. Occasionally we find discrepancies that need further research. Previously this required a trip to a repository (such as a town office or library) and now one discovers various resources on the Internet. Many vital records are available. However, it is said that only 5% of the information is on the web, the rest is in historical societies or churches etc. A few volunteers are working to verify the information. If you have an interest in genealogy, perhaps you could help. Contact either Jeanne A Jeffries ([arnjeff@myfairpoint.net](mailto:arnjeff@myfairpoint.net)) or Sue Sheldon ([sue.sheldon@gmail.com](mailto:sue.sheldon@gmail.com)).

A subcommittee visited Utica NY in October, reviewed and made recommendations for the Annual Meeting and Reunion in 2016. Viewing hotels with meeting rooms suitable for the Association, the committee recommended the Utica Hotel. They found accommodations suitable and cost effective for members. A continental breakfast is included in the room rate. The dining room also provides a full breakfast. Other venues do not include breakfast.

The adjoining parking lot is free whereas other venues charge for parking. The Hotel Utica was built in 1910 and is historic. They have facilities for our banquet. To make reservations call (315) 724-7829 and mention the Sheldon Family Association. The hotel is on the main street leading from the NY Thruway.

The committee reviewed restaurants and recommended Aqua Vino, also near the Thruway and the historic Erie Canal. The view is wonderful and the food delicious. We propose the group have dinner there on August 30. For those arriving in time for the Board meeting on August 29, we propose the group also have dinner at Delmonico’s also near the Thruway. Some may arrive on Sunday August 28 and participate in committee meetings and meet cousins. A dinner at Ocean Blue is also recommended. This restaurant is atop a four story building with a view of the city and seafood specialties. (Utica is famous for Italian cuisine.)

The theme for the meeting will be Land Agents since "Land Agents helped settle the country" and the plan is to visit the Sheldon House in Remsen NY built and owned by James Sheldon from RI, who was a Land Agent in Oneida County and his stone house served potential buyers of the land.

There will be opportunities to visit with cousins and enjoy Short Talks by cousins on various topics. (Everyone has a topic about which they can speak for 10 minutes allowing attendees to visit later about a subject. (**You** might volunteer to share some information.) We are also hopeful that some members will bring interesting displays to share. There will be display space. Let us know what you would like to do. We hope to have Kelly Wheaton join us in Utica to again share her explanations of interpretation of DNA results. So Mark Your Calendar now for August 28 through September 1 in New York. You will be glad you did.

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## **Why Utica In 2016? Jeanne Jeffries**

Georgia Newman came to Northampton, MA in 2012 and on her way back to Michigan found the James Sheldon House and met the Remsen Historian. Through research she discovered that James was the father of Asa Sheldon, her ancestor. She further found that James, descendant of John 8 of Pawtuxet and Providence RI had been a land agent for John Brown of RI in management of the Land Grant Brown had purchased in Oneida County.



**James Sheldon House in Remsen New York**

But, there is more. Many Rhode Islanders and New Englanders migrated to Upstate NY and Oneida County before and after the Revolutionary War in searching for better land. Many participated in exploration of NY or in the Revolution. There is much history here.

NY abolished slavery in 1812 and abolition was important. Runaway slaves traveled through NY to Canada.

Native Americans previously established a foothold in Upstate NY. See: [Bloody Mohawk: The French and Indian War & American Revolution on New York's Frontier](#) by Richard J. Berleth, Robert Weibel

**Six Indian Nations:** consisting of Mohawk, Oneida,

Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca and Tuscarora tribes. The list of New York tribes includes Delaware, or Lenni Lenape, Erie, Iroquois, Mahican, Mohegan, Montauk, Neutral, Saponi, Tutelo, Wappinger, and Wenrohronon tribes. James Fennimore Cooper author of [Drums Along the Mohawk](#), was a prolific author. (Remember Hawkeye of MASH).

Farther up Genesee Street is Munson Williams Proctor Museum home of [The Voyages of Life](#) by Thomas Cole of the Hudson River School as well as over 150,000 art objects.

On Genesee Street you can also visit Oneida County Historical Society which provides many opportunities for research about the settlers of the county.

Architecture on Genesee Street dates to the 1800's with imposing mansions. A ride along the street reveals a study of different designs. A volunteer historian could lead a tour.

The historic Erie Canal parallels the New York Thruway. It is possible to have a boat ride on the canal. Ancestors traveled this route to reach Ohio and beyond. Cities : Utica, Syracuse, Rochester and finally Buffalo provided overnight stops for travelers: .

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## **Sheldon Family DNA Project Jan 2016 By Frank S Sheldon with additions by Kelly Wheaton**

The DNA committee has been communicating extensively with 3 SHELDONS in England. Neale, who heads the SHELDON researchers in the UK with Dr. Michael Sheldon and Geoff Sheldon participating in DNA testing. By the time you read this their test kits will have arrived at Family Tree DNA (FTDNA). The plan is to make more contacts with SHELDON sur-

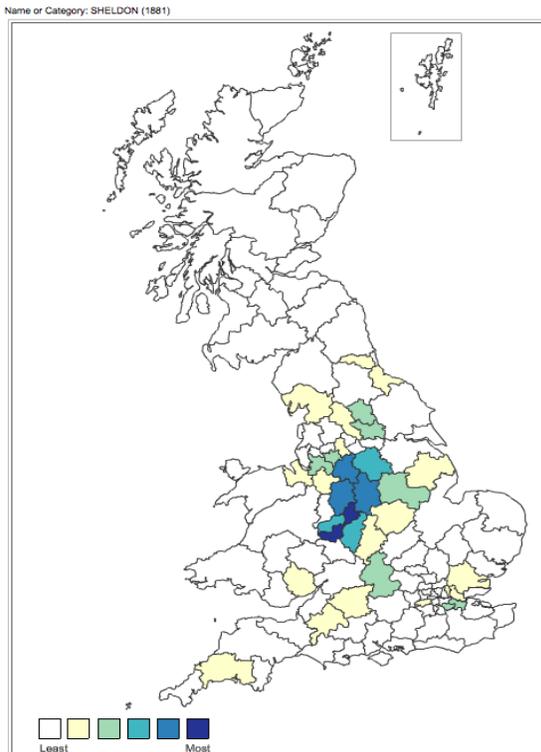


named males in England and build a data base to help link American or Canadian SHELDONS to S.F.A. progenitors in England. This then becomes irrefutable genetic proof of SHELDON progenitor ancestors for matching lines.

In October of 2015 we had 67 members in our FTDNA database which has increased to 76. Coming out of the Reunion Meeting in Sacramento we generated a lot of interest in DNA testing. Let us hope that with the exposure we have on Face Book, The Sheldon Web Page, Reunions and now UK contact we can significantly build our USA Sheldon DNA database.

In November of this year I emailed all the contacts on the FTDNA member list with an information letter letting them know of our efforts. The response though not over whelming was encouraging. I got to know what email addresses were good and which ones were undeliverable. Those persons who replied were very interesting to meet and gave me a chance to encourage them to come to Utica.

This map gives an idea of SHELDON distribution in 1881 for England.



The process for determining Y-DNA involves comparing values on a set of Y-DNA markers. Only males carry the Y-DNA and only males still bearing the SHELDON surname are appropriate for testing. Testing involves a simple swab of the inside of the cheek. SFA has set aside funds for this endeavor. However, you are welcome to make donations directly to the SHELDON DNA project if you wish at <https://www.familyreedna.com/group-general-fund-contribution.aspx?g=Sheldon>

Working together with our British partners hopefully we can connect the various SHELDON lines with their homeland in England.

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### **Family of Cynthia Sheldon S6640(I) of Iowa Contributed by Joseph Uphoff**

Cynthia Sheldon (1820-1887) moved to Horton, Iowa sometime after 1860 with her family from Illinois, where she had been living since the 1850s. Previously, the family lived in New York, where she was born. Horton is a very small town north of Waverly in Bremer County, Iowa. She was the daughter of Hezekiah Sheldon (S2727) and Sarah French of New York. Her husband, Stephen Youmans (1810-1887), had a sister named Lydia who married Orson Potter, being the latter's second wife. I descend from Orson's first wife, Caroline Nutting.

She was one of six children, of whom Tacy stayed in New York and Joseph died in Minnesota. He married a sister of Lydia's namely Mary. I was unable to discover the fate of her other siblings.

By the time of the 1880 census, Stephen was engaged in farming while she was tending house. Their son, John was living with them and listed his occupation as a laborer, possibly assisting his father. He eventually married Rose Anne Mishler, (Continued Next Page)

(Continued from Prior Page) having several children, one of whom, Nellie married William Stufflebeam. The latter's family often found itself mentioned in the *Nashua Reporter*, which published a social page describing the activities of several families in the region. Nashua is in Chickasaw County, Iowa. It was through this column, called Smith's Corner that I was able to find many of my relatives.

The remainder of this article will be a brief summary of the lives of their children based on what I discovered via censuses.

Son Stephen (1840-1924) had a farm of his own by 1870, also in Polk, Bremer County, Iowa. He moved to Minnesota by 1880. 1885 saw him back in Iowa where he listed himself as a laborer. Sometime before 1900 he once again took up farming and was not employed (retired?) by 1910 where he was living with his son, John. He married Amy Twell.

Stephen's brother, James (1842-1927) also had moved to Minnesota by 1880 where he took up blacksmithing. However, this seemed not to work out, as by 1900, he was in Algona, Kossuth County, Iowa working as a traveling salesman. Once again the family moved. This time to the city of Sacramento, California, where he gave his work as a carpenter in 1910. By 1920, he was retired and living in American, Sacramento County, California. James married Helen Taylor.

Their sister Cynthia (1844-1918), stayed in Iowa at least between 1885 and 1900. The latter census found her with her son, Walter. She married Thomas Woodworth.

Brother Bennett Bicknell (he used one or the other names on the censuses) (1847-1925) settled in Kensett, Worth County, Iowa where he took up farming. He stayed there until sometime after 1910 when he moved to Aitkin, Aitkin County, Minnesota and lists no job for his occupation. He married Willamette Wells.

Joseph (1848-1936) followed his brother, Bennett, to Kensett, Iowa and would not take up the family occupation of farming until sometime after 1900. Previous

to this, he was a chandelier maker sometime between 1880 and 1900. He married Lena Arendts.

I was unable to discover much about their sister, Emmeline (1851-1902). Except that she was divorced and living with brother John, working as a housekeeper.

Their brother, Lafayette, (1853-1940) also moved to Minnesota by 1880 and settled in New York Mills, Otter Tail County, where he took farming. Sometime before 1900, the family moved to Kensett. Possibly to join other members of his family there. However, by 1910, he moved to Northwood, Worth County, Iowa where he continued his work, By 1930, he was not working. And by 1940, he was living in the same locale with his son, Bert. Lafayette married Jessica Oberdear, another of my relatives through other connections.

The youngest, John (1858-1945), stayed in Polk, Iowa throughout his life and worked as a farmer until after 1930. He was listed in the 1940 census as not working.

As an afterword, I recently discovered that one of my great uncles, Carl, was given the middle name of Sheldon. He died young, but was mentioned once in awhile in casual conversations with my grandmother, his sister.

The census data:

Stephen Vincent Youmans 1810-1887

1850: Eaton, Madison, NY Laborer with Cynthia

1860 Vernon, Sara, Illinois 50 Farmer

1870: Polk, Bremer, Iowa Farmer

1880: Polk, Bremer, Iowa Farmer

1885: Polk, Bremer, Iowa Farmer

Stephen Van Rensler Youmans 1840-1924 m. Amy Twell

1870: Polk, Bremer, Iowa Farmer (moved from parents)

1880: Leaf River, Wadena, Minnesota Farmer

1885: Washington, Bremer, Iowa Laborer  
1900: Polk, Bremer, Iowa Farmer  
1910: Washington, Bremer, Iowa none of family was listed as employed with son John

James deWitt Youmans 1842-1927 m Helen Taylor  
1880: New York Mills, Otter Tail, Minnesota Blacksmith  
1900: Algona, Kossuth, IA Traveling Salesman  
1910: Sacramento Ward 8, Sacramento, California Odd Jobs Carpenter  
1920: American, Sacramento, California none

Cynthia Maria Youmans 1844-1918 m Thomas Woodworth  
1885: Washington, Bremer, Iowa with brother Stephen  
1900: Waverley, Bremer, Iowa with son Walter

Bennett Bicknell Youmans 1847-1925 m Willamette Wells  
1880: Kensett, Worth, Iowa Farmer  
1900: Kensett, Worth, Iowa Farmer  
1910: Kensett, Worth, Iowa Farmer  
1920: Aitkin, Aitkin, Minn none

Joseph Youmans 1848-1936 m Lena Arendts  
1870: Polk, Bremer, Iowa Farmer  
1900: Kensett, Worth, Iowa Chandelier Maker  
1915: Kensett, Worth, Iowa Farmer  
1925: Kensett, Worth, Iowa Occupation not listed

Emmaline Youmans 1851-1902  
divorced by 1900  
1900: Polk, Bremer, Iowa with brother John house-keeper

Lafayette Youmans 1853-1940 m. Jessica Oberdear  
1874  
1860 Vernon, Sara, Illinois with Stephe V Young  
19 Farmer  
James D Youmans 17 Farmer  
Cyntha Youmans 15  
Bennett Youmans 13  
Joseph Youmans 11  
Emeline Youmans 9

Lafayette Youmans 7  
John Youmans 1  
US Census 1870, Polk, Bremer Co., Iowa age 17, Farmer, with Joseph, 21 Farmer, Emmaline 18, John 11. Father: Stephen, Farmer  
1880: New York Mills, Otter Tail, Minnesota Farmer  
1900: Kensett, Worth, Iowa with 7 children Farmer  
1910: Northwood, Worth, Iowa Farmer  
1930: Northwood, Worth, Iowa none. Wife: Jessica Oberdear Launderer  
1940: Northwood, Worth, Iowa none. Lives with son Bert

John D Youmans 1858 Illinois – 1945 m Rose Anne Mishler  
1880: Polk, Bremer, Iowa with parents Laborer  
1900: Polk, Bremer, Iowa Farmer  
1910: Polk, Bremer, Iowa Farmer  
1920: Polk, Bremer, Iowa Farmer  
1930: Polk, Bremer, Iowa Farmer  
1940: Polk, Bremer, Iowa none

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**Who are Ransom & Elizabeth (Betsey) Sheldon?  
Contributed by by Jim Russell**

Several years ago prior to the Northampton Reunion, Susan & I visited cemeteries in Harpersfield, Delaware Co., NY. One was Elisha Sheldon (S2517) a brother of Susan's GGG Grandfather Jonathan Sheldon (S2519). Per a Lorain County, Ohio Mug Book, Susan's GG Grandfather Elisha Sheldon (S6058) was raised by his uncle Elisha after his parents died.

At Harpersfield Rural Cemetery in Delaware County, we found the following gravesites for the Elisha Sheldon (S2517) family:

Elisha Sheldon died 07/30/1831, 70 years  
Temperance Sheldon died 03/04/1826, wife of Elisha, 63 years (Continued on Next Page)

(Continued From Prior Page)

Ransom H. Sheldon, died 11/23/1835, 40 years  
Elizabeth (Betsey) Sheldon died 03/13/1842, wife  
of Ransom H Sheldon, age 45 years  
Henry Sheldon, died 07/03/1835, son of Ransom H  
Sheldon & Elizabeth, age 8 years 8 days.  
In addition were multiple unmarked graves marked  
by flagstone suggesting stillborn or early deaths of  
children.

Probate for Elisha Sheldon (S2517) in Delaware  
Co. suggests that he had no children and gave his  
inheritance to his 1st Baptist Church (in memory of  
his first wife Joanna), his 2nd wife Temperance,  
his nephew Elisha (S6058), and the remainder of  
his estate to his nephew Ransom Sheldon.

Note that Temperance, Ransom Sheldon, Eliza-  
beth, & Henry Sheldon are not in our database. Ob-  
viously Temperance is a second wife.

Who is Ransom Sheldon? Elisha apparently had  
no children. Brothers Jonathan & Ephraim (S2521)  
do list their children in their probate. Other  
brothers David (S2518) & Allen (S0858x4) list  
only wife in probate and children are not known.

In a follow up future article, DJ Paul, SFA  
Member, has furnished research on the Betty  
Brook Cemetery in Kortright, NY of the family of  
Ephraim Sheldon. His research and probate ex-  
tends his Ephraim's family another generation. He  
is currently waiting from National Archives for  
Civil War records for a Private Edwin Sheldon,  
also not in our database, along with a few others.

As we open up the SFA Database to others, we  
hope that members will provide more missing in-  
formation.

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### **Additional Reunion Information**

Room rates at the Hotel Utica are \$94 plus tax. In  
addition, the SFA Reunion registration fee has  
been increased to \$20 per person for this reunion in  
order to cover a direct charge to SFA for the meet-

ing rooms. The Hotel Utica with the increase in  
the registration fee is still significantly less ex-  
pensive than other possibilities.

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### **What Do We Need To Show The Connections between generations? Jeanne A Jeffries**

After 35 years of searching for elusive ancestors,  
I offer some advice. I have assisted over 20 indi-  
viduals with application to the DAR or SAR. All  
were accepted. Peter and I have presented genea-  
logical workshops for 10 years helping over 100  
people get started on the journey searching for  
ancestors.

We traveled to Maine, Minnesota, Denver and all  
New England. Each year we visit the Family  
History Center in Salt Lake City. Using libraries  
and state Archives, cemetery offices, visiting the  
offices of Town Clerks, using Microfilm and mi-  
crofiche town histories, family histories, com-  
puters and genealogy software

What was his father's name? and his father? And  
his father? Do not forget the mothers. Peter was  
persistent in collecting the brothers and sisters, a  
hint for previous generations. Given or first  
names are often repeated in families. Some fami-  
lies name the first son for the father's father and  
the first daughter for the mother's mother. Sec-  
ond son is named for the mother's father, second  
daughter for father's mother. Then they use the  
names of brothers and sisters. Some cultures  
only use names of deceased, not the living.

Typically we are looking for the birth date and  
place, the marriage date and place and the death  
date and place. It is useful to also discover the  
burial place since families often bury in the same  
family lot. You may find other family members  
you had not known about.

Birth certificates are created at the time of birth

and filed in either the town or county and at the Vital Records of the state where it occurred. So, if the family lived in a suburb of Providence, eg Lincoln but the baby was born in Providence, the record will be in Providence. Marriage and death records are similarly filed. Cemetery records are often at the town clerk's office. If there is a cemetery office associated with the cemetery, there will be a record of date of burial, owners of the lot and all the names of those interred.

In the next issue, we can talk of other sources of information.

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### **The Importance of Social Security Numbers to Genealogical Research** By Brian Mulcahy [BMulcahy@leegov.com](mailto:BMulcahy@leegov.com)

Social Security records are one of the most overlooked resources in genealogy. Researchers often encounter brick walls when looking for people born in the nineteenth century before formal birth registration was required. Social Security records may provide valuable vital facts about birthplace and date, death date, or parents' names. Some important additional clues that may be found include localities of residence, employment, where they resided when they first applied for their Social Security card, where they last resided, and the locality of residence for the person who received benefits upon their death..

More than 35 million applications for Social Security numbers were processed between November 1936 and June 30, 1937. This was the first time the federal government required citizens to prove they were legal citizens of the United States. They had to prove their legal birth or naturalization if applicable to be issued a card. For some who went by multiple names previously, they had to agree on one legal name. For those born without having a formal birth certificate, they were required to obtain what is known as Delayed Birth Certificates to qualify. Form SS-5, Application for Social Security, can be a useful tool in locating early informa-

tion on any ancestor. The information requirements of the forms has been updated over the ensuing decades. Historically, applicants were required to provide the following information:

1. Full name
2. Full name at birth, including maiden name
3. Present mailing address
4. Age at last birthday
5. Date of birth
6. Place of birth (city, county, and state)
7. Father's full name
8. Mothers full name, including maiden name
9. Sex
10. Race as indicated by applicant
11. Whether applicant ever applied for Social Security or Railroad Retirement previously
12. Name and address of current employer
13. Date Signed
14. Applicants signature

The first three digits of a Social Security number, known as the area number, are assigned by geographical region.. Prior to 1972, cards were issued in local Social Security offices around the country, and the area number represented the state in which the card was issued. Since 1972, when the SSA began assigning numbers and issuing cards centrally from Baltimore, the area number is assigned based on the zip code in the mailing address provided on the application for the original Social Security card. A word of warning: the applicant's mailing address may not be the same as his or her place of residence.

For more information on the numbering system, the best site to visit is <http://www.ssa.gov/history/ssn/geocard.html>.

**BLM 8/17/2015**

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## **Rules for Success in Genealogy Research** **By Brian Mulcahy [BMulcahy@Leegov.com](mailto:BMulcahy@Leegov.com)**

Genealogy is one of the most enjoyable, yet challenging endeavors that one will encounter. Unlike the popular Staples commercial that features the infamous “easy” button, there is no such shortcut in genealogy. Success depends not only on passion, but also research skill, patience, knowledge of historical context, and some luck. Of all of these factors, knowing the historical context and place of residence is paramount. Historical context usually impacted the life decisions made by all of our ancestors. This article is designed to help you as you advance through the research process. Some important concepts are listed below.

1. Whenever you uncover facts, cite all of your sources completely. This is a must because without documentation it’s likely you’ll need to go back to check the facts.
2. Under no circumstances should you ever assume that another researcher’s information is absolutely accurate. This is true even if they documented their sources. Information without documentation should never be trusted.
3. When dealing with the spelling of names, whether it is an individual, locality of residence or origin, you frequently will encounter variations. Spelling was not standardized for many years.
4. Regardless of the source (print or online), never accept information found on someone’s family tree at face value. Treating it as a clue may be useful but accepting it verbatim is not a good practice.
5. When documenting sources, take time to examine the information for accuracy. Don’t make assumptions based on what appear to be well-documented sources. Anything a human being can do right, they can also do wrong. In some cases, errors can be intentional to cover up issues.

6. Sharing information among researchers is the key to why genealogists have achieved success over the decades. However, check and double check your information before recording or sharing.

7. When you run into roadblocks or research challenges, step back and check the documentation. Sometimes it’s a good idea is to take a short break from research then have a second look at the record or documentation. The break or re-examination of the source citations may provide you with fresh insight. In many cases the answer is there but you need time to refresh and mull over the options. This is also another time when re-examining the historical context can be beneficial.

8. You must maintain an open mind about your ancestors. The decisions they made were based on the historical context of the time.

9. Don’t be afraid to ask for help. The genealogy community is populated with individuals of all skill levels and areas of expertise, most of whom are happy to assist others.

Share. Offer to exchange information with other researchers. Share a little at a time and request a few documented facts from the other person. Sharing can open up opportunities to overcome research roadblocks.

BLM 9/22/2015

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## **Public Land States** **By Brian Mulcahy [BMulcahy@Leegov.com](mailto:BMulcahy@Leegov.com)**

Public land states are states that the federal government formed from the public domain. The term public domain is defined as land owned by the federal government that is subject to sale or transfer of ownership under laws passed by Congress. It includes western lands that the original states ceded to the United States as well as acquisitions from foreign governments. Congress was initially responsible for matters relating to the settlement of land.

The Public Land system in the U.S. is an outgrowth of the Northwest Territory created by the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 from lands that had been ceded to the fledgling U.S. government by Virginia and some other states. Records generated through this distribution process include thousands of diverse land claims and transactions regarding public domain, including military bounty lands, preemption rights, claims by refugees, agreements with Indian Nations, and the settlement of private land claims on public domain that the United States acquired from foreign governments.

The original 13 states and Hawaii, Kentucky, Maine, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, and West Virginia have no public domain. Several of these states ceded land to Congress for the benefit of the United States which became part of the public domain. To successfully claim land located within the public domain, one had to prove right to the land as recognized under public land laws. Claimants had to produce evidence to justify the basis for the claim. One type of land claim, private land claims on public domain that the United States acquired from foreign governments, often offers researchers a unique opportunity to gain detailed information on the claimants and their families.

The British, French, and Spanish governments granted a great deal of land within their American holdings to the inhabitants prior to the acquisition of the territories by the United States. After taking control of the land, the U.S. Government had to validate the titles originally granted by foreign authorities before the claimant could have legal possession of the land.

Congress also was responsible for the relief of veterans of the Revolutionary War and War of 1812 and passed many acts relating to bounty land, pensions, and other assistance to the soldiers and their families. Congress passed several public acts regulating veterans' claims that established common eligibility requirements and delegated to the Secretary of War the responsibility for administering the

provisions.

Many veterans and their heirs, however, brought their claims directly to Congress for adjudication, and Congress passed private acts to reward these individuals. Bounty land claims within the Public Lands volumes can supply information about the claimants' military service and subsequent lives. For many veterans of these two wars, the bounty land claims supplement the compiled military service records and pension bounty land files available at the National Archives.

The requirements for acquiring public land were eased over a period of years, culminating in the Homestead Act of 1862 which made it possible to get title to land for free provided that the land was improved and occupied by the claimholder.

BLM 3/17/2015

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### **Request for Sheldon Articles for SFAQ Jim Russell**

SFAQ is always in need of articles about the Sheldon Family. These and reunion articles take first priority. When necessary we use articles on how to do genealogy as a filler. We want to know when your Sheldon family is accepted by genealogy societies like DAR or SAR. We want to know about research and discoveries in your family. We are also interested in Sheldon places.

Please note that this Quarterly required four "how to do" genealogy articles as fillers. That is the most ever. In October SFAQ required four pages of photos to complete. Sheldon articles have slowed significantly in the last year.

Please keep those articles coming.

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**Sheldon Family Association, Inc.**

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**Send Dues and Address Changes and Other**

To: Barbara Gomez, Secretary/Treasurer  
PO Box 131462  
Ann Arbor, MI 48113

*New Members please access Sheldon Family Association at  
<http://sheldonfamily.org/membership.htm>*

*Please do not mail dues to the President*

# Land Agents



## Realtors of Yesteryear

The Sheldon Family Association Reunion will be held August 28-September 1 at the Hotel Utica in Utica, NY. Room charge should be \$94 plus tax per night. Also see additional Reunion Information , page 1,217.

To make reservations call (315) 724-7829 and mention the Sheldon Family Association.