D-OGS Newsletter – January 2024

News & Articles of Interest to Durham-Orange genealogists

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LOCAL NEWS FOR 10 JANUARY 2024

Presentation Topic
D-OGS maintains a website that all members can access with an abundance of educational materials and research tools such as meeting presentation videos, all Trading Path quarterly journals, newsletters, surname lists, links to other resources, and more!

Please join us on Wednesday, **January 10** at **7:00 PM ONLINE via Zoom,** to see D-OGS President and Webmaster ***David McCorkle*** demonstrate these features while answering your questions. You can even "play along" at the same time! If you've never accessed the website, we'll start off by showing you how.

Recording
This lecture will be recorded and made available on the member-only section of the D-OGS website.

Online Access
We will be using the popular Zoom software which runs on PCs and Macs, as well as mobile devices like phones and tablets. It will be free for you to use. You do not need a microphone or video camera - just speakers and a screen, but it will be easier to ask questions if you have a microphone. There is an option to call in via telephone but note in most cases the presentation assumes you can see the slides or demo.

Online information will be emailed to members on the day of the program.

This presentation will be online only

TranscribeNC – Make History Accessible

We're Back!

Thank you for all your patience as we transitioned to a new system to host the North Carolina Digital Collections. This affected our material in FromThePage as well.

We have not only added new material to your favorite collections like military letters, we have several new collections as well! All of these collections will become semi-permanent and new material rotated in as documents are transcribed.

As America's 250th anniversary approaches (2026) the State Archives of North Carolina is focusing on making more documents from this era accessible to help commemorate the event. To learn more about what the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources is doing for America250, please visit the event's dedicated website, https://www.america250.nc.gov/.

Our other new collection, Cohabitation Records, are documents legitimizing the marriages of formerly enslaved people. These records were traditionally kept at the Register of Deeds office in each county. The State Archives of North Carolina digitized records from our own holdings, but also worked with several counties Register of Deeds offices to get these important documents online.

Check out State Archives of North Carolina | FromThePage

HOW TO BECOME A BETTER STORYTELLER

The first sentence is the hardest part.

As any storyteller (including us editors here at Family Tree) would tell you, you only have a few words to capture your audience's attention, and you have to keep earning that attention as you go.

Being a good storyteller is essential to making sure family history gets passed down. Many genealogists have unfortunately tried to share family stories, only to have their listeners tune out or walk away.

As you gather with family this holiday, here are a few tips for how to be a more effective storyteller.

Keep it short.
It's best to swallow this pill right away. Accept that your audience has half of the attention span you'd prefer. Aim for a minute (or less).

Practice, but don't recite.
The Moth is a nonprofit organization that has produced live storytelling events, podcasts, books and more for over 25 years. They encourage their participants to memorize the main points of a story but not the whole story. This way the most important information is communicated, but your delivery feels natural and authentic.

Beginning. Middle. End.
Don't stray from this classic formula. When telling your story, make sure you introduce a situation with stakes, and then make sure that situation is resolved at the end. It doesn't have to be a happy ending, but as the Moth writes, meandering endings kill a story.

Craft the perfect first line.
Spend some time thinking about an interesting beginning to your story. Ask yourself: is your opening line one that would interest someone with zero interest or background in family history?

Use Visuals.
If you have an item or photo that goes along with your story that can safely be passed around, bring it! Or consider keeping a picture on your phone you can show your listeners.

Bring it home.
It's human nature to be more interested in stories that relate to us personally. If possible, choose stories that relate to a specific person, tradition, object, meal or anything else that is in your family currently.

We wish you safe, happy and story-filled celebrations!

(Reprinted from the Family Tree Genealogy Insider blog)

MONTHLY BACKUP REMINDER

It is the first of a new month. Don't forget to backup your data files.

WHY USING GENETIC GENEALOGY TO SOLVE CRIMES COULD POSE PROBLEMS

Police are using a new type of DNA sleuthing, called genetic genealogy. Already the technique has caught murder and rape suspects in California and Washington. While solving the cases has given cause for celebration, the tactics used in catching the alleged culprits have many privacy and civil rights experts worried.

Closing the Golden State Killer case (*SN Online: 4/29/18*) and the previously unsolved double murder of a young Canadian couple (*SN Online: 5/23/18*) involved probing a public online database of people's DNA and family-tree information called GEDmatch.

In a May 29 opinion piece published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, bioethicist Christine Grady and colleagues argue that police should be more transparent about how they use forensic DNA searches. Meanwhile, law professor Natalie Ram and colleagues go even further in an essay in the June 8 *Science*, writing that eroding limits on the use of crime-solving technology "threatens our collective civil liberties and opens the door to socially and politically unacceptable genetic surveillance."

Here are a few key points in the debate:

Why are police using GEDmatch instead of DNA testing companies?

If police wanted to use 23andMe or AncestryDNA to help solve crimes, they would need a clean saliva sample from a potential suspect to send to the company for testing and analysis. But crime scene DNA doesn't come in that form, so police can't send DNA to the companies for testing. That's not the case with the DNA analysis service GEDmatch, to which customers can upload raw DNA data received from testing companies.

"That means the police or law enforcement investigators are equally able, if they have enough DNA to create a sufficiently complete genetic sequence, to upload that to GEDmatch" to find potential suspects, says Ram, of the University of Baltimore School of Law.

You can read more in an article by Tina Hesman Saey published in the sciencenews web site at: http://tinyurl.com/397mvf5r

(Reprinted form Dick Eastman's Online Genealogical Newsletter)

THE GENEALOGICAL PROOF STANDARD: AN EXPERT EXPLANATION FOR GUIDING YOUR RESEARCH

By Sunny Jane Morton

Many of today's drivers rely on GPS technology to get from place to place. GPS units—global positioning systems—calculate the best routes and give step-by-step directions, even in unfamiliar territory. They advise you where to stop for lunch and instantly recalculate the route when you miss a turn.

Another type of GPS can guide your family history journey. The Genealogical Proof Standard serves as a "genealogical GPS" that teaches basic navigational skills: how to plot your research course, track your progress, read conflicting sets of directions, and share your journey with friends and family.
Once you've navigated your research path with genealogical GPS, you won't want to be without it. And you might as well learn from the best—what follows are testimonies from three expert genealogists as they handle the twists, turns and potholes of genealogy research using the Genealogical Proof Standard.

What is the Genealogical Proof Standard?

The Genealogical Proof Standard (your "Genealogical GPS") gives you "rules for the road" to make your research journey less risky and, eventually, more rewarding. Just as it's not always fun to drive within the speed limit, the GPS isn't built for thrills. Instead, it emphasizes the long-term joys of the journey: the unfolding scenery, time spent with ancestral traveling companions, and a safe and satisfying arrival at your destination.

The Board for Certification of Genealogists developed the Genealogical Proof Standard (GPS) in the 1990s to help researchers navigate the newly constructed information highway. "The internet was booming, and we faced old challenges in a new sense," says renowned genealogy scholar and author Elizabeth Shown Mills. "There's always been a problem of people not understanding what they found and passing it around, but the introduction of the internet exploded those negative consequences. … People coming into the field were overwhelmed by all they found. They needed a test they could pose."
The GPS filled the bill, Mills explains, by offering a way to measure the reliability of all family tree data—whether found online or not. If the information doesn't meet the five coordinates of genealogy's GPS, you're likely not to be in the place you think you are. Instead, you may have found incorrect information or even be tracing the wrong ancestors.

The sections that follow describe the key principles of GPS, and why they're important for your research.

Element of the GPS	Contribution to Credibility
Reasonably exhaustive research	• Assumes examination of a wide range of high quality sources • Minimizes the probability that undiscovered evidence will overturn a too-hasty conclusion
Complete, accurate citations to the source or sources of each information item	• Demonstrates the extent of the search and the quality of the sources • Allows others to replicate the steps taken to reach the conclusion. (Inability to replicate the research casts doubt on the conclusion.)
Tests—through processes of analysis and correlation—of all sources, information items, and evidence	• Facilitates sound interpretation of the data contributed by *each* source • Ensures that the conclusion reflects *all* the evidence
Resolution of conflicts among evidence items	• Substantiates the conclusion's credibility. (If conflicting evidence is not resolved, a credible conclusion is not possible.)
Soundly reasoned, coherently written conclusion.	• Eliminates the possibility that the conclusion is based on bias, preconception, or inadequate appreciation of the evidence • Explains how the evidence led to the conclusion

1. Reasonably Exhaustive Research

The first criterion of the GPS is "thorough research," Mills says. But what's thorough? How many mile markers do you need along your ancestor's life path to consider it sufficiently scenic? How much proof do you need that the genealogical information you've discovered is accurate?

Thorough research is "reasonably exhaustive," says Sherry Stevens, a 30-plus-year research veteran in Utah. But that doesn't mean you have to get exhausted. "It just means you should check as many records about your ancestor as possible. You never know which one might hold the clue you need."

Finding multiple sources for a single piece of information, such as a birthplace, is key. "If you look at just one source, you won't see that there's more than one possibility for what happened," Mills adds. "We know that when there are multiple eyewitnesses to an event, the accounts differ. In historical research, there's no such thing as the final answer. All we can do is gather the best evidence possible and make a decision." The more sources you can find for a piece of information about your ancestor, the better.

For example, sources for a couple's marriage date might include marriage licenses, banns, bonds or contracts, church records, wedding invitations, newspaper announcements and more. The date you find in each source should be the same or similar.

A genealogy guide can tell you about the kinds of sources that exist for a given piece of information. Mills recommends *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Genealogy* by Christine Rose and Kay Germain Ingalls (Alpha) for beginners, and for more advanced genealogists, *The Researcher's Guide to American Genealogy* by Val D. Greenwood (Genealogical Publishing Co.).

When do you call it quits? "Professionals are usually limited by the financial resources of their clients, but a hobbyist never has to quit," Stevens says. "There's always another record to search. Often you're limited

only by the types of records you know about, so the trick is to keep learning, because the information you need is usually out there—somewhere."

Time, money and competing interests will likely put the brakes on your research at some point, observes Paula Stuart-Warren, a professional genealogist in Minnesota. "Maybe the only material that holds your answer is five states away and your budget doesn't allow you to get there or hire someone, so you've reached a natural resting point on this family for the time being."
Here's where organization is important: If you can keep track of where that potential source is and how to access it, you'll be able to easily pick up your research when life allows.

2. Complete and Accurate Citations

Documenting a journey means keeping track of where you've been and what you learned on the way. The second rule of genealogical GPS speaks to this: It requires keeping track of sources and citing them accurately. That means identifying where you found each piece of information and logging what you'd need to know to find that source again. Follow these tips to help you keep track of sources:

- **Download and/or print copies of genealogical data you find online.** Note the URL, date you accessed it, the website title and (if known) owner, and information author, along with the usual information about the source itself (such as the volume and page number of a digitized deed and the name of the county office that created it). You never know when web pages or their content will move or disappear.
- **Copy the title page and write on it any other pertinent publication information** (such as the volume and page numbers you copied) when making copies from a book. Note the condition of each source (missing pages, an incomplete index, blurry microfilm) and how you used it. Did you review images of records? Keyword-search a database?
- **Keep your files together:** photocopies, digitized images or online index results and your notes about them.
- **Consider using bibliographic software** such as Evernote or Zotero as your personal card catalog: a place to keep all your source citation information. When it's time to write up your research, you can easily dump reference information into footnotes without having to retype it.

How to Create a Genealogy Source Citation

Though no one's favorite past-time, citing sources is crucial for good genealogy research. This beginner's guide to source citation will get you started.

Why go to all this trouble? "We should cite our sources for a very selfish reason—to keep ourselves straight," says Mills. "If we don't know where information came from, how do we know whether it's trustworthy? Each time we cite a source, we need to think about what we are gathering and whether its information applies to our person. For every 'fact' we gather, we need to consider why we are accepting it as 'fact.' What is there about this source that makes it credible?"

Citing sources also assures others—not only your family's future genealogists, but also anyone with whom you share your tree—that your information is reliable. "You need to guide others to the same source you found, so they won't need to redo your research," Stevens says. "That means providing all the details needed for them to find the same record."

"If following a standard [citation] format is intimidating, remember that the format is flexible," Stevens adds—especially if you don't plan to publish your research in a genealogical journal. She outlines the necessary citation elements:

- **Who:** author who or agency that created the record
- **What:** title of the document
- **When:** date the record was created
- **Where:** place and publisher, volume, page number, etc.
- **How:** location where the record can be found

"You also may want to include notes as to why the record is useful or what you learned from it," Stevens says.

Even these experts have tricks to help them remember, for example, whether the "author" of the 1920 census record naming Aunt Sally is the enumerator, the US Census Bureau or Ancestry.com. Stuart-Warren pastes sample citations for various records—such as census returns, birth certificates, family letters and online indexes—into a word-processing program and modifies them as needed.

3. Thorough Analysis and Correlation

At some point in your journey, you'll take stock of where your research road has taken you, with all its detours, fender-benders and apparent dead ends. Again, genealogical GPS is there to guide you with its third and fourth principles on analyzing data and resolving contradicting family information.

"Compare and contrast the details [in records you find], and resolve the conflicts when something doesn't fit," says Mills. The process, she notes in *Evidence Explained* (Genealogical Publishing Co.), requires genealogists to continually pit their sources against each other, weighing their reliability and credibility. Family historians test theories and gradually build solid conclusions based on thorough research in high-quality sources that were created separately, or independent of each other.

How do you manage this process of analysis? "I love to do timelines," Stuart-Warren says. "A timeline gives you a great overview of what you're doing. How else will you know when they arrived and left, and when and where to look for records?" Her timelines include ancestors' life events and historical happenings plus events related to records she's using, such as the date of a courthouse fire.

Creating an abstract of each record is another analysis trick that helps you put important data in at-a-glance form. "Abstracting is simply gleaning out all the important details from a source," Stuart-Warren explains. "Let's say I was reading an obituary. If it names a church, the cemetery, people who attended and where they were from—all that is important." You could put your abstracted data on index cards, in list form, or in your genealogy software, depending on how you like to organize and review your research material.

Stuart-Warren types up hard-to-read documents. The resulting "typescript" is a word-for-word transcript of all the data (as opposed to an abstract, which pulls out just the highlights). "Typescripts are easier to read," she says. "You'll get the information more ingrained in your mind."

4. Resolution of Conflicting Evidence

Finding conflicting information, such as two marriage dates for a couple, can throw a pothole into your genealogical travels. How do you know which (if any) date is right? "I look at each piece of evidence again," Stevens says. "I weigh it like this: An original source is usually stronger than one that was derived from another source. Information recorded at or near the time of the event is usually stronger than information recorded sometime afterward. Direct evidence, which directly states a fact, usually carries more weight than indirect evidence, which only implies a fact."

Unfortunately, if conflicts pop up, your research may require a U-turn. You may discover you've traced a same-named couple not actually related to you, or the evidence is inconclusive. "If I'm still unsure of the answer after weighing the evidence," Stephens says, "I try to find more records to help resolve the conflict."

5. Soundly Written Conclusion

You'll eventually want to pause in your research journey and prepare the proverbial slide show—in this case, a report of your family tree findings. The final genealogical GPS coordinate calls for a well-reasoned, detailed, documented writeup.

Find a realistic way to share what you've discovered so far—you may never have the time to write the 700-page family history opus of your dreams. "Get [your research] into print or online," encourages Stuart-Warren. "That doesn't mean you can't continue researching. But lay the groundwork: Get something done. You need to be a good archivist of what you already have."

How to Write a Genealogy Research Report

Writing a research report about your ancestor will take your genealogy search to the next level. We'll show you how to compose one in six simple steps.

Stevens starts writing as she's researching. "Writing helps you organize your thoughts about the information you have. It helps to decide what you know and what you still need to know. It helps you think of what the next step might be and what records you might use."

Many family historians want to write a simple narrative for their families, one without documentation. They worry that mentioning sources and conflicting evidence will confuse or (worse) bore non-genealogists.

Why not do it both ways? "Each style has a different readership, a different purpose," Mills points out. "If you're telling the story about your family moving out to Pottawattamie County, Iowa, and building a sod house, tell it one way for your family, but send the local society's magazine something that presents the evidence. Or on your website, present the story on one page, and on another page, put your reasoning."

Other authors put research notes and/or source lists at the end of the narrative instead of within the text or at the bottom the page, insert images of original documents as their sources, and weave evidence into the story without belaboring every detail of how they arrived at their conclusions.

But even if you're "just" writing for your family, don't cop out on doing it right. Make sure your research is thorough and your reasoning and source information are available to those who ask about it. "Our families deserve an accurate family history," Mills says. And your attention to the evidence will increase your family's confidence in your findings and lay groundwork for future researchers.

The Benefits of GPS

Obeying the rules of the road gets you to your destination without problems such as accidents and speeding tickets. Likewise, genealogical GPS helps smooth your research travels. “The technological GPS lets us know exactly where we stand. So does the genealogical GPS,” Mills says. “As genealogists, if any of our GPS coordinates are off the mark, we’re likely not to be where we think we are.” A mistake early in the journey—veering a few degrees off our mark—will be magnified the further you go in the wrong direction.

Using genealogical GPS rewards, you with confidence in your research findings along the way, as well as in the family story you’ve put together once you reach your destination. “When you’ve finished [your ancestors’] stories, you’ve created something that will last for generations—something that will be saved and cherished,” Stevens says.

Toolkit Research and Analysis

- The Board for Certification of Genealogist: Ethics and Standards
- *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Genealogy* by Christine Rose and Kay Germain Ingalls (Alpha)
- *Genealogical Proof Standard*, 3rd edition by Christine Rose (CR Publications)
- *Genealogy Standards*, 2nd edition by the Board for Certification of Genealogists (self-published)
- *The Researcher’s Guide to American Genealogy* by Val D. Greenwood (Genealogical Publishing Co.)

Source Citation

- *Evidence! Citation and Analysis for the Family Historian* by Elizabeth Shown Mills (Genealogical Publishing Co.)
- QuickSheets: Citing Online Historical Resources by Elizabeth Shown Mills (Genealogical Publishing Co.)

Writing

- *You Can Write Your Family History* by Sharon DeBartolo Carmack (Genealogical Publishing Co.)

THE UNSOLVED 19TH-CENTURY MYSTERY IN THE PARKING LOT

When George Washington Flint was buried in 1873, I doubt anyone suspected that in little over a century, his final resting spot would one day be the parking lot of a Dunkin' Donuts.

Historic gravestones are a staple of New England, as is the popular chain of coffee-and-donut shops known today simply as Dunkin'. This location on Route 1 in Peabody, Massachusetts is a rare example of the two coming together. The solitary gravestone is located next to an abandoned dumpster in the grass just beyond the asphalt, and bears the following inscription: "G. W. Flint Co. C. 17th Mass Inf."

I am by no means the first person to discover this grave. In fact, a wonderful article was written in 2012 entitled Tombstones and Donuts On Old Route 1 by Eric Schultz. Schultz was able to track down a headstone application for George W Flint and found some information about George's family and background. He also discovered that George died in 1873, when he was in his mid-20s.

Using this information as a starting point, I wanted to learn more about the man buried in the lonely grave in the parking lot. George was born in South Danvers, Massachusetts (now called Peabody) and enlisted in the 17th Massachusetts Infantry in 1863. He was 18 years old, stood 5 feet and 8 inches tall, and was said to have black eyes, dark brown hair, and a dark complexion. His father, Warren Flint, gave George permission to enlist and signed the back of his enlistment papers. However, George would soon contract an illness and spend the majority of his service in the hospital. After his discharge, he worked as a shoemaker in the town of Natick.

The mystery began in March of 1873, when George borrowed $19 for the purpose of going to Boston to collect his pension money from his military service. What happened in the next few hours is very unclear. We know that he boarded the 5:39 evening train from Boston to Albany, and soon began to argue with the train conductor, a man named Jerome Hastings. Hastings claimed that George was fighting drunk and was quarreling with some of the other passengers. Other witnesses claimed that he was brandishing a pistol.

Hastings decided to “get him off at Newton and find a constable.” It seems that after the train stopped in Newton, Hastings threw George from the train and lost sight of him.

Crucially, another witness told the Boston Globe: “The man looked and acted as one who had been drugged and no ordinary liquor could get a man in such a condition.” This witness also notes that when he was removed from the train in Newton, he “saw the man get off the train and run up the tracks.”

What happened between his exit from the train around 6:30 p.m. and 1 a.m. is a mystery. His remains were discovered by Josiah Stickney at the banks of the Charles River in Watertown. Found on his person were a Smith and Wesson pistol and his Civil War service papers. There was an inquest into his death, and the city corner ruled that he died of suffocation and exposure to the elements. Notably, there was a large injury to his head as well, but the coroner did not think it had contributed to his death.

People who knew George told the newspapers that he was not a heavy drinker, and that his habits were good. His employer at the shoemaking factory claimed that he had only suspected George of being drunk once in all of his years of knowing him.

George’s family buried him near their family home in Peabody. Days turned to months, and months turned to years. U.S. Route 1 was built, car travel became common, and a Dunkin Donuts sprung up by George’s forgotten grave. Eventually the Dunkin Donuts closed, and the site laid abandoned.

I decided to pay a visit to George’s burial place and was happy to discover that the site is no longer abandoned. It is now the home of a barbecue restaurant called The Big Pig.

While walking the parking lot looking for George’s grave, I was approached by a puzzled but friendly employee who asked what I was looking for. When I explained, he said cheerfully, “You are looking for George!” as we approached the gravesite. He said that he often thinks about the grave, and that he and other staff members keep the marker clean and often say hi to George.

While the death of George Flint remains a mystery, his memory is being kept alive in Peabody, Massachusetts.

(From The Weekly Genealogist newsletter)

WEBSITES OF POSSIBLE INTEREST

Database Revolutionizes Virtual Access For Civil War Buffs

Casper native Steven Dacus has done a lot of cool things — cruised through Casper streets with lights and siren as a firefighter, led horse-mounted cavalry at Gettysburg, and this summer helped launch a new website for Civil War historians that saves them a lot of time and money.

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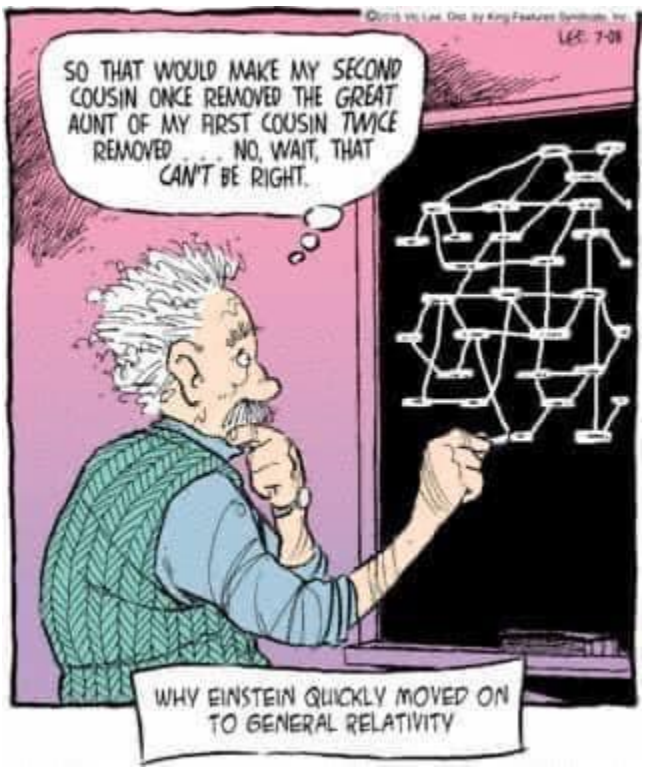
Dacus is one of the driving forces behind the new website ResearchArsenal.com. The website allows historians — amateur and professional — to dig into the nitty gritty of Civil War regiments, weapons and uniforms, or just to see how that great-great-great uncle lived on the battlefields from 1861-1865.

"The whole premise is to have a one-stop spot for researching mid-19th century history," Dacus said. "We have been working on it for about five years. We just made it public on June 2, and the vast majority of what we have is from private collections. We have 30,000 pages of letters that people can keyword search."

There are also 10,000 photographs that can be keyword searched: for weapons, uniform, place or even hairstyle.

You can read more in an article by Dale Killingbeck published in the http://cowboystatedaily.com/ at https://cowboystatedaily.com/2023/12/10/casper-based-database-revolutionizes-virtual-access-for-civil-war-buffs/.

HUMOR



(stolen off Facebook – it's TOO good not to use!)

PARTING THOUGHT

There is nothing to be learned from the second kick of a mule. - Mark Twain

If you have any items of interest that you would like to submit for future publication, please contact Richard Ellington at mailto:richard_ellington@unc.edu or 919.932.0516 (voice/text)