

CAJUNS, CREOLES, PIRATES AND PLANTERS

Your New Louisiana Ancestors Format

Volume 3, Number 29



Suzanne and Mike Schexnayder explain the FamilySearch.org website at the Annual Meeting of Le Comité des Archives de la Louisiane held September 18, 2011, at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Baton Rouge.

LE COMITE ANNUAL MEETING: Changes to the FamilySearch.org website are coming at a rapid pace. New databases and images are being added, Research Wikis are being developed and updated, and patrons in the U.S. can now order microfilm online and have it delivered to their nearest Family History Center.

Mike and Suzanne Schexnayder, Co-Directors of the Baton Rouge Family History Center, recently gave a presentation on FamilySearch at the Annual Meeting of Le Comité des Archives de la Louisiane. They demonstrated many of the features of the website, including the ins and outs of using the databases and image collections. They also showed how to unlock images for certain collections.

Other presenters at the meeting were Athena Jackson, who discussed LSU's Newspaper Digitization Program and the Library of Congress's Chronicling

America website (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>), and Judy Riffel who instructed the group on how to research French departmental archives online.

The three Power Point presentations and handouts have been posted to Le Comité's website (<http://www.lecomite.org>) under the What's New tab.

Le Comité is also developing and adding content to its website. Many of these additions are being made to the Members' Page, which requires membership in the organization. Parish Research Guides, Finding Aids, and Book Indexes have been developed and are being posted to the website. Soon to follow in the next phase of updates are Out-of-Print *Le Raconteur* articles and General Research Guides.

Membership in Le Comité is \$20 per calendar year and includes the three back issues of the society's quarterly print publication, *Le Raconteur*, and the upcoming December issue. A quarterly electronic newsletter, *E-Communiqué*, is also sent to members with e-mail addresses. A membership application is available on the website.

XXX

PERSONAL FAMILY RESEARCH: Missing links in ancestries is very common and sometimes requires professional help to determine a positive outcome. I have made it a point to work with but never promote professional researchers unless as an absolutely last resort, but I understand there is a point when their services might be needed. Up to this point, I encourage everyone to do their own research in order to receive the joys of discovering their ancestries. I still have "missing parts" in my ancestry, but I suppose as long as I live I will be searching for the answers myself.

The beauty of learning of one's ancestry is in doing all the work yourself. This has always been the way I have done this because I believe it is important in developing a more treasured outcome to any family research situation. I suppose this means that I never give up and am trying to impress this on any other researchers who may be continuing their individual research options.

With all the upgraded internet links, I suppose I need to get busy and go back and see what I might find on some of my individual family members. That means checking and re-checking all the many files I have on my family lines. There are many things I still need to learn, but I need to also go back and find the various documentations I have in these files. I started doing my family research when I was in the tenth grade in high school with a civics assignment to interview my grandparents and compile a family history chart. I still cherish the day that my teacher, Mrs. Bess Perigo, Logansport High School, Logansport, Louisiana, had our class do this – back in the early 1950s.

After all these years, I have several things I need cleared up. They are "dead ends" that hopefully someday will be in the category of successful research discoveries.

The one that stands out to me is what happened to Martha Moore Adams after the family moved from Sevier County, Arkansas to Panola County, Texas. Panola County is adjacent to DeSoto Parish, Louisiana, and many of my family records can be found in both states.

Wyatt Woodruff Adams was born in Tennessee in 1822 and was married to Martha Moore. According to census records, she was a Choctaw Indian, born in Missouri. Wyatt was a fairly successful landowner in Arkansas, and I did locate their marriage record, filed and recorded on June 10, 1844, and certifying that the marriage took place on May 9, 1844. I also acquired a description of his land – 97.53 acres – with its location in Sevier County.

In searching records in Panola County, I find no mention of Martha, just a note my grandmother gave me while I interviewed her. She told me as much as she could but did not know exactly what happened to her except to say that she “had been sent to Terrell, Texas.” I have been unable to find her burial place. I assume she died outside of Panola County because I find no record of her with other Adams relatives.

It isn't that uncommon to find burials in other places. A good example of that is my own great grandmother, Arminta Adams Sinclair. Other members of the family lost contact with her until I mentioned in one of my correspondences that she was buried in Cool Springs Cemetery in DeSoto Parish, Louisiana. Her husband had remarried and was buried in Panola County. It seems unusual that the two cemeteries could be so close together, but many researchers fail to look in adjoining parishes or counties for these lost family members. I helped out a lot of descendants with Arminta's final resting place, but I need to finally find closure for Martha Moore Adams.

Even in my Veach lineage, I still find things that bring a clearer picture to my own heritage. My main concern now is to learn more about Jeremiah Veach, an only child who became an indentured servant in Air Township, Pennsylvania. It is frustrating when you search and search and fail to come up with answers, but I try to stress that one should never give up. Therefore I keep doing research, and with each new marriage, I start on another surname. It keeps me busy in my spare time when I'm not writing, reading, or visiting places where relatives lived. I still find great pleasure in visiting old courthouses in places where my ancestors lived. There is a difference in seeing the actual records or in finding them transcribed in books or genealogy magazines.

Even though I may find cemetery listings where my ancestors or other relatives are buried, I find comfort in visiting these places in person. I also enjoy taking younger relatives to these places. There is more to research than just looking on the internet or going to genealogical libraries. You have to really do it all in order to get a complete picture of how your ancestors lived and died. Your family history is a part

of American history, and you should attempt to learn as much as you can by being there – where they were.

That is the reason I took my children to Brandywine, Pennsylvania. Our ancestor, Jean de Melet (John Mellett) fought here during the American Revolution. I learned so much about him by visiting the National Archives in Washington, D.C., but I also discovered a distant cousin who compiled a book on the Mellett family. It was just one of those things you never expect, but here was this wonderful compilation of work on all my ancestors. This also happened with my Veach lineage and with my Harlan ancestors.

You just have to care enough to use your time wisely and search out the missing parts of your ancestry. Just remember that with each new marriage you uncover with your own lineage, you have another complete family surname to research. I guess I need to get started on the Donbobbin, Wilson, Newton, Sparks, Stuart (Stewart), and even my Smith line. These are just a few. I'm not sure if I'll ever make it to Scotland or France or the other countries where my ancestors lived, so I may have to just stick to what I can find by way of the internet.

Whatever you do, take the time to learn as much as you can. Record it. Share this knowledge with other relatives, and if you can, see that the material is included in books on these surnames or at least listed in genealogical society publications. Just make sure it is not lost in time.

XXX

FREE SERVICE: Correspondence to this column should be directed to Damon Veach, Cajuns, Creoles, Pirates and Planters, 709 Bungalow Lane, Baton Rouge, LA 70802-5337. The e-mail address is ancestorslaveach@cox.net. Queries and book reviews are printed as space permits, and you are encouraged to take advantage of this free service. Claitor's Publishing can serve as a distributor for self-published genealogy titles. Go to their homepage for details on how you can obtain this excellent service.