



BAINBRIDGE ISLAND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

January 2019 Newsletter

News from the Board

*Happy New Year!
Wishing each of you
Focus, Facts, and Fun in
your 2019 Family
Finding.*

Coming Attractions

We are organizing another great year of learning and sharing opportunities; watch the website and newsletters for more details as plans for the year firm up. Our Program Chair Sylvia Nelson is lining up monthly program speakers which will include "familysearch.org Wiki" (Joleen Aitchison); "Mapping an Ancestor" (Janet Camarata); and "Did Your Ancestor Own Slaves?" (Janice Lovelace). Other potential topics Sylvia is exploring include preserving/digitizing your own family archives, Internet for Genealogy,

Member's Corner

My Mysterious Great-Grandfather

Contributed by Kay Grant



B.F. Manning/Franklin M. Brunson

My interest in genealogy began in the late 1970s with a desire to find out the facts about my mother's paternal grandfather. Somehow this interest arose only after the deaths of my grandparents, who might have known important information. Isn't that always the way? Nevertheless, my mother did have some information and it intrigued me. My mother's maiden name was Manning and she was born in Albany, Georgia in 1922.

Her father, Douglas Manning was born there in 1889. It is his father that is the person in question. He was known mostly as B. F. Manning and he settled in Albany in the early 1880s, I later learned. He was from South Carolina.

Some records have shown him as Brown Frank Manning and some as Benjamin Franklin Manning. Although her grandfather died in 1919, before she was born, my mother "always knew" that he was not born a Manning but a Brunson. The story was that his mother died, his father remarried and he did not get along with his stepmother, so he ran away from home, changed his name (possibly to his mother's maiden name), and joined the Confederate Army.

Looking back to my late-found interest in this ancestor, I think my belief that I could identify him came from my experience working for the Social Security Administration from 1965 and the resulting familiarity I had with federal census records. Entitlement to Social Security retirement benefits and Medicare require establishing a person's date of birth, as both of these are dependent upon the person's age. Births were generally not recorded in southern

and Google and Its Genealogy Tools.

Seven Special Interest Groups

(SIGs) Yes, count them – seven! SIGs provide a great way for members to share and learn from each other. These include: an Evening Discussion Group (monthly), Irish (quarterly), Great Britain (England, Scotland, Wales) (2 times per quarter), Southern States (quarterly), New England-Mid Atlantic, (quarterly), DNA (as scheduled), and 2nd Friday Skill Building (10/year). Skill Building topics scheduled include, "Where do I Begin" (fundamentals of genealogy research), "Ancestry.com Search Tips," and Using the Ancestry Card Catalog." Other topics being considered include: Planning a Research Trip and Review of 3rd party DNA results tools.

Mentors - In addition to the scheduled programs and SIG meetings, our mentors continue to provide outstanding support to our members for one-to-one help with focused research questions, e.g., understanding your DNA results, planning your research trip, or evaluating an aspect of your work to help you identify next steps.

BIGS-Net (email group of members) is a great way for members to share tips, insights, ask questions, or get ideas from other members. Besides actively participating in meetings or through BIGS-net, you can also contribute to our shared education effort by submitting a

states until sometime in the early 20th century.

Georgia, for example, did not require that births be recorded until 1919. In my first years working for Social Security we routinely requested census records for applicants to establish their dates of birth. This was, of course, nothing like checking census records today. There were no computers or direct access to records. We filled out a form with information from the applicant regarding where he would have been living, and with whom, in the first two census years after his birth. This was then mailed to the Census Bureau, and, in due course, a document was received from the Census Bureau with a record of the information about the applicant as shown on the earliest census on which he could be located.

I continued to be employed by Social Security in Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, and South Carolina from 1965 to 1977 and always these Census Records were crucial to our date of birth determinations. In 1977 I transferred to the San Francisco Bay Area. There was a Federal Records Center in San Bruno, California, and I had occasion to visit it in my capacity as a Social Security Field Representative. I doubt the visit was related to Census Records, because they were becoming less important (although still used) in date of birth determinations and we

still ordered them directly from the Census Bureau. I probably went to the FRC to check immigration records, which, among other records, were housed there. While there I looked around and found that they had the Federal Census indices in book form and the actual records on microfilm. Somehow the idea seeped in that I might be able to use these to find out about my great-grandfather.

At first glance, all that I knew was that my great-grandfather was from Clarendon, South Carolina, that he was born in 1849 (from his tombstone in Albany and his newspaper obituary), and that his name at birth was "Brunson." I had no idea of his parents' names or of his "real" first name. I realized that I also knew that he had a sister named Sarah or Sally and that after my great-grandmother died in childbirth in 1891, Sally moved to Albany to live with him and care for his five children. I had seen Sally's tombstone showing that her date of birth was in 1851. Knowing only Sally to connect him to, I decided to look first for the 1860 census in which they should be shown in the same household. I did this at the Federal Records Center using indices and microfilm. Without much difficulty I found the Brunson family in 1860. To be sure, there were several, it being a fairly common name in that area, but I was looking for a family with a son who was 10 or

member story, a book review, or a tip for our monthly newsletter.

We are looking forward to another great year with BIGS. Thank you for your membership and support.

Adverse Weather Policy

Our recent power outage has caused us to think about our policy for BIGS meetings scheduled for the Bainbridge Island Library, including our 2nd-Friday Skill Building and our 3rd-Friday Program Meetings. If the library is closed, we will NOT meet. When the winds are blowing and power is questionable, I will attempt to send a message to the membership as soon as we know whether a meeting will be held or cancelled.

Meanwhile, we will consult with the leaders of our other SIGs, including the ones held at the LDS Church, to update our adverse weather policy for those meetings as well. Stay tuned!

Betty Wiese

President



11 years old, name unknown, and a daughter who was 8 or 9 years old named Sarah or Sally.

That 1860 census record showed the head of household as Wm. H. Brunson, age 57, with a wife, Mary J., age 21 (the stepmother?), a daughter named Winny, age 13, a son named Franklin M., age 10 - my great-grandfather?, a daughter named Sarah E., age 8, and a son named John, age 1. This was in Sumter County, South Carolina. I then searched for this head of household in the 1850 census and found, also in Sumter County, William H. Brunson, age 45, a wife, Roxy age 29, a daughter Winny age 2, and a son Manning F. age 8/12. This appeared to be the same family as the one in 1860, except that Roxy had apparently died and been replaced by Mary J., who had a year old son in 1860, and Sarah had been born in 1851 or 52, as expected.

This information made me believe that I had found my great-grandfather's parents. I was later to find his father's parents, but I have never been able to determine who were the parents of Roxy, my apparent great-great-grandmother. I do not know her maiden name, which could have been Manning, but I doubt it. I learned, from the records of the administration of William H. Brunson's father's estate, that William H. Brunson was one of 13 children and

had a brother named Manning Brunson. I speculate that my great-grandfather was named for his father's brother and when he changed his name, he just shuffled his first, middle, and last names around.

By 1880 my great-grandfather was married, living in Georgia, and he and his wife had their first child as shown in the 1880 census. After that I have considerable information about him from newspapers and city directories, as well as later census records. He had a carriage and buggy business, a dairy and was in the "real estate and collection" business. He was also a Justice of the Peace. I have not been able to find a Confederate service record that I can say is definitely his, although there is some evidence to support his service. I have a second cousin, Sheila Wilder, who has done much genealogy. Sheila tells me that her late aunts told her that they believed that our great-grandfather went out west, maybe to Colorado after the Civil War. Obviously, if he did so, he returned to the south. I realize I may never be able to unlock the entire history of my great-grandfather. I took my title of this article from Shelia's comment to me: "What I wouldn't give for ten minutes' conversation with our mysterious great-grandfather."

Meet Your Board

Here is the third in a series of Board Member Profiles,

Submitted by Sue Hassenmiller, Treasurer



"Where in Italy did grandma and grandpa come from?" was my first genealogy question at a family dinner of my father's family. Around a table heavily laden with more than a dozen Italian dishes, were gathered most of father's sisters and brother and their families. The first response was dead silence. Then everyone started to offer opinions but no one could give a real answer. On the following Saturday, my uncle Rocco came to my house. He said he felt embarrassed that he could not answer my question at the dinner. There in his hand, he held my grandfather's naturalization papers, which he had gotten from the safety deposit box. So at 10, I held my first genealogy record which said my grandparents came from Potenza, Italy. This was the first of many genealogy records I have held.

I was born and raised in Chicago, along with my brother but spent every summer on my grandmother's farm in Northern Wisconsin where my mother was raised. It was the land of my Swedish grandmother, and my German/Irish grandfather. No one knew much about the family heritage. It has been a challenge to piece their history together.

I moved to Seattle (and Bainbridge Island) in 1966, and worked on my college education at Seattle Community College, taking accounting and anthropology. Being a true Gemini, I worked both the left and right sides of my brain. I finally finished my bachelor degree in accounting at Golden Gate University in San Francisco during one of the periods I did not live on the island. I worked as either an accountant or auditor until 2012 when I retired.

Besides my addiction (as my friend Sylvia calls our hobby), I enjoy gardening, reading and spending time with friends. My husband and I have spent a lot of time traveling and have seen a good portion of the world including Antarctica.

One of my childhood goals was to visit the ancestral village of each of my ancestors. Except for my Irish ancestors, all my other ancestors came over since 1850. Over the years, I have visited Potenza, Italy (Paternal Grandparents), Aspisheim, Germany (Maternal 3rd great Grandparents), and Jonstorp, Sweden (Maternal Great Grandmother). A year ago, with the visit to Ireland (6th or 7th Grandparents), I have almost reached my goal. The brick wall to reaching it is to find the home village of my Maternal Great Grandfather. He did not leave any breadcrumbs to his home in Sweden.

I have been a member of BIGS since the start and was part of the group that founded BIGS. It was a work of love as the idea of having a genealogy group on Bainbridge was a wonderful dream. I served as treasurer for several years after the group was formed as well as being on the Board.

When I lived in Seattle for a period of time, I attended the Seattle Genealogical Society, where I learned so much from the members about doing genealogy research. So I enjoy helping others as they start on the road of finding their ancestors. I am especially interested in DNA testing and how it can help with our research. Since it is still a new and constantly growing area for genealogists, I like learning and passing on information on how to use DNA results to further family research.

~ Sue Hassenmiller

It's time to renew your BIGS membership!

The deadline for annual dues is February 15, 2019. It will be here before you know it! If you haven't already done so, please send your check to:

PO Box 135 Rolling Bay, WA 98016.

We need to know our budget for the year so we can plan our presentations and events. If you intend to renew, please pay as soon as you can. Thank you!

Plans for New Email Group



In the next few days you will receive an email, asking if you want to join a DNA email group. The purpose of the separate email group is to allow us to plan small group meetings, or discuss specific DNA topics, without sending emails to the whole BIGS membership. DNA is a complex topic and doesn't lend itself readily to large groups, and not all our members are interested in participating. The plan is to hold small DNA workshops during 2019. If you are interested in joining the DNA email group, just respond to the email when you get it.

Monthly Members' Meetings

JOIN US

Friday, January 18, 10:00 AM to Noon

Bainbridge Public Library, 1270 Madison Ave N

Topic: **FamilySearch: Ways with the Wiki**

Speaker: Joleen Aitchison

The FamilySearch Wiki is a marvelous resource for genealogists. It contains links to databases and online resources, as well as research training guidance. There you will also find location specific pages, and more! We will take an in-depth look at many of the features of the Wiki. We'll follow a path from one page to another, and into the World Wide Web to discover how this vast site can make a difference in our research.

We will have some discussion time at the end, so bring your FamilySearch questions!

Contact Historian [Betsy Hettich](#) for presentation handouts.

The complete meeting schedule is on our [website](#).

Special Interest Groups

For BIGS Members Only

Refer to our [website](#) for the complete schedule.

Great Britain Special Interest Group, two times quarterly

Friday, January 4, 10 AM to Noon

LDS Church, 8677 Madison Ave NE

Facilitator: **Joleen Aitchison**

New England - Mid-Atlantic Special Interest Group, quarterly

Tuesday, January 8, 1 PM to 3 PM

Bainbridge Public Library, downstairs meeting room

Topic: **Active problem solving and updates on research progress**

Facilitator: **Mary Ferm**

Skill Building, second Friday of the month

Friday, January 11, 10 AM to Noon

Bainbridge Public Library

Topic: **Managing Your Research**

Explore ways to keep your research organized, including genealogy software, research plans and logs

Presenter: **Claire Smith via teleconference**

Evening Discussion Group (EDG), third Monday of the month

Monday, January 21, 7 PM to 9 PM

HomeStreet Bank on Hildebrand Lane, Community Room, 1st floor. Knock if it's locked!

Topic: **Active problem solving and updates on research progress**

Leaders: **Sue Elving and Mary Ferm**

Southern States Special Interest Group, quarterly

Thursday, January 31, 1 PM to 3 PM

Bainbridge Public Library, downstairs meeting room

Topic: **Active problem solving and updates on research progress**

Facilitator: **Paula Schmidt**

Skill Building, second Friday of the month

Friday, February 8, 10 AM to Noon

Bainbridge Public Library

Topic: **Member Sharing/Problem Solving**

Facilitator: **Betty Wiese**

Happening Around the Sound

Seattle Genealogical Society - 6200 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

Second Saturday Speaker Series: Ins and Outs of Indexes

Saturday, January 12, 2019 - 1:00pm to 3:00pm

SGS Library, 6200 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

Indexes for county records are the key to finding deeds, probates and more. As FamilySearch digitizes more and more records, it's crucial to be familiar with different indexing systems and how to use them. The same skills are necessary for onsite courthouse and archive research. Learn about a variety of indexing systems. Discover strategies to use when you can't find the index or instructions to use it.

Speaker: Mary Kircher Roddy

Confirm event: <http://seattlegenealogicalsociety.org>

Puget Sound Genealogical Society - 1301 Sylvan Way, Bremerton

Introduction to Canadian Genealogy

Saturday, January 26, 10:30am - 12:30pm

Sylvan Way, Heninger Room ([map](#))

Explore the history of Canada, timelines of important events and major databases for research.

Speaker: Elisabeth Demmon

Canadian Genealogy: Migration

Tuesday, February 5, 10:30am - 12:30pm

Sylvan Way, Heninger Room

An exploration of Canadian migration patterns

Speaker: Elisabeth Demmon

Confirm event: <http://www.pusogensoc.org/>



[BIGS Website](#)



Your newsletter was edited by Andrea Hoskins and designed by Lori Gibson
