

## Trilogy Genealogy Club – Newsletter October 2021



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**If you have moved out of Trilogy or no longer wish to be a club member, please reply to this email and let me know. I will remove you from the email list and the club roster.**

In addition to information about upcoming meetings and events, this month's newsletter contains an overview of the results of the recent club survey, making it a bit longer than usual. Please read it all.

### Meetings

During our September meeting, we focused on researching on the Internet, and I handed out a “cheat sheet” with website addresses. If you missed the September meeting, I have posted the cheat sheet and a white paper on the club website.

In October, I started the meeting with a presentation on using cluster research to break down brick walls. If you missed the meeting, the presentation is on the club website. We then had a workshop where members helped each other research their ancestors online. If you missed this meeting, you missed a real opportunity. I asked those who attended if they enjoyed the workshop, and the response was overwhelmingly positive.

In November, Denise Beason will be back to talk to us about using the census in your genealogy research. Denise teaches genealogy at the college level in California. She has a winter home in Pebble Creek and has been a great friend of the Trilogy Genealogy Club. As anyone who attended her presentation last Spring can tell you, she provides an enormous amount of excellent information in a very short time. I will ask her to provide handouts we can post on the club website. We will also have a club member, Vicki Reisenfeld, show how she uses Microsoft One Note in her research. I think you will be amazed by what she has accomplished, and many of you will want to take advantage of what she is offering to share with the club.

In December, we will have a workshop similar to what we did in October but incorporating the census techniques we learned from Denise. I have asked Gary Lowe to lead this workshop as he knows much more about the census than I do. Most of my research is in the colonial era, long before the US census existed.

### Revised Tools and Platforms SIG

Based on the survey results discussed below, I restarted the Tools and Platforms SIG in October, immediately following the club meeting. We watched a 14-minute video on finding historical records on FamilySearch. This presentation was initially recorded for RootsTech 2021. The techniques described apply to almost any platform. There were about twelve members in attendance, and all said they enjoyed the video and found it worthwhile.

The October Tools and Platforms SIG feature a video on using the FamilySearch Wiki. The meeting will be held immediately after the regular club meeting. All club members are invited to attend.

## **October Board Meeting**

The October Board meeting was held on Saturday, October 9, 2021. The minutes from the meeting are now posted on the club website, and many of the items are discussed below. To access the minutes of this and previous meetings this year, login to [trilogygenealogyclub.org](http://trilogygenealogyclub.org) and click on the blue Club Organization button on the left side of the screen. On that screen, click on the blue Exec Board button on the top row, then click on the blue bar that says Board Meeting Minutes. A list of the available documents will appear.

## **Elections of Officers for 2022**

Our club bylaws require we hold elections for officers each November. All officers serve one-year terms and are limited to serving a maximum of two years. The process for electing officers is clearly defined in the bylaws. Nominations for all four positions are now open. Any club member may put their name on the ballot simply by letting me know before or during the November meeting that they wish to serve. I am pleased to report that we already have nominees for all four positions; however, if you are interested, please don't hesitate to add your name to the list,

I will close the nominations at the November meeting and send out the ballot via email shortly after that. I will announce the results at the December meeting.

## **Club Bylaws**

The Club Bylaws have been revised, approved by the Board, and distributed for your review. I will take a voice vote for final approval at the November meeting. This is the first time we have updated the bylaws since I first wrote them nine years ago. The most significant change is the elimination of standing committees, which never materialized, and the addition of Special Interest Groups (SIGS). If you didn't receive a copy of the updated Bylaws and would like a copy for review, please email me, and I will send you a copy.

## **Survey Results**

Thank you to the thirty-nine members who participated in our latest survey. Your responses will drive our direction in the future. The results are summarized below.

### **Question One – Club Social**

Three people said they would prefer a daytime event that replaced a club meeting, with no guests, ten said they preferred an evening with spouses or partners, twenty people said either format was good. Only four said they were not interested.

This was discussed at the Board meeting. We will schedule an evening event for mid to late March. More details will be provided by early 2022.

### **Question Two – Family History Day**

Family History Day received overwhelming support. Only three people of the thirty-eight who answered this question said they were not interested, and twenty-nine members offered to volunteer at some level. I will contact those who offered to serve on the planning committee soon and schedule a kick-off meeting. Look for updates on this in future editions of this newsletter.

### **Question Three - Getting Started Webinar Series**

I was surprised to see thirteen people express interest in the Getting Started series. I was expecting a lot less. I will schedule this for sometime in November and will be in touch with those who are interested. Note that this is just the basics, so if you are at all experienced in genealogy, this is probably not for you. If you didn't express interest and would like to participate, please send me an email, and I will add you to the list. Further announcements for this will only be sent to those on the interest list.

## **Question Four – Speakers**

Twenty-seven people said the speakers so far this year have been good. Two said they would like to hear more from club members. Two said we need more outside speakers. One person said we should start paying speakers.

We will continue to try and find speakers to present a variety of topics that members have expressed interest in (see question five.)

Also, any member who would like to speak, either as the featured speaker or for 15-30 minutes after the featured speaker, to share ideas, techniques, or experiences, please contact me. Your participation would be greatly appreciated by all. In the past, there have been efforts to encourage more member presentations. My observation is that these efforts have often met with great resistance, so I have avoided pushing members to get up and speak. If you are willing to do so, I'm sure many people would love to hear about your adventure in Family History.

I am somewhat reluctant to pay speakers unless we find someone exceptional and feel it is worth it. There was a time when the club paid many speakers, which consumed most of the dues money. My observation was that the paid speakers were seldom better than those who didn't charge a fee. When speakers started demanding higher fees, we moved away from that, and I know of other clubs, including other clubs in Trilogy and genealogy clubs in other communities that never pay speakers.

The bottom line is we will pay speakers if and when we believe it is warranted, but we will continue to be careful how we spend your dues money. We currently have a healthy bank balance and want to keep it that way.

## **Question Five – Suggested Topics**

Sixteen people answered this question, but there were duplicates leaving eleven general areas suggested:

- Comparison of the various genealogy sites. By this, I assume the member meant Ancestry, FamilySearch, MyHeritage, and FindMyPast. This seems like an interesting topic. The difficulty will be finding a speaker who is an expert in all four and can be unbiased in their presentation. We will see if we can find someone.
- More meetings like September on how to access and use various websites. I'm glad you enjoyed the September meeting and got something from it. We will look for speakers with similar approaches. In the meantime, if you missed September, the white paper is on the club website under the September handouts.
- Research Tools. This appears to be similar to the previous suggestion. Also, the Tools and Platforms SIG focuses on this, and we will present a different tool or platform each month.
- Telling the Family Story. This topic is near and dear to me as it is the focus of my Family History work. We have a Telling the Family Story SIG, and I know Mark has some plans to improve these meetings significantly. There are also many ways to Tell the Family Story, some of which don't require any writing at all. I will look into scheduling a presentation along these lines.
- Incorporating pictures in Family History. This is a broad topic ranging from processing and recovering old photos to using photographs to tell or enhance the family story. This could be an interesting topic, and I will look for a suitable speaker.
- Presentation by members of their experiences. I would love to do this. The problem is that most people want to hear other people speak but seem to be unwilling to get up and say anything themselves. If you would like a shorter time frame to share, I can schedule you after a guest

speaker, or, if at least 4-6 people volunteer to talk, we will have a sharing meeting. If you are willing to participate, please email me.

- DNA. This is always a popular topic, and the DNA SIG is doing well and meeting at noon on the day of the club meeting each month. We will have one speaker on DNA at Family History Day and may do something at a future club meeting.
- Immigration Records. It has been quite a while since we had a speaker focused on this topic. We will see if we can find someone qualified to discuss this.
- Ways to get around brick walls. We all have brick walls. Sometimes they can be overcome, and there are techniques for attacking this problem. In our October meeting, I presented cluster research, which is a strategy for finding your ancestor when there are no records. If you missed this, the slides are on the club website. It is a good topic, and we have a guest speaker for February who will speak on this.
- Details on using FamilySearch. I'm glad someone mentioned this. I see FamilySearch as the most valuable website there is for genealogy, and it keeps getting better, but it is not the easiest site to navigate, maybe because it has so much information on it. I would like to have an expert on the site speak to us soon, perhaps on Family History Day.
- Choose a country and do an in-depth presentation on genealogy for that country. This is an interesting idea, but I feel that whatever country we choose, it will only apply to a small number of our members and be of little interest to others. RootsTech has sessions of this type, and since they have so many attendees, there is always an adequate audience for any country.

#### **Question Six – Badges**

Thirty in favor, eight opposed. We will get new badges for all who renew or join for 2022. You will be given your badge, and it will be your responsibility to wear it to meetings. We won't police this, so it is up to you, but it helps encourage interaction between members at club meetings.

#### **Question Seven – Tools and Platforms**

Twenty-one people said they would come often. Fifteen people said they would come if the topic were of interest to them. Three people said they were not interested. We had our first meeting in October following the regular club meeting. The topic for November will be the Family Search Wiki.

#### **Question Eight – When**

Concerning when we should have the Tools and Platforms meeting, eight people preferred Zoom, eight people preferred an in-person meeting on a different day than the club meeting, and eighteen people preferred having it after the club meeting. We will have them immediately after the club meeting.

#### **Question Nine – 2022 Officers**

I am delighted to say we have candidates for all positions.

#### **Question Ten – Please Sign Here**

I made a mistake on this question in that I didn't set it as a required field. Two people did not put their names on the form, so I don't know who they are. I still counted their answers, but both indicated they would volunteer in some way to help with Family History Day, and one asked to be on the Getting Started list. Since I don't have their names, I can't put them on the list. If you are one of these people, let me know who you are so I can add you to the appropriate lists.

## Genealogy Tip of the Month – Cemetery Sites

<https://billiongraves.com/>

<https://www.findagrave.com/>

<http://www.interment.net/>

### Questions

1. Which is the best cemetery Site?
2. Which sites are free?
3. Does Billion Graves really have records for a billion graves?
4. If I find my ancestor on one of these sites, is that a reliable source?

### Answers:

1. Find a Grave is the most popular, but each has information the others don't, so you may need to check them all.
2. They are all advertising supported, although Billion Graves now has a paid membership, most features are free. The advertising on Interment is especially intrusive and annoying, but they may have actual cemetery data the others don't.
3. No, Billion Graves doesn't have a billion graves. That was their original goal when the site was founded in 2010. According to Family Tree Magazine, they now have over 40 million uploaded tombstone records.
4. That depends. Interment has real cemetery records (no tombstones), which is usually considered a referenceable source. Billion Graves has uploaded tombstone images with GPS data. The picture of the tombstone speaks for itself. Just be sure this is really your ancestor and not someone with the same name. FindaGrave has added memorials that accompany the tombstones with family history information, and uploaded records from members with no tombstones. These may be very useful in your research, but they are other people's trees and often contain bad data. Again, the picture of the tombstone speaks for itself. Beware of other information when no reliable source is provided.

Here is a comparison chart from Family Tree Magazine:

	Monthly unique visitors	Number of records	Owner	Tombstone image?
BillionGraves	146,000	40 million GPS-tagged headstones; 140 million total burial records	Independent; sponsored by MyHeritage	Yes, for all
Find a Grave	990,000	190 million gravestone memorials	Ancestry.com	Yes, for many
Interment.net	78,000	25 million cemetery records	Clear Digital Media (an independent company); sponsored by GenealogyBank	No

### Bottom Line:

You should learn to use these sites to help you in your research. As always, be careful to make sure the ancestor you find on them is really your ancestor, and always verify the additional unsourced information that people add.

## 2022 Membership

Our Bylaws require that we renew memberships annually. There is a ten-dollar annual membership fee. In 2021 the Board waived the yearly dues as so few meetings were held in 2020 due to the pandemic. Those who don't renew by the end of January are considered no longer interested and are removed from the membership roll, the email lists, and the website. Members who join or renew in the Fall get full credit for the following year. You can beat the rush and renew at any meeting by seeing the club secretary.

This year, all new members and past members that renew by the end of January will receive new magnetic name badges. We will order these in early February to have them by Family History Day in March.

The Genealogy Club typically experiences a 20-25% turnover every year due to people leaving the community or losing interest. This year our membership role is bloated as we automatically renewed everyone for free for 2021. It would be beneficial for our planning purposes if those who plan to renew did so early, and those who do not intend to renew let us know soon. You can renew at any meeting just by letting Mark Miller know and giving him your \$10 in cash or check. Checks should be made out to TVA Genealogy Club. Alternatively, you can click on the red button on the first page on the website that says Join Us, fill out the form and write the word Renewal on it, and mail it to the address shown on the form with your payment.

### This Month's Banner Photo

This month's banner shows the remains of Burnchurch Castle and Tower in Kilkenny, Ireland, and the plan for the Tower. Burnchurch castle or Tower House was built in the 1400s and owned by the Fitzgeralds, otherwise Barron, of Burnchurch, who descended from Maurice Fitz Maurice, whose father was most probably Maurice Fitz Gerald, one of the first of the Anglo-Norman invaders into Ireland and ancestor of the different branches of Fitzgeralds in the country.

The Fitzgeralds of Burnchurch, also known by the surname of Barron, account for the wide distribution of the surname Barron in this part of County Kilkenny. They lost their lands to Colonel William Warden in the mid-17th century under the Cromwellian settlements. The property later passed by marriage into the Flood family. The Round Tower would have originally formed a corner of the walled enclosure attached to the Tower House.

Fitzgerald/Barron is one of my ancestral lines.

### Your 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 for the benefit of our members?

Please write to me at [rsalford@gmail.com](mailto:rsalford@gmail.com). I'm listening.

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