

CAJUNS, CREOLES, PIRATES AND PLANTERS

Your New Louisiana Ancestors Format

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CONTINUING RESEARCH: In the last column, I discussed the importance of family research and some of the obstacles you would find along the way. This week is a follow-up giving you three examples of how to continue by searching out newspapers, marriages, and wills. I'll use Robert K. Headley Jr.'s works on early Virginia records as examples.

Genealogical Abstracts from 18th Century Virginia Newspapers is a great example of this kind of research. This is an exceptionally thorough work, and it contains genealogical abstracts from more than 7,000 issues of eighty newspapers printed in Virginia in the 18th century. In addition, where there were gaps in the Virginia papers, newspapers from nearby states were scanned for Virginia material. In selecting items to abstract, Dr. Headley looked especially for those that gave at least two pieces of genealogical data: age and place of residence, for example, date of death and names of executors, or name of spouse and place of residence.

The data provided came from marriage notices, death notices, estate sales and settlements, advertisements for runaways (usually servants, apprentices, slaves, or deserters) and court cases. Information furnished in the abstracts varies from item to item, of course. Marriage notices, death notices, and estate settlements usually provide details on next of kin, occupation, and place of residence, while notices for runaways tend to be the juiciest of all. They can provide minute descriptions down to the manner of wearing the hair, tattoos, personality, and clothing, and they sometimes give place of birth, age, date imported, name of ship on which imported, occupation, and suspected destination.

But the chief thing is that this work draws together all genealogical data in 18th-century Virginia newspapers, which is in itself a stupendous achievement. Thanks to Dr. Headley's labors, we now have abstracts of approximately 10,000 items of a genealogical nature found in 18th-century Virginia papers and an index to an additional 10,000 persons mentioned in the notices. If you've hit a dead-end in your Virginia research, this may be the way out.

I have a hard-cover version in my collection, but it is available now from Genealogical Publishing Company in a soft-cover edition. It is priced at \$52.00, postpaid. Their address is 3600 Clipper Mill Road, Suite 260, Baltimore, MD 21211.

Married Well and Often: Marriages of the Northern Neck of Virginia, 1649-1800 covers marriages and marriage references for the counties of Lancaster, Northumberland, Old Rappahannock, Richmond, and Westmoreland. This work contains a list of 7,000 marriages and boasts an additional 16,000 index entries. It contains all marriage references including licenses, bonds, mentions in wills, deeds, order books, and Bible records that the author could locate in both published and

unpublished sources, and, because it is so well sourced, it offers far more than a simple list of marriages.

Starting with marriage license bonds for Northumberland County (1783-1800), Westmoreland County (1772-1800), Richmond County (1750-1800), and Lancaster County (1701-1800), the author added marriages from scattered licenses, fee books, ministers' returns, family bibles, and notes in various volumes of court records, finalizing his research in the will books and deed books for Northumberland, Lancaster, Westmoreland, Old Rappahannock, and Richmond counties, as well as in standard publications.

The result is a work with many unusual features. Besides the names of husband and wife and the date of marriage, entries may contain the names of parents, grandparents, former spouses, children of previous marriages, and other relations, as well as names of persons connected with the marriage such as securities for the groom, guardians, and clergymen. In addition, parent and children relationships are spelled out, as are sibling relationships, and there is a wealth of incidental detail concerning illegitimate children, places of birth and residence, putative marriages, dates of death of one or more parents, exact spellings of names, and precise dates of marriage.

If you have even a glimmer of interest in the Northern Neck of Virginia, this exhaustive work is bound to satisfy you. This one is available for \$58.00, postpaid.

The third book from Dr. Headley is *Wills of Richmond County, Virginia, 1699-1800*, and it is another in a soft-cover format. It is available for \$37.00, postpaid.

Richmond County, Virginia was formed from a part of Old Rappahannock County in 1692 and was itself the parent of King George County. Although created eight years before the turn of the century, Richmond County wills are extant only from 1699, but the compiler of this useful work has bridged the gap by substituting information from Order Books, 1692-1699, thereby extending the possibilities for genealogical enquiry.

The entries, which consist mainly of abstracts of wills and inventories and refer to about 8,000 persons, are arranged throughout the work in chronological order. Each will abstract contains the name of the testator, often his place of residence, the date the will was written and the date it was proved, the names of legatees, executors and witnesses, and a variety of other matter supplied by the compiler himself from independent sources. This is the basic source for genealogical research if you are researching early ties to Richmond County, Virginia.

These three examples of Virginia research can serve as a guide for your research in any state. If your ancestors are from Georgia, the Carolinas, or even here in Louisiana, consider all the data that might be right at your fingertips by searching

out records in newspapers, marriage records and wills. In doing my own personal research in DeSoto Parish, I have spent many hours checking out early records.

Even if you can't make it to courthouses to do research, much is online to assist you, and if you check out your local genealogical library collections, you may be able to find much of this material in book form. Society publications are also great means for finding information on your family lineage. These societies search out and publish material to help make it more convenient for you to do your own research. Much of this material has never been in print before, and it serves to preserve and present valuable data to researchers.

There is so much out there if you just take the time to see what has been done in the past. And there are so many people who are willing to share their research results with you.

If you are lucky enough to find others working on your personal family lines, this makes doing research even better. This way you can divide up assignments which will save a lot of time and prevent duplicate attempts at doing the same segment of research.

Don't overlook the fact that you can also ask for help by submitting family queries to this column format or to those many society publications. Be sure to take advantage now of this service. Most of these listings are free.

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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 can be any length, and book reviews are printed as space permits, and you are encouraged to take advantage of this free service. All genealogical/historical/preservation books are reviewed in this column format, but a review copy is necessary for this service. Another service is offered here too. 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. It is a way to get out-of-print books back into the system and definitely is a great assistance to genealogists who may need this information.