D-OGS Newsletter – April 2026

News & Articles of Interest to Durham-Orange genealogists

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2026 dues – $20
President – David McCorkle

***** D-OGS will not have a regular meeting in April, but will instead have a "field trip" to the Orange County Historical Museum in Hillsborough NC *****

Presentation Topic

The Orange County Historical Museum in historic Hillsborough NC is free to visit and contains exhibits and artifacts related to Orange County history. Instead of a regular meeting in April, D-OGS will have a "field trip" to the museum on **Monday, April 13 starting at 1PM**. We will hear an introduction to the museum from Exhibits and Programs Coordinator **Courtney Smith** who will also talk about the various exhibits and items of interest. All in person attendees will simply meet at the museum at 1pm. The museum closes at 4pm, so people can take their time looking at the exhibits, answering questions, etc.

The museum is at **201 N Churton St, Hillsborough, NC 27278**. You can find more information at https://www.orangehistorync.org/ . We will livestream the introduction and will attempt to stream some of the exhibits for those who are unable to attend in person.

Speaker Biography

Courtney Smith began her professional career teaching US Government and World Geography in the Richmond, VA metro area. She then created and managed a specialty toy store in Lewisburg, WV. In Lewisburg, she served on numerous nonprofit boards and assisted with many community programs and initiatives. This service led to her becoming the Executive Director of the Greenbrier Valley Community Foundation, an organization dedicated to ensuring that every local nonprofit had the financial and educational resources they needed.

After returning to school for a Master's in Public History, she moved to Hillsborough in February 2020 and became the Exhibits and Programs Coordinator for the Orange County Historical Museum.

Smith is also a writer of historical fiction. Nine of her plays have been produced and her three novels all received excellent reviews by Kirkus Reviews.

Recording

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

Online Access

Online access will be available to D-OGS members. 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.

Online information will be emailed to members the day before the program.

FAMILYSEARCH AND THE OFFICE OF CULTURAL EDUCATION COLLABORATE TO EXPAND ACCESS TO GENEALOGY RECORDS

Documents from the New York State Library and New York State Archives to Be Made Available for Free

The New York State Library and New York State Archives are working with global nonprofit genealogy organization FamilySearch International in an exciting effort to expand access to some of the state's most important ancestry records and historical collections, the New York State Education Department's Office of Cultural Education announced today. Through this collaborative effort, thousands of records will be made available online in digital format for the first time, providing researchers from anywhere in the world with greater access to the documents.

Since January 2026, Mark and Lynne Hamp, a retired couple from Utah, have been scanning books from the New York State Library's collection for digital access on FamilySearch.org, the website of the largest genealogy organization in the world. Important collections the Hamps have scanned so far include family histories, with plans to include local histories and genealogy periodicals, such as society and family association journals. As FamilySearch volunteers, the Hamps will remain in Albany, New York, until the end of the year.

New York State Librarian Lauren Moore said, "We could not be more excited to welcome Mark and Lynne. Digitizing our physical collections has always been a priority, and this collaboration advances our mission to responsibly preserve and maintain these invaluable works. While we always look forward to assisting genealogists in person at the library, providing increased online access to important reference books opens the door to new research opportunities for those unable to travel to the Capital Region."

Viviane Davis, collections manager at the FamilySearch Library said, "The books we are scanning at the New York State Library are especially significant because they preserve materials that are both rare and deeply rooted in the local communities. The collection includes many unique local family histories, as well as county and local histories, many of which are not widely available elsewhere, and which provide invaluable insight into regional heritage, migration patterns, and community development. By digitizing these works, we are not only safeguarding fragile, often one-of-a-kind resources but also making them more accessible to researchers, genealogists, and the public. These books will be added to FamilySearch's digital collection online, ensuring that these important historical narratives remain available for generations to come."

Lynne Hamp said, "I have always felt a connection with American history, so being in New York is a delight. I love working with these old, historic books and have developed an appreciation for strangers who recorded their family histories because they understoodthe importance of preserving this information for future generations. Mark and I are truly blessed to do this work."

Meanwhile, through a separate project, nearly a quarter of a million pages of previously microfilmed records in the collection of the New York State Archives have been made available online for the first time, thanks to additional digitization work. These documents include colonial deeds and wills, land grants to Revolutionary War veterans, and convictions of British loyalists.

New York State Archivist Brian Keough said, “These newly available online documents increase the amount of free online resources available to educators, teachers, scholars, and students across New York State and beyond, connecting them to valuable primary sources. It is very exciting to know that these thousands of pages of online resources will also assist the genealogy and family history community.”

FamilySearch sees an average of almost 25 million website visits each month. Users with a free sign-in account have access to 5.75 billion digital images, almost 17 billion searchable names, and more than 651,000 digital books.

About the New York State Library

The New York State Library, established in 1818, is the largest state library system in the nation and one of the largest research libraries in North America. It oversees a vast network of more than 7,000 libraries statewide. Collections are made available onsite and through a robust interlibrary loan program. The library’s mission is advanced through several key divisions, including the Research Library, which houses a collection of over 20 million items, the Talking Book and Braille Library, and the Division of Library Development. The library preserves and maintains invaluable historical collections and works and serves as a regional depository for federal publications. Additionally, the State Library is the official repository of New York State government publications, ensuring their enduring preservation and accessibility for future generations.

For more information, please visit www.nysl.nysed.gov.

About the New York State Archives

Established in 1971, the New York State Archives has amassed one of the most extensive and historically significant state archive collections in the nation. The archives manages, preserves, and provides open access to over 250 million colonial and New York State records dating back to the 1630s. In addition, the archives provides records and archival management services to nearly 4,500 counties, cities, towns, villages, school districts, and other local governments across New York State. The archives offers technical assistance, training, and grants to nongovernment repositories through the Documentary Heritage Program and Documentary Heritage and Preservation Services for New York (DHPSNY). Researchers can access public records through the archives’s online Digital Collections or by appointment on the 11th floor of the Cultural Education Center. For more information, please visit www.archives.nysed.gov.

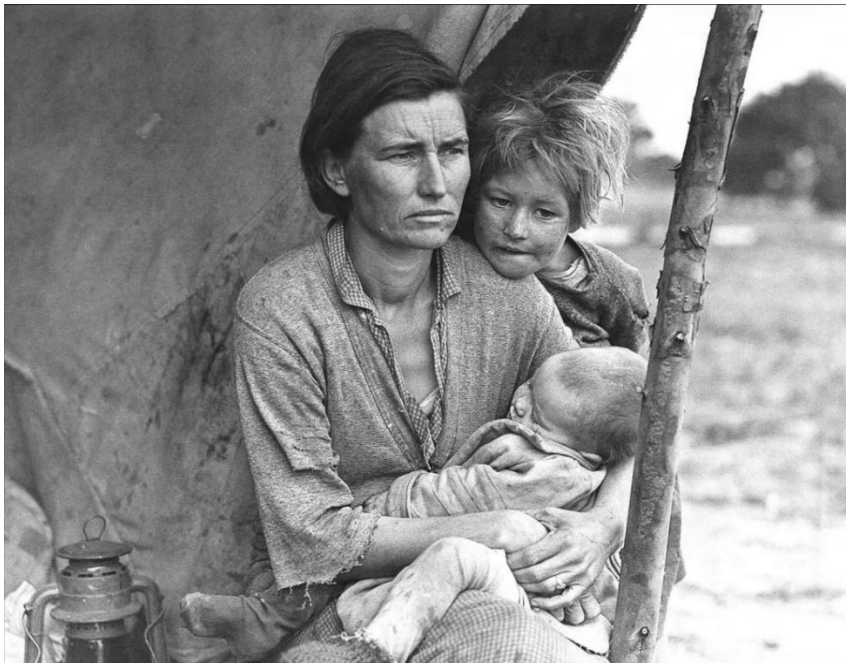
About FamilySearch

FamilySearch International is the largest genealogy organization in the world. We are a nonprofit, volunteer-driven organization sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Millions of people use our records, resources, and services to learn more about their family history. To help in this great pursuit, FamilySearch and its predecessors have been actively gathering, preserving, and sharing genealogical records worldwide for over 125 years. People access our services and resources free online at FamilySearch.org or through over 6,500 FamilySearch centers and affiliates in 129 countries, including the main FamilySearch Library in Salt Lake City, Utah.

TWO WOMEN ON OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE LENS

In March 1936, on a rain-soaked roadside in Nipomo, California, two lives collided for just 10 minutes. One woman held a camera; the other held the weight of seven hungry children. Their lives were about to become inseparably connected.

Dorothea Lange, 41, was a photographer for the Farm Security Administration, tasked with documenting the "human face" of the dust bowl and great depression to justify new deal legislation. Florence Owens Thompson, 32, a woman of Cherokee descent from Oklahoma, was stranded at a pea-picking camp. Her vehicle had broken down near the entrance to the farm, and Thompson had just sold the tires to buy food. The family had been living off frozen vegetables gathered in the surrounding fields, supplemented by birds the children killed.



Lange later recalled the encounter as a moment of shared purpose. "She seemed to know that my pictures might help her, and so she helped me. There was a sort of equality about it," said Lange. She snapped six photographs of Thompson and her children. The photos were published widely and put a face on the human suffering of migrant workers. The impact was immediate, and the government quickly sent 20,000 pounds of food to help.

By the time the food arrived, Thompson and her family had already moved on. The mother who stirred the nation's conscience didn't receive a single bit of the relief she helped inspire.

''I went up to Mr. Hannah and said, 'There's my grandmother,' '' said Brady, 47, who lives in Turlock, Calif.

''That's nice, Sheryl,'' Mr. Hannah replied. ''Now go sit down.''

''I said, 'No kidding, Mr. Hannah. That is my grandmother,' '' Brady said. ''And he said, 'You're serious.' ''

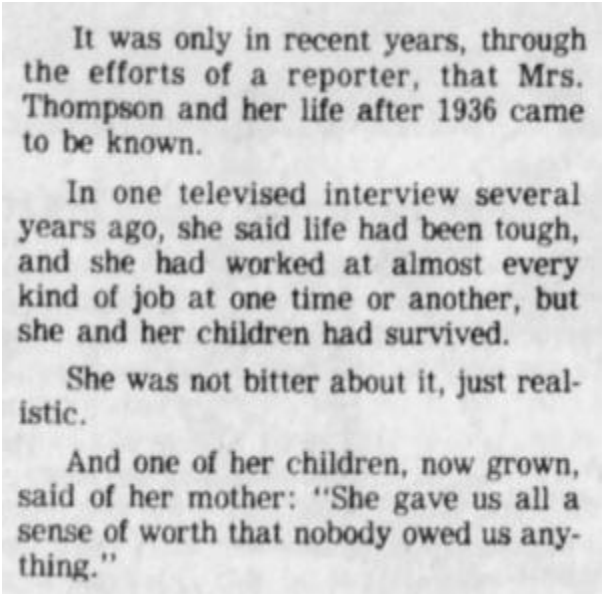
The photo was Dorothea Lange's ''Migrant Mother,'' taken in 1936 at a pea pickers' labor camp in San Luis Obispo County, Calif., and long considered the most representative and pertinent image of the Dust Bowl era.

THE POST-STANDARD: SEPTEMBER 29, 2008

For over 40 years, Thompson's identity remained a mystery. In a strange twist of fate, her own granddaughter recognized her in a junior high school textbook in 1974, but when she told her teacher, she was dismissed and sent back to her seat.

It wasn't until 1978 that Thompson gave an interview to the Modesto Bee confirming that she was the woman in the photo. Her recollection of the day the photographs were taken differed from Lange's. "She didn't ask my name," Thompson said. "She said she wouldn't sell the pictures. She said she'd send me a copy. She never did."

Lange was said to have complained that the attention 'migrant mother' received overshadowed her other work. She died of cancer in 1965 without ever reuniting with Thompson. Thompson, on the other hand, felt angry and exploited that her photo was displayed worldwide, yet she never received any compensation.



It was only in recent years, through the efforts of a reporter, that Mrs. Thompson and her life after 1936 came to be known.

In one televised interview several years ago, she said life had been tough, and she had worked at almost every kind of job at one time or another, but she and her children had survived.

She was not bitter about it, just realistic.

And one of her children, now grown, said of her mother: "She gave us all a sense of worth that nobody owed us anything."

Akron Beacon-Journal: September 22, 1983

With her true identity now publicly revealed, the world was eager to hear how Thompson's life had evolved. She shared that things had been tough, and she had worked at almost every kind of job at one time or another, but she and her children had survived. Her children reported, "she gave us all a sense of worth that nobody owed us anything."

Despite some bitterness, Thompson's life ended with a wave of unexpected gratitude. When she needed additional end-of-life care but couldn't afford it, people from around the country donated more than $15,000 to help cover costs. Those donations also paid for her funeral when she died near Santa Cruz in 1983.

MONTHLY BACKUP REMINDER

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

FAMILYSEARCH CELEBRATES NATIONAL DNA MONTH WITH FREE WEBINARS

Free FamilySearch Webinars: April 2026

SALT LAKE CITY, UT (2 April 2026)—FamilySearch International celebrates National DNA Month with free educational webinars designed to help people learn how to use DNA testing to enhance their family history research. The webinars will be offered live and on demand and are suitable for all levels of family history discovery experience.

"DNA is valuable because it can help you identify relatives you're connected to," said Debbie Gurtler, assistant director of the FamilySearch Library. "To get meaningful results, it helps to combine your DNA matches with solid genealogical research."

The webinar series progresses from foundational DNA concepts to applying test results and online tools in family history research.

FamilySearch Webinars April 2026 Schedule:

Date	Webinar | Event and Link	Presenters
Watch Now on Demand	DNA and Family History: The Basics	Debbie Gurtler

Thursday, 9 April 2026	I've Taken a DNA Test, Now What Do I Do?	Geoffrey Fröberg Morris
Thursday, 16 April 2026	Identifying Ancestors Through DNA	Suzanne Trotter-Martin
Thursday, 23 April 2026	Online DNA Tools to Solve Family History Mysteries	Tanner Blair Tolman

FAMILYSEARCH WEBINARS ON DEMAND

Recent webinars, such as "Best of RootsTech 2026" and "Norwegian Research 101," are available on demand here.

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More Resources

- Explore 22 billion historical records and images at FamilySearch.org.
- Search historical record images using the powerful Explore Historical Images feature.
- Find more books, records, and images in the FamilySearch Catalog.
- Learn discovery tips in the FamilySearch Research Wiki.
- Choose from over 3,000 free inspirational and informational on-demand sessions from RootsTech.

Social Media

Follow FamilySearch social on Facebook | Instagram | YouTube | X (formerly Twitter)

ÖTZI THE ICEMAN'S DNA REVEALS A LIVING RELATIVE 5,000 YEARS LATER

By: Courtney Eberhard

(Reconstruction of Ötzi the Iceman (left) alongside a modern individual whose maternal DNA traces to the same rare lineage)

For years, scientists thought Ötzi the Iceman's maternal line had vanished. New genetic findings reveal it still survives today. For decades, Ötzi the Iceman has felt both astonishingly close and impossibly distant.

Discovered in 1991, frozen in a glacier high in the Ötztal Alps along the border of Italy and Austria, Ötzi is Europe's oldest known naturally mummified human. At more than 5,000 years old, his body preserved a rare snapshot of prehistoric life. His clothing, tools, health, diet, ancestry, and even his tattoos have been studied in extraordinary detail. Those 61 tattoos are the oldest known in the world.

Yet for all we have learned about Ötzi, one part of his story seemed closed. His maternal line.

In 2008, genetic researchers studying Ötzi's mitochondrial DNA concluded that his direct maternal lineage was extinct. No living person appeared to share the same genetic signature. The conclusion was blunt and widely cited: it was highly unlikely that Ötzi had any living maternal relatives.

That assumption has now been overturned.

Through modern genetic genealogy, FamilyTreeDNA researchers have identified a living man whose maternal DNA traces back to the same ancient lineage as Ötzi, reconnecting a family line believed lost for millennia.

How a Modern DNA Test Connected to Ötzi the Iceman

The discovery began quietly, with a DNA test.

Heddi Abbad, a French citizen with maternal roots in northeastern Algeria, took a mitochondrial DNA test to learn more about his ancestry. Like many people who test, he hoped for context and clarity about where his family came from. He did not expect to hear from a research team.

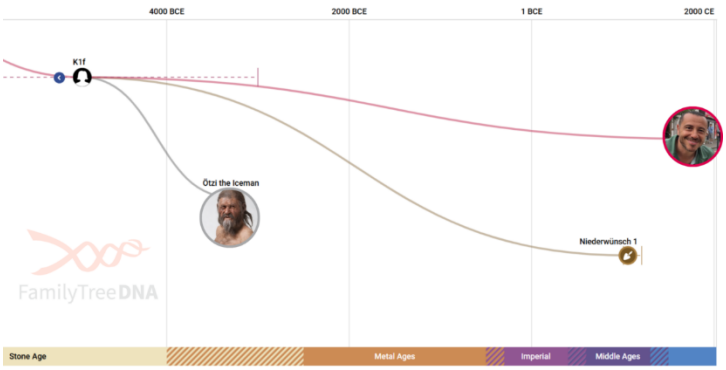
"At first, I thought it was a joke," Heddi said. "But when they explained the connection, I realized this was something extraordinary."

Heddi's mitochondrial DNA matched the same rare maternal lineage once thought to exist only in Ötzi.

What Did Ötzi the Iceman's DNA Reveal?

Mitochondrial DNA, often called mtDNA, is passed from mother to child, generation after generation, with only occasional mutations over long stretches of time. Because of this, mtDNA provides a powerful record of direct maternal ancestry, stretching deep into the past.

Ötzi belonged to mitochondrial haplogroup K1, but with two unique mutations that made his lineage distinct. That lineage was first labeled K1ö in reference to Ötzi and later standardized as K1f. For years, no one else was known to share it.
Heddi does.



Phylogenetic timeline illustrating Ötzi the Iceman's mtDNA haplogroup K1f and its continuity into a modern maternal lineage.

His mitochondrial DNA carries both of Ötzi's defining mutations, along with three additional mutations that developed along his maternal line over the last several thousand years. This shows that Heddi and Ötzi shared a common maternal ancestor who lived roughly 7,000 years ago.

This does not mean that Ötzi was Heddi's direct ancestor. Only women pass down mitochondrial DNA, so the connection points instead to a shared ancient grandmother whose maternal line quietly endured across thousands of years.

"The fact that Ötzi has no mutations that Heddi does not have tells us their maternal ancestors were relatively close in time," explained Dr. Miguel Vilar, Genetic Anthropologist at FamilyTreeDNA. "This was not a lineage that split tens of thousands of years earlier."

Ancient DNA Evidence of Neolithic Migration Across the Mediterranean

Map illustrating the geographic continuity of Ötzi the Iceman's rare maternal lineage from the Alps to North Africa. The woman shown represents Heddi's mother, whose Berber ancestry connects to this surviving mtDNA line.

Heddi's maternal grandmother belonged to the Shawiya Berber community of northeastern Algeria. Berber populations represent a deep and complex blend of ancient North African ancestry and ancestry from early Neolithic farmers who spread from the Near East into Europe and North Africa thousands of years ago.

This helps explain how a maternal lineage associated with a man found in the Alps could survive in North Africa.

"This is likely a second Neolithic connection between Italy and North Africa that we have identified," said Dr. Vilar. "Similar to what we previously observed with Y chromosome haplogroup R-V88, these trans-Mediterranean links suggest early maritime movement across the region."

In other words, prehistoric people were not isolated. They moved, migrated, and connected across regions long before written history recorded their journeys.

How Was Ötzi the Iceman's DNA Reanalyzed in a Modern Study?

The connection between Heddi and Ötzi was uncovered during the development of FamilyTreeDNA's mtDNA Tree of Humankind, a comprehensive maternal family tree built from the mitochondrial DNA of hundreds of thousands of testers worldwide.

Known scientifically as the Mitotree, it is the largest and most detailed mtDNA tree ever created and it continues to grow as more people test and new maternal branches are identified.

Visualization of the world's largest mtDNA haplotree, containing more than 54,000 branches used in the reanalysis of Ötzi the Iceman's maternal lineage.

In 2022, the tree contained 5,469 distinct maternal branches. Today, that number has grown to more than 54,000.

This growth matters.

This living tree allows individuals to see, in greater detail than ever before, where their maternal line fits within the mtDNA family tree and how they are connected to one another and to more than ten thousand ancient remains.

As researchers expanded the tree, Heddi's rare mitochondrial signature stood out.

Where Has Ötzi the Iceman's Maternal Lineage Been Found?

Further analysis revealed that this ancient maternal line did not exist only in Ötzi and Heddi. It has also been found in archaeological remains from Mesolithic hunter-gatherers associated with the Iron Gates region of present-day Serbia, as well as medieval sites in Hungary and Germany.

Timeline showing Ötzi the Iceman's mitochondrial haplogroup K1f within the FamilyTreeDNA mtDNA Haplotree, alongside ancient and modern samples that share related maternal lineages.

The lineage traveled widely in ancient times.

Yet today, it remains exceptionally rare. Heddi must go back roughly 20,000 years to find another living maternal relative.

This combination of ancient mobility and modern rarity helps explain why the lineage was once thought extinct and why it took a tree of this scale to rediscover it.

Why This Rare Maternal Lineage Was Once Thought Extinct

For years, Ötzi was described as a genetic outlier, a man whose maternal line ended with him. This discovery changes that narrative.

It also offers a broader reminder about ancestry and genetic genealogy. Lines do not disappear all at once. They narrow, scatter, and sometimes persist quietly in unexpected places.

"Discoveries like this remind us that human history is not static," said Dr. Vilar. "Every new genome added to the tree has the potential to change what we think we know."

More than 5,000 years after his death, Ötzi's story is still evolving. And for one family in North Africa and Europe, the ancient past has become personal again.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What was Ötzi the Iceman's mtDNA haplogroup?
Ötzi the Iceman belonged to mitochondrial haplogroup K1f, a rare maternal lineage within haplogroup K. Haplogroup K is a branch of the larger mtDNA haplogroup U and has been found in both ancient and modern European populations. However, the specific subclade K1f identified in Ötzi has remained extremely rare in modern genetic databases. His mtDNA haplogroup helps trace his maternal ancestry through the female line.

Does Ötzi the Iceman have living relatives?
Yes, genetic research indicates that Ötzi the Iceman's maternal lineage has living descendants today. While his specific mtDNA branch was once believed to be extinct, updated mitochondrial DNA analysis has identified a rare modern connection to the same maternal line. This discovery suggests that Ötzi's maternal

ancestry did not disappear but persisted at very low frequency over thousands of years. The connection was identified through comparative analysis of ancient and modern mtDNA data.

How was Ötzi's mitochondrial DNA studied?
Ötzi's mitochondrial DNA was extracted from preserved tissue samples and analyzed using ancient DNA sequencing techniques. Because ancient DNA is often fragmented and degraded, researchers use specialized methods to reconstruct the mitochondrial genome and compare it to modern reference databases. Updated phylogenetic analysis allows scientists to refine haplogroup placement as new mtDNA data becomes available. This reanalysis helped clarify Ötzi's position within haplogroup K1f.
Why was Ötzi's maternal lineage once thought extinct?
Ötzi's maternal lineage was once thought extinct because no matching mitochondrial DNA sequences had been identified in modern genetic databases. His specific subclade, K1f, appeared only in ancient remains and was not observed in contemporary populations. As mitochondrial DNA databases expanded and sequencing methods improved, rare modern matches were identified. This showed that the lineage had survived at very low levels rather than disappearing entirely.

OLD MAP COLLECTIONS TO USE IN YOUR GENEALOGY RESEARCH

Thankfully, several digital map collections are available online to help us better *see* that past. The following ten collections will enhance your research but never forget to also take advantage of maps available in your local area of research by visiting the online collections at local historical museums, state archives, libraries, and universities. You can even use Google Maps as a digital resource. Read this article to learn more.

1. David Rumsey Map Collection
You could almost stop right here. Why, you ask? Well, because almost every map you could imagine is within this awesome collection. David Rumsey, president of Cartography Associates, is the owner of a map collection exceeding 150,000 maps. Over 25 years ago, he built this site to offer public access to his collection. We owe a huge debt of gratitude for his incredible gift.
From the Explore page, you can search for endless maps by simply refining your search. Or you can see previewed maps by roaming around the Google Maps page.

2. Library of Congress Collections with Maps
Visit the Library of Congress to gain access to their full catalogue of digitized maps. For example, the Civil War Maps collection, with over two thousand maps, is the byproduct of the LOC's collection, plus that of the Library of Virginia and the Virginia Historical Society. It's quite comprehensive, to say the least. If you can't find what you need here to better visualize this conflict you probably haven't exhausted the collection yet.
Mapping the National Parks will offer you a glimpse at the beauty of America's wilderness. Be sure to open the first tourist maps of Yellowstone National Park, from 1883. Just amazing!
The Library of Congress also holds the famed Sanborn Maps, which allow genealogists to see individual homesites. Read this article to learn more about these valuable resources.
To get a bird's eye view of things, investigate the Panoramic Maps collection. My personal favorite is the Railroad Maps collection, from 1828 to 1900. This would be my first stop when researching family members employed by the railroad as builders or engineers.

3. Old Maps Online

The welcoming page of Old Maps Online will get your heart racing! It's difficult to decide whether to click *Find a Place* or *Browse the Old Maps*. Choose wisely, friends! Either one can be a time-gobbler.
Browse the Old Maps defaults to your current location, and shows you a list of maps across history, just waiting for you to view them. A link redirects you to the map's online location. If you choose *Find a Place*, a search bar allows you to type the location of your choosing. Perhaps the best news of all is that you can download the Old Maps mobile app for your phone or iPad, and carry this resource wherever you go.

4. Digital Public Library of America

The DPLA offers more than 40 million images, texts, videos and sounds, all from the U.S. – including 512,515 maps. Not too shabby. As you refine your searches listed items are displayed from their original source, which consist of separate institutions all across America.
Let this assist your research further by identifying sources you may not have thought of to use in your genealogical research. For example, the University of Kentucky holds a 1718 map of New Orleans. This becomes even more valuable when Kentucky's collection is identified as a potential source for additional records pertaining to the same place and time. View each resource not as an end result but instead as a new angle that may lead to even greater evidence.

5. Harvard Map Collection

Harvard boasts two beautiful online collections in addition to maps held within the library itself in Cambridge. Online visitors can browse almost 3,000 items, many of which are entire atlas books. Do keep in mind that this collection extends far beyond the Old Bay State of Massachusetts.

6. New York Public Library Map Division

It's impossible to describe the sheer volume of maps held on this site. You've got to see it for yourself. Definitely not limited to all things New York, you will find maps from every kingdom across the globe. To filter your search, type "map," and then the "place" (i.e. map: Georgia).

7. Old Maps

The ease of locating state maps is what makes Old Maps (different than Old Maps Online listed above) invaluable to the genealogist. Simply go to the website, scroll down the state list on the left side of the home page, and up pops a series of maps for quick view. Their latest series of maps added to the archives is *New York Town Maps*. They also have a collection of nautical maps that are sure to fascinate historians focused on the Atlantic seaboard.

8. Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center

This invaluable resource includes four fundamental digital collections. They have the American Revolutionary War-Era Maps, the Boston and New England Maps, the Maritime Charts and Atlases and the Urban Maps.
Curated by theme, these offer easy access to the originals located throughout the country. A hand-drawn Draught of Boston Harbor from the 16th century pops up immediately, and it will amaze you. Navigation through this website is quite seamless and enjoyable. Simply click *Browse the Collection* and you are on your way!

9. Historic Map Works

Two collections are offered by Historic Map Works. The Library Edition can be accessed at public libraries and universities. The subscription-based website includes over 1.5 million images. Start with Browse and take advantage of the improved interactive browser. Filter by continent, country, and state or province. Once

a place is identified, results are listed from oldest to present. The filter does not break it down to city or town but a search box is available to filter further. Once the map is opened, you can purchase the map or an image license.

10. Brunan Map Collection at the UCLA Library

If your research is focused on the west coast, specifically California, you may wish to visit the UCLA Library online. Libraries and college libraries are some of the best repositories of maps. Perhaps not all colleges have digitized their maps yet, but that should not diminish the importance these records may hold to solving your ancestor's mystery. Speaking of college libraries, we have to give a shout out to the University of Alabama and its Historical Maps collection. So many hyperlinked maps available with just a simple click.

Additional Collections

We simply couldn't leave you with only twelve maps resources, so we added a few more. As unique as they are, these are also powerful resources you may use over and over again in your research. The Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network is a must for anyone studying ancestors from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Within this amazing resource, for example, you can overlay a *Modern Street Label* map over the *1875 Philadelphia Atlas* to see how things looked to your ancestor. It's invaluable to any genealogist with family in Philly.

The World Digital Library will move your research from America to the world stage. Acting as a repository, this site will send you to the original source once you quickly locate a map of interest.

Some of us will wish we had ancestors from Chicago when we investigate Chicago in Maps. This repository offers a direct link to the original digitized map and is a Windy City gem. Of course, a story about maps would be remiss without addressing globes. If you like your maps in three-dimensions, check out the Virtual Globes Museum, just for the fun of it.

By Bridget M. Sunderlin, CG®. Bridget practices in Maryland. She is the owner of Be Rooted Genealogy, where she specializes in Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, Ireland, and Scotland research.

SAVING A SMALL CEMETERY

I have great-grandparents, James Cole and his wife Susan Weaver, who are buried in the Erwin Mills Cemetery (also known as Cedar Hills Cemetery). This place is a mess! It has changed hands at least twice and no one has attempted to keep it clean and accessible. There are several trees that measure more than 2 feet across. The best we can hope for is to keep the brush down so family members can get to their family's graves.

D-OGS member/distant cousin Amy Hessldahl has joined the project to clean up this tattered space. We have contacted Beautify Durham to help clean and advertise this project. We had a workday earlier this year, but it snowed like crazy, so we cancelled. We will get it done!

10 THINGS YOU SHOULD NEVER DO WITH AN OLD PHOTO + WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

By Patricia Hartley

For genealogists, the older a family photo, the better. Who doesn't love scouring old photographs for clues to an ancestor's lifestyle? Or maybe you just enjoy looking for similarities in the facial features of you and your

great-great grandmother. Whatever the reason, you want to be sure you keep your collection in the best possible condition for future generations to enjoy.

With that in mind, we've gathered our ten best tips of **what *not* to do with your old photographs** so they survive to be treasured by your family's next designated historian.

1. Decline Your Invitation to the Cropping Party

Remember a few decades ago when scrapbooking was really popular, and all of your friends held "cropping parties?" Participants would use all sorts of nifty tools to cut their family photos into various shapes and sizes, "cropping" out backgrounds or extraneous people to focus on one subject.

While this practice resulted in some stunning scrapbook pages, cropping original photos cuts away the context of the image. You may lose details that help you date the image or even other individuals you thought weren't important at the time but turn out to be great-aunts and uncles.

Imagine adding your family tree to a simple website and getting hundreds of new family history discoveries instantly.

MyHeritage is offering 2 free weeks of access to their extensive collection of 33 billion historical records, as well as their matching technology that **instantly connects you with new information about your ancestors**. Sign up using the link below to find out what you can uncover about your family.

Photos taken by instant cameras, particularly Polaroids, could be destroyed if cut. Polaroid images seal within their several layers chemicals that create the instant photo magic. When you cut into those layers, you break the seal and speed up deterioration of the photo.

Do This Instead

Rather than permanently alter an original, make a copy (or several copies) of your old family photos on high-quality photo paper so you can cut or crop with abandon. If you're putting your original photos into a scrapbook, choose archival materials and adhesive photo corners to secure the entire image to the page.

2. Don't Give Photos Their Day in the Sun

Not many things in life are made to withstand extended exposure to sunlight (thus, the invention of SPF 100 sunscreen). Your family photos are especially susceptible to sun damage, specifically from the ultraviolet (UV) radiation within the sun's rays.

UV radiation from sunlight **or fluorescent bulbs** can fade, discolor, or even destroy not only photos, but also papers, books, fabrics, and collectibles by breaking down the chemical bonds in the dyes used in these items. The longer they are exposed, the worse the damage.

Do This Instead

If you insist on displaying an original photo instead of a quality copy in your sunny living room rather than in a room that doesn't receive direct sunlight, replace the glass in your frames with UV-filtering acrylic sheets. These sheets can reduce harmful UV rays by up to 98%.

3. Know When to Hold 'em, and When NOT to Fold 'em

One of the reasons there are so many photo restoration companies in existence today is because so many old photos have been badly damaged from folding, rolling, or bending. Photographs are quite fragile — even the 19th century images like carte-de-vistes or cabinet cards, which were mounted on layered cardboard.

Folding or bending a vintage photograph creates creases, cracks, tears, or breaks that distort the image or leave the photo in pieces. A rolled-up photo will retain its curved position long after it's unrolled, also. While there are remedies to flatten and digitally repair these damages, it's best to avoid these situations altogether.

Do This Instead

Always store your photos in containers or albums that are large enough for the photos to lie flat without folding or bending. If you must mail an original photo, place it between two sheets of sturdy cardboard and clearly label the envelope with "Do Not Bend" instructions.

4. To Label, or Not to Label

It's every genealogist's dream to know all the details about old family photos: whose faces are captured and why, when and where the photo was taken, and what is the significance of the other elements of the photo, like clothing, automobiles, houses, or pets. We wish every photo we inherit came with at least a paragraph of descriptive text. Alas, this rarely happens.

To keep future generations from suffering the same fate, some of us have tried to record information conveniently on the backs of our old photos — and instantly regretted our decision. I personally cringe when I see photos from my childhood inscribed on the back in my blocky, heavy handwriting … in ball-point ink.

Ball-point pens are one of the worst ways to label photographs. The pressure you apply when writing leaves impression marks on the front of photos, and the ink itself can easily smear or transfer to other images. Likewise, non-archival markers and felt-tip or paint pens can also bleed through. Plus, permanent inks can't be erased, so if you've mislabeled an image, it's impossible to erase.

Temporary labels like "sticky notes" may seem like a good solution, but any adhesive can leave residue or discoloration on a delicate surface. Even the Smithsonian has a "no-Post-It-note" policy!

Do This Instead

If you must write directly on the back of a vintage photo, use an archival pen that won't bleed or feature, or a soft-lead pencil, and use a light touch, writing near the edges of the photo rather than in the middle. Your best bet is to envelope the photo in an archival sleeve, then label the sleeve, not the photo, with an archival pen or a label.

5. Don't Make a Photo Even More UnaPEELing

Yes, the title to this section is somewhat of a stretch, but if you've ever come across an old magnetic photo album or a glass-front frame with old family photos firmly stuck inside, you know what I mean. While your first instinct may be to impatiently rip out or slowly peel off the photograph from the adhesive album page or glass pane, you can actually cause even more damage — the irreparable kind — by doing so.

It's not magnets that cause photos to stick to the pages of magnetic album pages. Rather, it's the acidic chemicals in the cardboard page that grip the photo stuck to it. These glue-like chemicals combined with the clear plastic overlay on the album page eventually create a seemingly indestructible bond that also turns the images contained within its grasp a sickly 1970s yellow.

Photos usually stick to glass because of humidity. When moisture comes between a photo and the glass of a picture frame, the photo's emulsion coating reacts with the water and becomes sticky. Eventually it becomes one with the glass.

Do This Instead

There are several remedies on the internet for getting pictures unstuck, but you should be wary of anything involving microwaves or hair dryers. Instead, try carefully and slowly sawing a piece of dental floss back and forth between a photo and an album page. Sadly, there's no easy DIY way to separate a photo from glass. Leave that task to a professional photo restoration firm, or have the image scanned. Find out about scanning and enhancing your photos here.

6. What's Mine is Yours … Except for My Family Photos

Genealogists love to share. It's a highly collaborative hobby. That's why most of us wouldn't hesitate to provide others with information, documents, and even photos we've collected during our research. Sharing is a wonderful thing. But sharing your original vintage family photos is not.

Think twice before you tuck your priceless original images into a mailing envelope or hand them over to a cousin who promises to scan them and return them as soon as possible. The risk of losing these photographs forever greatly outweighs the reward.

Do This Instead

Rather than part with your old family photos, offer to scan them yourself and share digital images or high-quality reprints instead.

7. It's Getting Hot in Here, So Move Those Old Photos

We've already discussed the harm sunlight can do to your vintage photos. Similarly, excessive heat and water or humidity can not only damage but completely destroy them.

High temperatures can literally melt your photos, separating the emulsion which creates the image from its paper backing. When conditions turn cold, the temperature change can cause cracks or make photos so brittle they break when touched. Humidity can make photos stick together or allow mold or mildew to grow. For all of these reasons, uninsulated basements, attics, garages, and storage facilities are the worst places to keep your precious family photos.

Do This Instead

The National Archives recommends storing photos at room temperature (below 75 degrees Fahrenheit) and keeping relative humidity between 15% and 65%. They should also be kept away from sources of leaks or floods such as pipes and windows.

8. Don't Eat My Great-Aunt!

Another storage no-no has nothing to do with weather. However, the two go hand-in-hand, because in the right (or, more accurately, *wrong*) conditions, your old family photos become a tasty meal for a variety of insects.

Book lice, which are so tiny you can barely see them, love to eat any kind of paper, including photos, in humid conditions. Silverfish also thrive in humidity and, like book lice, will even wheedle their way into frames to get to your photos. Cockroaches aren't as picky; they'll eat anything, including photos or other types of paper products, in any condition. They'll also chew through plastic.

Do This Instead

Control the humidity within your home and where you store your photos by keeping windows closed and using dehumidifiers when necessary, and take advantage of pest control services when you see any evidence of creepy-crawlers. To find out more about storing old photos and other memorabilia properly, look here.

9. Don't Get Too Attached

A cute decor fad involves clipping a line of snapshots to a string or cord and draping it adorably across the wall like a pennant. Unfortunately, attaching photos to anything, or bundling photos together, can cause irreparable damage. Paperclips and binder clips rust and create permanent indentations. Glues, tapes, and other adhesives can bind to photos, and leave icky residue behind. And rubber bands can melt, destroying your vintage images.

Do This Instead

Always keep images separated from one another using archival sleeves. If you want to display your photos in this way (especially on a cute little clothesline), use a scanned copy rather than your originals. To keep several photos grouped together, use an archival-quality envelope or photo box.

10. Keep Your Hands to Yourself

You're probably already extra-careful when you handle your family's vintage photos, being acutely aware of their fragility. However, did you know the natural oils from your hands or residue from soaps, lotions, or foods can do just as much damage as ripping or cracking an old photograph? You may not see them immediately, but fingerprints left on images can become visible over time.

Do This Instead

Your best bet when handling your vintage family photos is to wear lightweight cotton gloves as the archivists do. If this isn't an option, though, limit your contact with your photos to the outer edges, and be sure you've thoroughly washed your hands first.

If there's one theme running through each of these "don't's" it's to keep your original old photos in safe storage and use quality scanned copies for projects, sharing, and display. We've discovered a number of excellent tools (even an amazing free one) that are easy to use and produce great results. Remember, your original vintage family photographs are decades or centuries old and irreplaceable, so you'll want to do everything you can to ensure they're around for your own descendants years from now.

- Also read: The Simple Dos and Don'ts for Preserving Old Family Photos at Home
- To discover how to scan with an app, read this article

Discover Even More About Old Photos Here

*By **Patricia Hartley.** For nearly 30 years **Patricia** has researched and written about family history. She has a B.S. in Professional Writing and English and an M.A. in English from the University of North Alabama and a M.A. in Public Relations/Mass Communications from Kent State University.*

LOCAL EVENTS OF POSSIBLE INTEREST

Join the Alliance for Historic Hillsborough as we invite you to immerse yourself in the captivating history of the American Revolution through a day of FREE, family-friendly events! Featuring reenactors, dancers, captivating historic tours, interactive activities, and collaborative events throughout the town, this is a day of enriching experiences for all to enjoy.

>>> REGISTRATION is recommended, not required <<<

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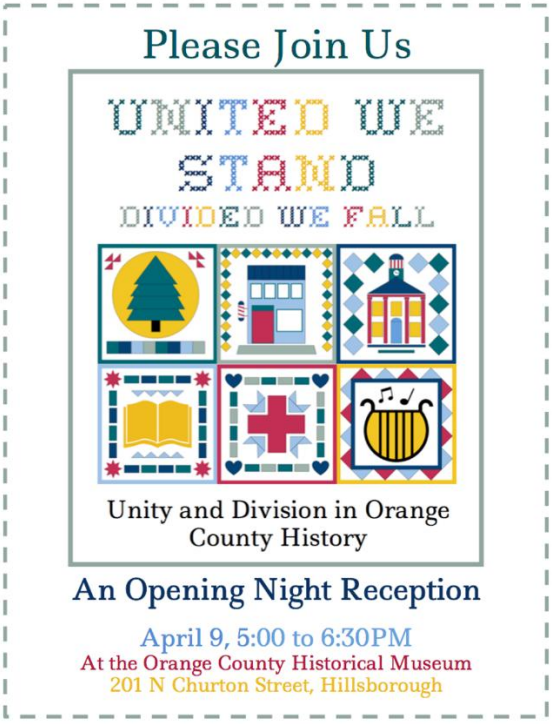

In celebration of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, which officially created the United States of America, this exhibit explores our country's first motto as it has applied to the history of Orange County.
It examines the direct and indirect ways that people in Orange County have been connected and have created communities. It also acknowledges the ways that fear and the pursuit of personal interest created conflict and division.

This exhibit will be arranged thematically
It will explore six areas that people today generally appreciate most about the county and how these threads have united and divided county residents:
Environment * Commerce * Service * Health * Learning * The Arts

HUMOR

I wondered why the baseball kept getting bigger. Then it hit me.

PARTING THOUGHT

I've never wished a man dead, but I have read some obituaries with great pleasure. – 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)