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CONTACT US:

Telephone: 801-422-1968
Fax: 801-422-0928
E-mail: cfhglab@byu.edu

Mail: Center for Family History and Genealogy
1031 JFSB
Brigham Young University
Provo, UT 84602
U.S.A.
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JOURNAL SUBMISSIONS

The BYU Family Historian is an online academic journal published by the Center for Family History and Genealogy at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Visit our website at http://familyhistory.byu.edu.

We invite researchers to submit an article, book review, or CD-ROM or DVD-ROM review for this publication. We publish articles relating to family and local history, research techniques and procedures, descriptions of genealogical and historical records and collections of international scope, documented compiled genealogies, professionalism, and reviews.

We solicit articles on beginning genealogy as well as scholarly articles. Articles should include footnotes and be well documented. They will be peer reviewed. We follow The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

If you are interested in submitting a manuscript, please do one of the following:
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• mail a PC floppy disk or USB flash (jump) drive
• mail a paper copy of your manuscript

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Thank you,
Kathleen Shipley, Assistant Editor
E-mail: kathleen_shipley@yahoo.com

BYU Family Historian
Center for Family History and Genealogy
1031 Joseph Fielding Smith Building
Brigham Young University
Provo, UT 84602

Kip Sperry, Editor
E-mail: sperry@byu.edu
Telephone: 801-422-5030

BYU Family Historian
Center for Family History and Genealogy
1031 Joseph Fielding Smith Building
Brigham Young University
Provo, UT 84602
ANCESTRY TRACING AND THE INTERNET

CECIL R. HUMPHERY-SMITH

There is a belief that seems to be increasing amongst those interested in tracing their ancestries that everything can be found on the Internet. In fact, this not only is erroneous, but leads to particular hazards in research. Some readers may know me as the one who began family history as a concept of genealogy, attempting to get genealogists to come to know their ancestors in the context of their historical, environmental, occupational, and social circumstances throughout their individual lives, instead of being vague records of “hatch,” “match,” and “dispatch” of names on a family tree. In introducing family history as an academic discipline sixty years ago, I used those somewhat disparaging descriptions of birth, marriage, and death deliberately to compel audiences to be aware that their ancestors were more than entities. We need to get to know them, respect them, and honor them, whatever their economic circumstances may have been. An eighteenth-century English author once wrote that there was not a mayor in the New World that was not branded on the hand. Such a remark (Family History, No. 28/29) may have reflected the truth that they had been transported for crimes of petty larceny and other minor offences largely due to the injustices and poverty of the times in England. Few of these people would have known their family origins.

Often we have come across pedigrees made up from the sources found on the Internet. The late W.H. Whitmore admonished genealogists nearly a century and a half ago not to insult true progenitors with false claims to others. Links to others who are entirely unrelated are readily established by using the Internet indiscriminately. There are those who resent any professional genealogists questioning the erroneous conclusions or trying to correct what has clearly gone wrong. But what is the point of producing a family tree that links you with somebody to whom you are simply not related? Or, why put effort into family history that may be the story of someone else’s ancestor?
A scientific approach to genealogy depends upon investigation of proof and demonstration of knowledge. Proof is dependent upon finding sufficient evidence or establishing a fact or producing a belief in a certainty based upon determinable judgment of nonconflicting facts and evidence with the calculated dismissal of what is submitted that is conflicting. Proof arises from the condition of having successfully withstood a test, recognized without anxiety. Truth must not be imitation; it must not be discountable; it must not be unbelievable. So what of the evidence of material culled from the Internet for genealogical research?

Genealogy, which is the scientific process of relating an individual to the generations before him and those that follow, is worthless if it is not conducted according to the strictest rules of evidence. Any entry put into the family tree must have co-ordinates of evidence that prove beyond every reasonable doubt that the right individual is properly identified in the context of ascent and descent in the family tree. Similarly, the historical accounts that are built around that individual in the family history must be evidenced by documentation, preferably original. If evidence is secondary, it should, wherever possible, be checked against the original (where that has survived). What is on the Internet has been culled from a large selection of copy material that has been made over the years, in the distant past, and more recently, by antiquaries and family historians anxious to preserve records. The ability of those who have produced these listings or prepared indexes of them, has depended upon individual skills in reading old handwriting and accurately copying. How easy it is to turn over two pages at a time or to skip a paragraph or entry when the same name appears, one under another.

An entry on the Internet may suggest that a whole parish register has been transcribed. In fact, that register may have many gaps in it, information lost or destroyed over the centuries. The original transcriber may have been interested only in certain names and in transcribing the register, taking out only those few names for a limited period and neglecting all the other names in the register. This is by no means uncommon. The original searching and transcription carried out by a professional record searcher in the locality may have made a transcript. After it was submitted to some society, a copy may have been made subsequently. The copier may have had no knowledge of local orthography or names. The result is, not infrequently, many errors and omissions and misinterpretation of initial letters and even of dates and places.
The very idea that the Internet provides a panacea for family historians and that everything you need is on it insults the intelligence of the amateur and ultimately causes the professional a great deal of time-consuming work and frustration unraveling entirely bogus family trees. Even the most experienced professional knows the errors that can so easily be made by misreading copies or using anything but primary sources without discrimination and proper judgment. Indeed, for these very reasons, the leading professional organizations insist that researchers be properly trained, best by following a full-time four-year post-graduate course of study with The Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies, or an equivalent program in the United States.

As stated above, every fact needs to be confirmed by additional documentary evidence in support of each statement. So far as English research is concerned, such evidence might be in the form of wills, probate inventories, land tenure documents, proceedings in the courts of Chancery, Exchequer and Requests, records of manorial copyhold tenure, rentals and the records of the Ecclesiastical Courts, visitations, subsidiary censuses and the collections of the Heralds in their Visitations and researched and registered pedigrees. Most frequently, amateurs do not have access to these or do not know how to gain access to them. Even when they can see them, they will find difficulties in reading and interpreting them. Sadly, teaching skills in paleography and in reading Latin texts is neglected in most courses, as is the knowledge of basic history and the origins and etymology of names.

“I have spent days and searched everywhere for the birth of Jim Hanes,” a lady e-mailed me. “I hope you tried James; but have you looked for Hain(e)s, Haynes, Aynes and such like variants, even without the “s,” as well as all the sources up to when James would have been in his middle twenties, especially if the individual’s family were Baptists.”

I never had any thanks until years later, when the lady attended a class and explained how easy it was once she had thought of variants. But ISCULA that turns out to be BEALE or FLELLO that was KELLS are challenges for experts, not easily found on the Internet.
Individuals engage professional researchers for several reasons. First, they do not have the time, knowledge, or the opportunity to carry out family history work on their own. Secondly, because they have a particular purpose in wishing to acquire proven facts about their ancestries; or, thirdly, because the professional, if properly qualified, has had the training and experience to provide solutions to problems that might not otherwise be solved. The professional will generally devote time and expertise, together with corresponding costs, to research conducted on a scientific basis, step by step. It does not necessarily mean that it will produce immediate results to satisfy curiosity. It will, however, be thorough and accountable, discovering the best means to reaching the ultimate conclusion. A stint of research may be spread over a number of weeks, months, or even years in pursuit of an answer. The professional researcher would keep the client fully informed as to progress.

Teams of professionals have a number of particular advantages. Experience and resources are shared. There is some pride in achievement of results. The research team supporting The Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies has the enormous advantage of the library and resources of a charitable educational trust into which it deposits any surpluses that it may make towards the maintenance of the building where they work alongside the academic staff. Achievements Ltd was founded as a not-for-profit company. There are no directors or shareholders taking profits. Not only a vast collection of books and papers, original manuscripts and indexes, but a most comprehensive collection of microfiches, microfilm, and CD-ROM resources saves researchers an enormous amount of time, effort, and cost in not having to travel to London or other centers for much of the information they need. In addition, the Institute holds some special indexes and collections to which the research team of Achievements has access. Achievements’ team forms the longest-running research service anywhere and has the greater advantage of a collection of tens of thousands of research cases already investigated. This is a resource of experience where clues are often found within old files that help with current work. There is still the matter of time, however, and the best professionals deserve proper remuneration.

Apart, of course, from copies of the records of General Registration and censuses for the whole kingdom, and the International Genealogical Index that grew out of the Institute’s idea of
the British Vital Record Index, later developments and indexes are available. I was responsible for purchasing the Pallot Index, 1780–1837, Andrews and Gretna Green collections, and marriage and baptism indexes. More and more of these resources are being made available on the Internet, but every copying is the source of more errors. Much work has also been done in collecting monumental inscriptions before churches have become redundant.

London marriage licenses (often with copies of the original marriage licenses), Catholic marriages for the period 1837–1870, Sussex baptisms and marriages, Nonconformist registers and transcripts of Wills and other papers and Settlements, Soldiers who died in the Great War of 1914–18, collections of notices from newspapers, the London Gazette and many foreign sources of people dying abroad between the 1890s and the 1970s, next-of-kin lists, periodical sources, Freemasons’ Indexes, Australian Civil Registration from 1856, New South Wales convicts, Apprenticeship Indentures, and indexes to Wills and Administrations for most counties. These and many other sources are held in the Institute’s library. There is also a special collection for Sussex, Hampshire and Kent, Ireland and Personal Names, Coats of Arms and original and unique documents, proven pedigrees, charters, and deeds.

Very little of this material is yet available on the Internet directly, but the collections at the Institute, along with others in libraries and public and private archives in England, Scotland, and Wales, represent only a fraction of the many thousands of other record sources and indexes that, similarly, are not available to the public surfing the Web. It is therefore dangerous to believe that everything has been done in genealogical research once it has been extracted from the Internet. Nothing could be further from the truth, which is another good reason for needing professional assistance. Count your own time, costs and frustration, and you will find that it is often the cheapest and most effective way forward. If you are interested in researching for yourself, the professional may well be able to provide material for the missing link that you have sought, to enable you to continue once more on your own.

I have been personally involved in family history for more than seventy years. I have been researching and teaching for several universities since the 1940s. I continue to learn, but, thanks to a computer buff and a knowledgeable grandson, a website has been erected on which I
put essays and lectures intended to assist amateurs and professionals alike, free of charge. After all this time, I continue to learn. Good professionals never cease learning to improve their ability to assist their clients, and are unlikely to be able to without learning from their peers and sound instruction as well as from the surprises on the Internet.

If you seriously need an ancestor because you cannot find yours on the Internet, do let me give you the opportunity from an entry in a parish register from Suffolk; “Last week, or it may have been the week before, I baptized a child whose name I have forgotten.” Do read my article on “Evidence” to be found on www.britishancestry.org.
DIGITAL ROOTS OF HUMAN RELATIONS:
ENABLING TECHNOLOGIES FOR FAMILY HISTORY AND
GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

WILLIAM BARRETT

Flowing out of a Computer Science research lab on the third floor of the Talmage Building is a wellspring of enabling technologies for family history and genealogical research. Here, computer science students, working under the direction of Dr. Tom Sederberg and Dr. Bill Barrett are creating software tools to help individuals with their family history research so that people everywhere can seek out their ancestors and perform vital ordinances in their behalf, as desired. These tools include visualization of an entire pedigree on a single (large) sheet of paper (Figure 1), the ability to automatically calculate if and how two or more individuals are related (Figure 3), and a variety of advanced technologies for automatically converting microfilm records into digital, accessible, searchable form over the Internet (Figure 5).

OnePage Genealogy

Many people are familiar with a family pedigree displayed on a single 8 1/2” x 11” sheet of paper, which can accommodate at most five generations. But what if you want to display a fourteen-generation pedigree so that you can have a bird’s-eye view of your family tree? If the font size and information remains constant, a little arithmetic tells you that you would need a sheet of paper about 22” high (~ 2 feet) to get six generations on it—four feet for seven generations. Fourteen generations would require a sheet of paper about the length of Lavell Edwards football stadium (Figure 2).
So how do we visualize a fourteen-generation (or larger) pedigree on a single 3 1/2’ x 5’ sheet of paper as depicted in Figure 1? Using a standard GEDCOM file for the input data, One Page Genealogy exploits the fact that family trees often have incomplete branches—areas of the pedigree that are incomplete. The program automatically optimizes the space by expanding other branches into these areas, while forcing every pair of sub-trees as close to each other as possible. The algorithm used to achieve these results is adaptive to each unique set of records and to each user’s preferences. Users can access this software by visiting the OPG Web page found at http://roots.cs.byu.edu/pedigree/. Pedigrees are created in the popular PDF format for portability and shared access. A hard copy can also be ordered through this website for a nominal fee. 100 percent of these proceeds fund students to develop other family history technologies.

**Relationship Finder**

Family Trees can also be used to determine if, and how, two or more individuals are related. Relationship Finder, a software tool developed by Dr. Tom Sederberg, is accessible to anyone at http://roots.cs.byu.edu/digroots/. Relationship Finder is used to discover relationships between people using Ancestral File data (see http://www.familysearch.org/). Using it, individuals or groups can find out how they are related to Prophets, Apostles, Kings, Queens, as well as anyone else who is entered as part of the group. For example, the following excerpt of a Relationship Finder report shows how I am related to the Prophet Joseph Smith as well as several other people. Joseph Smith’s Father’s Father’s Father’s Father’s Mother’s parents are my Mother’s Father’s Mother’s Mother’s Father’s Mother’s Mother’s Father’s parents. They are T. French and M. Scudamore, who lived in England in the early 1600s. I am a little more closely related to President Boyd K. Packer: His great-great-great-great grandfather, A. Anderson, is my great-great-great-great-grandfather, who lived in Sweden in the early 1700s. And I am of “Royal Blood,” as are many of you.
William Barrett *********

Kimball: Beckys

Lund: Ryan's

Larsen: Alan's

Smith: Joseph's

Young: Brigham's

Packer: Boyd's

Kimball: Heber's

**************************************************
William Barrett, you are of royal lineage. Here are some of your royal ancestors.

**************************************************
Henry III (1206-1272) King Of ENGLAND is your 21st greatgrandfather.
Louis VIII "the Lion" (1187-1226) King Of FRANCE is your 22nd greatgrandfather.
Phillip II (1176-1208) King Of GERMANY is your 23rd greatgrandfather.

Figure 3. Sample report from Relationship Finder showing how William Barrett is related to other people.

Since this report makes use of the Ancestral File, it is only as accurate as the genealogical data in that file.

The website that hosts OnePage Genealogy (http://www.onepagegenealogy.com) and the Relationship Finder (http://roots.cs.byu.edu/digroots/) is owned and maintained within the Computer Science Department at Brigham Young University. Many students who have received their training in our computer science curriculum have been involved in the development of these tools. Tom Finnigan’s software expertise facilitated the “hand-shaking” between the Ancestral File and the Relationship Finder. Jeremy Robertson served as our Webmaster for the “Digital Roots” website and was the primary architect for the Relationship Finder interface. Brian Sanderson is now extending this interface and expanding its scope. Nick North and Josh Jenny implemented the first versions of the desktop application OnePage Genealogy and architected the PDF formatting that enables it to be easily shared, browsed and printed in our lab. Britton Quist and Moriah McClanahan are extending the formatting to allow OnePage Genealogy to be adapted to a more traditional layout and make the “holes” in the family tree more visible.
Many other technologies need to be invented and developed. For example, automatically converting microfilm records into a digital form for searchable access over the Internet requires the solution of several subproblems.

**Digital Microfilm**

The LDS Church began gathering genealogical records in 1894 and now maintains the world’s largest repository of genealogical resources. Among these resources are 2.4 million rolls of microfilm, containing parish, census, and vital records, etc.—a total of three billion pages. The original microfilm rolls are stored in a granite mountain vault for preservation. Copies of these films are available for anyone to view through a network of over 4,000 family history centers worldwide. Development of the technologies for digitization and indexing of this vast collection is one of the major focuses of this lab.

To make full use of digital microfilm, individual frames must be deskewed, scaled, registered, cropped, enhanced, and indexed for random access and browsing. In addition to these geometric and grayscale transformations, the information *within* each frame must be zoned, labeled, and partitioned into fields for more efficient and targeted access across predominantly slower Internet connections. Individual fields containing machine print or handwriting must also be analyzed and recognized, automatically and with human assistance to identify document content. Extracted information (names, dates, places, etc.) must also be linked into a (possibly hybrid) database. Finally, enabling technologies for searching, linking and visualizing genealogical records are needed to assist patrons in finding names. We refer to this process as the Digital Microfilm Pipeline (Figure 5).
Many of these technologies do not exist and must be invented. Over the last ten years, our students have been involved in researching and putting together the puzzle pieces (cropping, enhancing, compressing, zoning, labeling, etc.) of the Digital Microfilm Pipeline as described below.

Figure 5. The Digital Microfilm Pipeline is a framework of technologies for converting scanned microfilm into searchable genealogical records.

![The Digital Microfilm Pipeline Diagram](image)

Figure 6. Automated frame cropping of scanned microfilm with stripe removal.

Graduate students Chris Nelson and Mark Pinson have created software to automatically detect and crop individual frames (dashed yellow lines) from scanned microfilm by processing an entire roll at a time. Automating this process greatly increases the accuracy, while dramatically reducing the time for frame cropping.

Figure 7 shows a small section of a tabular document obtained by averaging twenty similar documents, following the application of algorithms for correction for scale, rotation, and
translation for each document individually. These algorithms were developed by Luke Hutchison as part of his MS thesis.

Digital image enhancement is used to improve the readability of films that through the acquisition process or other deterioration, are too light, too dark, too noisy, etc. In addition to the correction of grayscale transformation problems, image processing can also be used to selectively enhance patterns, strokes, lines, etc. (Figure 8) beyond what appears in the original document.

As part of his MS thesis, Chris Nelson is currently working on a compression technique that fits parametric curves to the outlines of handwriting, allowing documents to be incrementally downloaded in the order that they were written, revealing content to the user as needed. This will also enhance the novel Just-In-Time Browsing scheme developed by Doug Kennard as part of his MS thesis. Doug is now pursuing his PhD to integrate and extend several critical parts of the Digital Microfilm Pipeline.

As part of his MS thesis, Heath Nielson developed automated Zoning and Labeling algorithms to carve up and index (tabular) documents into meaningful Regions of Interest (Figure 9). This eliminates the time and tedium associated with manual zoning and labeling or downloading the entire (unzoned, unlabeled) document and searching for content sequentially. Extracting the document form also allows us to “cookie cutter” content for family history work.

**Figure 7.** Average of twenty documents after correction of geometric distortion. Clarity of (registered) lines/text demonstrate correction to be highly accurate.

**Figure 8.** Selective Stroke Enhancement using a custom convolution kernel derived from the handwriting.

**Figure 9.** Document Zoning and Labeling. Green = machine printed text. Purple = handwriting. Pink = empty.
Family History Technology Workshop

Technologies such as those presented here are nourished by the Annual Family History Technology Workshop. Sponsored by the Department of Computer Science and promoted by our alumni, this workshop recently concluded its fifth year at BYU, bringing together technology and domain experts from industry, academia, and the LDS Church’s Family and Church History Department (http://www.fht.byu.edu/). The workshop was created to provide a venue for the presentation of ground-breaking work in family history technologies and to catalyze interaction between the groups. Our students have been able to present their own work and rub shoulders with professionals from these areas.

This year was the strongest the workshop has ever been, with over 100 computer scientists and genealogists in attendance. The keynote address was given by Ransom Love, director of strategic relationships for the Family and Church History Department. The talk set the stage not only for the workshop, but for years to come, as it portrayed the convergence of technologies and inspired insights, while anchoring them to specific prophetic statements made over the past century.

Back to the Future

It is in the cultivating of inspired technologies that we are able to extend our reach back in time—to see our own roots more clearly, and, through that, to see our own future with deeper purpose and meaning. The flowering of technology has accelerated family history and genealogical research, but it is important to note that there is an ever-present spiritual component and impetus behind this work—even in the bits and bytes and novel algorithms. Certainly because it helps the LDS Church with one of its three major missions, and our students sense that. But they bring their own spirit of enthusiasm and inquiry to the work and are driven from within to make a contribution here. And they are becoming known for their polish and their work in this area. It is truly exciting to work with bright, young students who are providing timely solutions to such a meaningful problem domain.

At the 100th anniversary of the Genealogical Society of Utah, President Howard W. Hunter said, “The Lord has guided the development of information technology and accelerated
its role in work for the dead, and will continue to do so. However, we stand only on the threshold of what we can do with these tools. I feel that our most enthusiastic projections can capture only a tiny glimpse of how these tools can help us—and of the eternal consequences of these efforts.”

It is this prophetic vision that drives us. So we continue to dig and to plant, anchoring these digital roots in spiritual soil. These are the digital roots of human relations that will harvest hearts and turn them to each other.
FAMILY STORIES:
HANDLE WITH CARE, ESPECIALLY THE MOST DRAMATIC ONES

WILLIAM G. HARTLEY

Rare is the family story that does not get “better” as retold over time. A few families have in them characters who like to tell tall tales, or at least embellish information they relate about their parents or grandparents. Most often, however, misinformation gains currency unintentionally. People assume they have the story right, but in fact they misunderstood minor and sometimes major details. We need to record and treasure family stories that come to us, even though most are wheat with chaff. Folklorist Bert Wilson has shown us that repeatedly told family stories, be they true or false, convey a truth about what the family values. He suggests we ask why that story matters so much to the family that it continues to be told.¹

But, as history students are taught early, we need to keep an attitude of skepticism about how accurate our sources of historical information are. Here are some examples of stories that circulate in families but that are seriously incorrect.

Among descendants of Johan Christenson, a Swedish convert to Mormonism who immigrated and settled in Gunnison, Utah, a typed family story says that he crossed the plains in the John Murdock Handcart Company in 1861. Those who know LDS Church history quickly see misinformation here—no handcart companies came after 1860 and no handcart company was captained by John Murdock. So what is the truth of the story? Checking documents outside the family’s histories, we find the story was almost correct, that Johan was in the John Murdock wagon train—not handcart train—in 1861.²

So, how did the handcart element get into the story? Apparently someone said or heard, correctly, that Johan walked across the plains in the Murdock Company. Someone else heard

that, and, not realizing that almost everybody in wagon trains walked, must have figured that if Johan walked, he was not in a wagon train so must have been in a handcart company, and told that version of Johan’s crossing the plains. Sad to say, the Christenson family lost a handcart pioneer when this story was checked out.

The Ellison family has a story about English ancestors aboard a sailing ship bound from Liverpool to New Orleans. It tells how a storm struck, blew off the masts, and forced the ship off course and near to Portugal. Dead in the water, it received a tow from a passing ship and was pulled to New Orleans. Portugal to New Orleans? Not a chance. Although the story has elements of truth in it, somehow someone in the family garbled the facts. Records show that the ship did lose its masts in a storm at sea, but ended up off the coast of Puerto Rico—not Portugal! It was not towed to New Orleans except when it entered the mouth of the Mississippi River, where all sailing vessels, even those with good masts, were towed upriver. Obviously the family story became more dramatic than the realities warrant.³

One of the LDS Church magazines almost ran a great story about John Lowe Butler and his family being told by Joseph Smith to flee from mobs to safety in Nauvoo, Illinois. The Butlers obeyed and avoided the mob, the story goes, who came to their cabin that night looking for them. Artists had rendered the story in picture blocks showing the Nauvoo Temple in the background. This garbled story came from a Butler descendant who did not have the facts straight. Other family records show that the setting was in Missouri, not Illinois, and that the Butlers, following the counsel of Joseph Smith, moved into Far West, Missouri, not Nauvoo. Therefore, the family story was correct except for the time and location.

A Skeen family story meant well but fell apart when compared against basic facts. Jesse Skeen, the story said, was a kind slave owner—so kind that when the Civil War freed the slaves, they all decided to stay with Jesse and work for him as freedmen. The major problem with this

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³ Mary Siegfried, “Family History of Matthew and Jane Ellison and Descendants,” unpaged, copy in author’s possession.
story is that Jesse Skeen died in 1841—twenty years before the Civil War and twenty-three years before the Skeen slaves were freed!⁴

A story involving a Schlesselmann family said that one of the five Schlesselmann children orphaned in the late 1860s dropped out of Mormonism because his adoptive family was not active in the LDS Church. But, checking the facts, we find that Mrs. Mair, who adopted Harry Schlesselmann, was a pillar in her ward, even serving as the ward Relief Society President. Hence, Harry’s Church inactivity cannot be attributed to a backslid stepmother.⁵

In many LDS families, life stories are passed along that say an ancestor left Nauvoo in 1846 by crossing on the ice, but that wonderful and dramatic fact is wrong. Contemporary documents clearly show that during the February 1846 exodus from Nauvoo of Brigham Young’s vanguard company of Latter-day Saints, almost everyone in that company ferried across the unfrozen river between February 4 and February 22, when the weather was good. They encamped seven miles inland in Iowa at the Sugar Creek campsite. President Young himself crossed by boat on the 15th. By February 22, two days before the river froze over, President Young and the camped company were ready and anxious to start west. But bad weather and some delayed wagons prevented their departures until March 1. Diary accounts show that no ice bridge formed until the 25th, that it lasted only five days, and that relatively few Saints crossed it to join Young’s company.

This being true, what do we do with dozens of accounts claiming the people left and crossed on the ice on specific dates before February 24? For example, George Whitaker’s fine autobiographical account says that his family left on February 9, at noon, and their four wagons crossed on the ice. Further, he claims that President Young and the main body of Saints had crossed the river a day or two before his family did (Young left on the 15th).⁶

⁵ William G. Hartley, Kindred Saints: The Mormon Immigrant Heritage of Alvin and Kathryne Christenson (Salt Lake City: Eden Hill, 1982), 164. Harry Mair’s niece, Kathryne Christensen, told the author that Harry’s inactivity was due to his being raised in a family not active in the LDS Church.
While working on my own life story, I once wrote about one of my personal experiences in high school and called the episode “Livermore Kiss.” Later I found out how faulty my own memory was—except for the kiss itself! My story said that when I was student-body president of Arroyo High School in San Lorenzo, California, I went with classmates on a bus to an evening football game in Livermore. Our team beat Livermore. While we were boarding the bus, a jubilant junior varsity cheerleader came up to me and gave me a kiss. I thought that was great and decided maybe I should not be going steady with my girlfriend, who went to another high school—maybe I could be dating some nice Arroyo High School girls. So I broke up with Gayle—because of the Livermore kiss. Ah, but in checking my high school yearbook, I discovered some embarrassing problems with my story. Arroyo did not play Livermore in football that year. The game was in fact against Castro Valley, not Livermore. And we lost, we did not win. I was definitely correct about the kiss, but the girl was a junior-class officer, not a junior-class cheerleader. My own mind and memory had altered the facts over time, something I would not have known had I not checked records outside my memory.

And so it goes. We need to be cautious about accepting family stories at face value. As a general “rule of evidence,” firsthand stories are usually (but not always) more accurate than ones told by someone else to the person who writes them down. Also, the closer in time the teller is to the event, the more reliable the information (usually). I find that people often tell garbled stories about their grandparents because the stories have passed through their parents and usually were not told correctly in the first place or else were misunderstood by the grandchildren. Sometimes in the same family we find contradicting versions of the same story.

Relatives usually do not lie, at least intentionally, when telling stories about their ancestors. But sometimes they do not have the facts quite right, even the ones who experienced it. And then, when stories are retold, understanding gets lost in the transmission. What level of accuracy can we assign to information given us firsthand by the person who witnessed or experienced it? That will vary, but fuzzy math gives us at best an 80 percent accuracy level—the person might not have understood exactly what he or she saw or experienced, and his or her words cannot convey the actuality adequately. What about information a son said his mother or father told him? This is a second-hand account, and if 50 percent accurate, we are lucky. Third-
hand accounts—what the daughter says she heard her mother say about her grandmother—could be about 30 percent accurate.

It helps if we can find out how the person who wrote it or told it knew it in the first place. Witnessed it? Heard about from a participant? Heard it second hand? Read it somewhere?

One vital safety check is this: whenever possible, we need to compare our family’s stories with other family and outside-the-family records, and with recollections of others who were there.

Sad to admit, embellished or garbled family stories often are more dramatic and of more interest than the factual story. But we ought to cherish accuracy more than entertainment—even if it kills a good handcart story or replaces Portugal with Puerto Rico, or makes a saint out of a lady who was portrayed as a backslider, or changes a crossing-on-the-ice story—or even if it takes away a kiss from a cheerleader.
According to family legend, Otto Krieger, former Bürgermeister (mayor), and a classmate of the Kaiser, smuggled his sons one by one out of Germany. He then followed them with his wife and daughter to Hamilton, Butler County, Ohio, before traveling on to Kansas. A family record chart provided extensive details with birth and marriage dates, wives, children, and grandchildren. The family charts even identified the former residence in Germany as Bad Wildungen. The Kriegers were identified as Lutheran.\(^1\) There was one big problem: No Otto Krieger lived in Butler County, Ohio, from 1850 to 1870.

**Henry Krieger in Butler County, Ohio**

No Otto Krieger appeared in the 1850, 1860, or 1870 censuses. The researcher could not find reference to him in land and probate records, Lutheran Church records, city directories, county histories, cemetery records, or death records for Butler County during the same time period. The search for Otto expanded to include any Kriegers living in the Hamilton area of Butler County, with special emphasis on those with the given names of Otto’s known sons: Conrad, Henry, Carl, Adam, Lewis, and Andrew. A Henry Krieger (spelled various ways) emerged as a probable match for Otto. Could he indeed have been the same person as Otto Krieger?

- Henry, 59; his wife, A. Mary, 40; a son Andrew, 13; and a future daughter-in-law Anna Maria Stein (also Otto Krieger’s daughter-in-law) all emigrated together from Darmstadt (Hesse, also known as Hessen-Darmstadt), and arrived at New York on 12 June 1857. Their recorded ages agreed with birth records from the

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family and 1860 census information, but not with immigration information from family charts.²

- A Henry Krieger, 63, appeared in the 1860 census of Hamilton with Mary, 42, and Andrew, 17. All three were born in Germany. These names and ages matched information about Otto and his family gleaned from family records.³

- Further searching for Otto under the name of Henry and for his children unearthed various land records in the same area of Butler County for the correct time period for him and for his wife, Mary, and for Otto’s son, Henry.⁴⁵

- There were entries in the Williams’ Hamilton Directory, City Guide and Business Mirror, 1858, that showed Henry Krieger and men with the names of two of Otto’s sons, Henry and Carl. All lived in close proximity and worked as coopers.⁶

- The married children of Otto, Karl Krieger and Mary Feyh appeared in census records in 1860 in the same area of the county as Henry.⁷⁸

- In the probate of the estate of Henry Krieger, Mary (name of Otto’s wife) appeared paying taxes on their property. Carl (name of Otto’s son) appeared as administrator. George Feyh (name of Otto’s son-in-law) appeared on receipts. No relationships were stated.⁹

⁵ Ibid. Book 31:527, Henry and Sarah Krieger, FHL# 350739.
⁹ Henry Krieger Estate Packet, Butler County estate file # 02838, Butler County Records Office, Hamilton, Ohio.
These records all show a probable connection of Henry to the known sons, daughter, and wife of Otto Krieger. The researcher found no contradictions to the family records except on the dates and order of immigration. The preponderance of records suggesting a connection, and the lack of documented contradictions showed that Henry and Otto were probably the same person.

**Johann Krieger in Butler County, Ohio**

The extracted church records for the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hamilton, Ohio, gave the most useful clue, but added a further complication.

- Church records showed a Johann Krieger born 19 December 1797 in Heimbach, Hesse-Darmstadt, and dying 7 December 1864. The exact birth date given for Otto Krieger in the family records was 19 December 1797.¹⁰

- Germans often use Johann as a baptismal name. But now Otto had an additional name.

- None of Otto’s children received the name of Johann, which was inconsistent with naming patterns for Hessen. However, Otto named one of his sons Henry.

- Further perusal of the church records revealed births and deaths of what appeared to be Otto’s grandchildren because Otto’s children were listed as their parents.¹¹

- Family information identified the Kriegers as Lutherans, and their appearance in the Zion Church records supported that fact.

Birth date, religion, and names of wives, children, and grandchildren of Johann Krieger and Henry Krieger all matched those of Otto Krieger. Naming customs and patterns might explain the use of multiple names.

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¹⁰ Hazel Stroup, comp., *Butler County Cemetery and Church Records* (Cincinnati: R.D. Craig, 1980).
¹¹ Ibid. 10, 34.
Henry Krieger in Cemetery Records in Butler County, Ohio

The cemetery records in Hamilton, Ohio, for Greenwood Cemetery documented the death of Henry Krieger, 68, buried 9 December 1864.\textsuperscript{12}

- The church death record for Johann Krieger stated that he died two days before this burial.\textsuperscript{13}

- The probate for the estate of Henry Krieger was dated 2 January 1864, but, since the dates for funeral and medical expenses postdated that event by several months, the researcher assumed that the recorder made an error in writing the year when switching to the new year and meant 2 January 1865.\textsuperscript{14}

- The cemetery record lists Henry Krieger as the owner of the plot in which he and Ann Maria, the name of his wife and of the wife of Otto Krieger were buried.\textsuperscript{15 16}

- The birth date calculated from the age at burial for Henry Krieger matched the birth date of Otto Krieger.\textsuperscript{17}

This chain of interrelated evidence and abundance of supporting documents provided evidence that Johann, Henry, and Otto were the same person. The definitive answer would lie in Germany.

Searching for Otto, Henry, and Johann Krieger in Germany

A search of possible birth places for Otto Krieger in Germany led to Hainbach, Alsfeld, Oberhessen, Hessen, Germany, because its spelling resembles Heimbach, the place of birth listed in the Zions Lutheran Church records for Johann Krieger, and because it was located in Hessen.

\textsuperscript{12} Henry Krieger Cemetery Record, Greenwood Cemetery, Hamilton, Butler, Ohio (Hamilton, OH: Greenwood Cemetery, ongoing) digital database interment # 2421.
\textsuperscript{13} Stroup, Butler County Cemetery and Church Records, 10.
\textsuperscript{14} Henry Krieger Estate Packet # 02838, Butler County Record Office.
\textsuperscript{15} Henry Krieger Cemetery Record #2421, Greenwood Cemetery, Hamilton, Butler, Ohio.
\textsuperscript{16} Ann Maria Krieger Cemetery Record, Greenwood Cemetery, Hamilton, Butler, Ohio (Hamilton, OH: Greenwood Cemetery, ongoing) digital database interment # 2234.
\textsuperscript{17} Henry Krieger Cemetery Record #2421, Greenwood Cemetery, Hamilton, Butler, Ohio.
• Hainbach, located in Hessen in the area of Bad Wildungen, was named as the hometown for the Kriegers in the family records. Previous correspondence showed that no Kriegers had ever lived in Bad Wildungen.

• The parish for Hainbach was Nieder Gemunden.

• Nieder Gemunden, Alsfeld, Oberhessen, Hessen, Germany, church records contained many Kriegers in the indexes. Some nearly matched data for Johann, Henry, or Otto Krieger. The ones with closest birthdates were eliminated through death records.

• An exact birth date search revealed the birth of a son to Catharina Musch on 19 December 1797. The witness was Johann Heinrich Musch. Alexander Krieger claimed parentage. No first name was given for the child.  

• In this area of Hessen, parents name the child after the witness. Therefore, this was the birth record for Johann Heinrich Krieger born the exact date stated in family records and in the Lutheran Church records in Hamilton, Ohio.

• The marriage records of Johann Heinrich Krieger, son of Alexander Krieger and Catharina Musch; and Johann Heinrich Krieger, son of Alexander Krieger and Anna Maria Musch, second wife, were found in Ermenrod, a small village close to Hainbach with records in the same parish of Nieder Gemunden. Johann Heinrich Krieger’s age at marriage gave him a calculated birth date of 1797. 

• Further research showed the children of Johann Heinrich Krieger being born in Ermenrod, Hessen, Germany. They were the same children as those attributed to Otto

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18 Johann Heinrich Krieger’s Baptismal Record, Evangelische Kirche Nieder Gemunden, Kirchenbuch, 1619–1908, Baptisms 1660–1807, 6, FHL# 1195773.
20 Johann Heinrich Krieger-Anna Maria Musch Marriage Record, 14 May 1843, Evangelische Kirche Nieder Gemunden, Kirchenbuch 1619–1908, Marriages, 1660–1807, FHL# 1195714, 133.
Krieger with two additions and the exception of the second child, Conrad. Some of the dates of birth were not exact, but close. Johann Heinrich Krieger and either Catharina Musch or Anna Maria Musch were named as the parents of all of the children. Otto’s (Johann Heinrich’s) son, Henry Krieger, was born Johann Heinrich Krieger.  

- Johann Heinrich Krieger’s brother, born 7 September 1799 in Hainbach, was also named Johann Heinrich Krieger. This information came from the marriage records of Johann Heinrich Krieger (b.1797), which identified his brother, Johann Heinrich Krieger (b.1799), as a witness and stated that he was his brother.  

- In Hessen, families sometimes gave children the same given name, especially if the first child died or was illegitimate.

**Conclusions**

The preponderance of interrelated data collected from various records while following Otto Krieger from Ohio to Germany and through three given names, proved that he was the same person as Johann Heinrich Krieger in Germany and Johann Krieger and Henry Krieger in Ohio. He was the husband of Catharina Musch and Anna Maria Musch, who usually appeared as Mary, A. Mary, or Ann Maria in the Ohio records. He was the father of eight children, six from his first marriage and two from his second marriage. Two children died in Germany and six emigrated to Ohio. Family records named and documented all six children. There were no conflicts except with family tradition, clerical errors, and inexact birthdates.

Here are some probable explanations to some of the remaining puzzles. Johann Heinrich Krieger was called Otto in family records, but on no official documents. Johann Heinrich Krieger probably used the nickname, Otto, to distinguish himself from his brother of the same name. Otto was a Bürger (citizen), not a Bürgermeister (mayor) and probably had never met the Kaiser, but

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22 Johann Heinrich Krieger-Catharina Musch Marriage Record, 4 Mar 1828.  
23 Johann Heinrich Krieger-Anna Maria Musch Marriage Record, 14 May 1843.
was nicknamed after him. The Kriegers likely named Bad Wildungen as their home because it was the closest town of any size to Hainbach and Ermenrod.

Family records, although incomplete and exaggerated, provide the researcher with needed information to begin the quest for the identity of Otto Krieger. The problem was resolved by evaluating the information collected along the way in light of the family records and coming to a well-documented conclusion.

**Continuing Research**

The ancestors of the Kriegers and Musches should be easy to locate because of the abundance of available microfilmed parish records for the area of Ermenrod and Hainbach. Future research goals include finding the baptismal records for and relationship between Johann Heinrich Krieger’s wives, Anna Maria and Catharina Musch. The baptismal record for his son Conrad must be found. The search for the birth date and birthplace of Anna Maria Stein, daughter-in-law of Johann Heinrich Krieger, will begin in Ermenrod and the neighboring villages. An understanding of the culture and history of the Ermenrod region will broaden the understanding of the Krieger family’s German roots. The study and documentation of the entire Krieger line should be fruitful, but will require extensive research.
William Barrett received his PhD in medical biophysics and computing from the University of Utah in 1978, where he also received a BS in mathematics. He is currently a professor in the Department of Computer Science at BYU. He has worked with the Family and Church History Department on technologies for scanning, cropping, enhancing, zoning, registering, browsing, and indexing (digital) microfilm. He founded the annual Family History Technology Workshop and is working on the development of Family History Software (see http://roots.cs.byu.edu/pedigree/).

Karen Ingalsbe Greenwell graduated from BYU in Spanish and English in 1972. She has pursued her personal research since then, recently augmenting her genealogical knowledge with family history classes at BYU. The Family History Library now employs her as a reference consultant. She and her husband, Duff Greenwell, have four children.

William G. Hartley is an associate professor of history at Brigham Young University. He earned BA and MA history degrees at BYU and completed doctoral coursework in history at Washington State University. He is the author of more than 100 articles and twelve books dealing with LDS history and family history. He is former director of the LDS Church’s oral history program and of BYU’s Genealogy and Family History Services, founding president of the Mormon Trails Association, and a past president of the Mormon History Association.

Queen Elizabeth II made Cecil R. Humphery-Smith an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 2004 for “services to education in genealogy and heraldry.” Cecil has lectured worldwide and tutored widely and is also honored as a fellow of many societies throughout the world. He is principal and one of the eight trustees of The Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies that he founded in Canterbury in 1961 from earlier beginnings as a school for family history studies.