



Trilogy Genealogy Club

Newsletter June 2022

Welcome Back

Another summer has passed, and we have begun our 2022-2023 season. Members who travel during the summer or call somewhere else home but live in Trilogy in the cooler months have started to return. I know many of you will not be back for several months yet, but hopefully, this newsletter will be helpful to you in keeping up to date on what the club is doing.

September 12, 2022 Meeting

The first Monday of the month was Labor Day, so the meeting was held on the 12th. Trey and I were both traveling and were unable to attend. I want to thank Vicki Reisenfeld for stepping up and hosting the meeting.

Our guest speaker for September was Kathleen Ackerman, a professional genealogist. Vicki also did a presentation about which I have heard good comments.

October 3, 2022 – Our Next Meeting

Style, Story, and Substance -- Kristen Mercker (joining us via Zoom)

Kristen will share her visual system for staying organized and consistent while researching different lineages. She currently manages THIRTEEN lineages and can find anything within a few minutes. Then she will share research ideas and examples for creating a rich family story that goes beyond the data to paint a picture of our ancestors, how they lived and what was important to them.

Kristen has always been a storyteller at heart. She studied radio, film, and television at Northwestern University, which led to her career as a writer, producer, and director. She brought her entertainment and visual storytelling approach to corporate clients who were looking for new ways of engaging their employees. Her clients did not have Hollywood budgets, so she often took a documentary-style approach. Those experiences honed her research and interview skills.

In the 1990s, her parents caught the genealogy bug and started their research. Her professional skills were a natural fit for this hobby, and as a young mother looking for an intellectual challenge, she joined them on the treasure hunt.

In the process, she gained a genealogical knowledge of German and Latin, with a smattering of Danish. She has forayed through weedy, snake-ridden fields to find family cemeteries, composited 18th-century

cadastral maps with 21st-century Google maps, and submitted one family history to the Library of Congress, meaning she is “published.”

After Kristen’s presentation, I have some information about using excel timelines while researching to track and organize facts about your ancestors easily. I hope to see many of you at the meeting.

Upcoming Club Elections

It is that time of year again when we need to elect officers for next year. Our 2022 officers are:

- President – Bob Alford
- Vice President – Trey Higgens
- Secretary – Hattie Dixon
- Treasurer – Cheryl Widlak

Officers serve for one-year terms and can serve no more than two terms. Hattie and Cheryl are on their first terms and have indicated they are willing to stand for re-election. Trey and I are on our second terms and are not eligible for re-election.

We need at least two individuals to step forward to run for President and Vice-President in 2023. The Association rules require that I notify club management of the officers for 2023 by late December. If we cannot fill all four positions, we must shut down the club and dissolve all operations.

We will discuss this at our October meeting. We must finalize the list of candidates by the November meeting. The election will be held by email ballot during November, and the results will be announced in December.

Please consider stepping forward and volunteering to fill one of these positions. Simply send me an email to let me know. If you want to discuss what is involved in doing this, I would be happy to meet with you.

History Day 2023?

Traditionally the club has sponsored a Family History Day on the first Monday in March, open to all Trilogy residents. Club members who volunteer their time organize and manage this event. The process starts in the Fall by forming an organizing committee that works out the program and starts lining up the speakers.

New people are required each year to make this happen. Please consider joining or perhaps chairing the organizing committee. If there is a lack of interest in participating, we will be unable to have a Family History Day in 2023.

Would you like help from a professional genealogist?

In the past, numerous members have asked how they can obtain professional assistance with their family history. Our September speaker, Kathleen Ackerman, is a local professional genealogist offering such services. She is willing to come to Trilogy to assist individual members by appointment. She will provide a reduced rate of \$25/hour for our members if we can provide meeting space and lineup four consecutive one-hour appointments per visit.

This offer is an opportunity to obtain the services of a professional to assist you with your family history right here in Trilogy at a very low cost. You may choose a one-time appointment to give you the boost you need or ongoing sessions for as long as you need them, providing we can satisfy the scheduling requirements.

If you are interested in this, please send me an email and let me know. If there is enough interest, I will try to set up something.

A Quick Survey

I have sent out a quick survey and need your responses to make plans moving forward. Please take a few minutes to complete this.

Quick Tip of the Month

Want to try something new and unique? Take a look at DeepStory by MyHeritage. DeepStory is an online tool you can use to animate your ancestor from a still photo and have them tell their life story or whatever else you wish from a script you create. Bringing your ancestors to life may seem creepy, but the technology is impressive. I haven't used DeepStory with one of my ancestors yet, but I have viewed some stories created by others.

DeepStory is the latest development by MyHeritage in animating pictures. Some years ago, they introduced an animation feature, and I used it with a picture of my maternal grandmother. I never knew her; she died a few years before I was born, but I have several pictures of her, and she was a beautiful woman. She has a very stiff look on her face in all her pictures, as most people in old photos do. I used an image taken about ten years before she died. When I animated it, she turned, looked at me, and smiled. It was not a broad grin but a lovely, soft smile. It touched my heart. It was easy to imagine that is how she would have looked at me as a little boy if she had lived long enough to know me.

DeepStory goes a lot further. The character comes to life and tells their story, or at least the one you have written for them.

If you need a break from wading through historical records, check out DeepStory at MyHeritage.com.

This Month's Banner

Old photos can tell beautiful stories, but not without some written descriptions.

This month's banner features two pictures from my Alford family history. On the left is my great grandfather, David Lewis Stockwell Alford, on his farm in Illinois with his second wife and their daughter. David was born in 1849 in upper-state New York. In 1672 he married a beautiful young woman named Phoebe Elizabeth Burdick. David and Phoebe migrated to Illinois to seek a new life for themselves.

On June 2, 1873, Phoebe gave birth to Charles Burdick Alford, my grandfather. Unfortunately, about six months later, Phoebe became very ill, so the young family returned to New York to seek medical aid. Phoebe died on March 19, 1874, in Saranac Lake, New York.

David married Ada Helen Hayes two years later, on November 30, 1876, in Saranac Lake. Shortly after that, David moved his new family back to Illinois, where he and Ada had five children and spent the rest of their lives farming. Ada did not want a stepson, and Charles did not accept discipline from his new stepmother. David returned to Saranac Lake with Charles and left him in the care of

Phoebe's parents, Peter Ferris Burdick and Phoebe Elizabeth Stockwell, who were in their sixties at the time.

When Charles was ten years old, Peter Burdick died on May 17, 1884. Phoebe dedicated the rest of her life to raising her grandson. Phoebe Burdick had strong religious beliefs and raised Charles accordingly, sending him to seminary when the time came. He became a Methodist minister but soon converted to Episcopalian and spent the rest of his life as a minister in northeastern New York. The picture on the right side of the banner is of Charles in his church at Lebanon Springs, New York, in 1908.

The picture on the left of David and Ada was taken by Charles around 1920 when he took my father, who was then a young boy, by train to see his grandfather.

Pictures tell stories, but not without words to accompany them. If I left these two pictures to my children without explanation, they would discard them. These pictures take on special meaning to descendants with just these few short paragraphs.

I'm sure many of you have old pictures around. You can turn them into family treasures with just a little effort. You don't need to write a book to tell the family story.

Here is just one more photo for you, a picture of Phoebe Elizabeth Stockwell Burdick, my great-great-grandmother who loved and raised my grandfather when no one wanted him. He grew up to be an honorable and respected citizen who raised a family of six boys and two girls, all of whom went on to live successful lives. We all owe Phoebe a debt of gratitude, for, without her, Charles's life would have been different, and the rest of our family might not be here.



Feedback is Appreciated

- How can the Trilogy Genealogy Club help you with your Family History?
- What ideas or suggestions do you have for future meetings?
- How can we improve what we are doing to benefit our members?
Please write to me at rsalford@gmail.com. I'm listening.