



Forensic Genealogy News

January/February 2015

Volume 5, Issue 1

Published bimonthly by the:

COUNCIL FOR THE
ADVANCEMENT OF
FORENSIC GENEALOGY

c/o Wanda Smith,
P.O. Box 260981
Plano, TX 75026

www.forensicgenealogists.org
info@forensicgenealogists.org

*Progressive Leadership in the
Field of Forensic Genealogy*

CAFG 2014 Board Members

President

Leslie Lawson

Vice President

Michael Ramage, JD, CG

Secretary

Wanda Smith, JD

Treasurer

Juli Whittaker

Mentor Program Coordinator

Cathi Desmarais, CG

Mentor Program Coordinator

Amber Goodpaster Tauscher

Director at Large

Kelvin Meyers

Newsletter Editor

Bethany Waterbury

120 + 1 Business Card Exchange, at the SOLD OUT 2015 FGI

The Forensic Genealogy Institute (FGI) will be held 26-28 March 2015 at the Wyndham Hotel Love Field in Dallas, Texas. Both the “Forensic Genealogy Master Practicum” and the “Advanced Genetic Genealogy and Unknown Parentage Cases” courses have been officially sold out. Waitlists have been started for both courses. To be added to the wait list, please send an email to: institute@forensicgenealogists.org

For all of you attending this year’s Forensic Genealogy Institute, be sure to bring at least 121 business cards with you. With both sessions sold out there will be over 100 student attendees and 13 instructors and event organizers to meet.

We are planning some entertaining activities at Wednesday night’s Icebreaker to kick off FGI 2015, and the business card exchange is just part of the fun. You’ll have the opportunity to meet and mingle with professional colleagues from across America along with a few international attendees as well!

You will also want to be sure to bring at least one extra card to drop in the bowl for the door prize drawing at the Icebreaker. Read more about the door prizes on page 4 of this issue.

Inside This Issue

- 1 FGI Update and Business Card Exchange
- 2-3 Opportunities in the Oil & Gas Industry
- 4 FGI Door Prizes Announced
- 4 Members in the News

Opportunities in the Oil & Gas Industry

By Cynthia M. Hofmeister

The Oil and Gas Industry may be one of the most underutilized industries in the professional genealogical community. However, this industry has great potential for the Forensic Genealogist looking to increase their business clientele.

You may be asking yourself, what does the Oil & Gas Industry have to do with Forensic Genealogy? Honestly...Everything!

An Oil & Gas company's ultimate goal is to produce and/or transport oil, gas, and minerals. To do so, they must identify the current owners or heirs of the mineral interests of a tract of land for the purposes of leasing, bonus, and royalty payments. Large Oil & Gas companies hire Land Companies and/or Brokers to ultimately fulfill this goal. These companies then hire what are known as Landmen to run their chain-of-title.

Much of the Landman's work is similar to a genealogist's. Let's compare the separate processes:

<u>GENEALOGIST</u>	<u>LANDMAN</u>
Use of Indexes	Use of Indexes
Research Areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courthouses • Archives • Books • Online 	Usually just courthouse records
Research on one person and/or relatives	Research on all people, their heirs, and or companies that ever owned a tract of land

The ultimate goal of the Landman is to identify all current owners for leasing purposes. In many instances, mineral interest owners will not appear on the records because the subsurface estate has been severed from the surface estate, and will appear in a different chain of title.

Many times the mineral estate does not appear of record when the property changes hands due to intestacy. Since mineral interests are treated like real estate in most states and the rights do not terminate, there are often several generations of ownership that much be researched. Quite often heirs have no idea their loved one owned any mineral rights or had property under an oil and gas lease. Sometimes probates were opened and closed without mineral interests being identified, and sometimes out-of-state probate records were never recorded in the state and county where the

Continued on page 3

Opportunities in the Oil & Gas Industry, continued

Continued from page 2

property is located. All of these contribute to the difficulty of identifying the current owners, and all of these issues can create work opportunities for the forensic genealogist.

In oil and gas research, the Landman also researches additional issues genealogists never need to track, such as whether leases are currently held by production, ownership of the leasehold, ownership of royalty interests, right of ways and easements, location of navigable waters, and so on. Landmen usually work on tight deadlines, so trying to stop and do genealogical research can take more time than they are willing to dedicate to it. Therefore, while Landmen are concentrating on identifying all the other issues they need to address, they may want to sub-contract their genealogical research to a forensic genealogist. It is also a way for the land companies to minimize their business risk by hiring someone who is an expert in genealogical research.

Tips and Suggestions for finding work

Following are a few suggestions on how to break into the oil and gas industry

1. First and foremost it always helps if you know someone in the industry.
2. Don't try to sell yourself as having knowledge you don't
3. Learn the terms used in Oil and Gas that are useful in your genealogical research
4. Become an expert in Microsoft Word and Excel
5. Open the phone book and/or go online locating Oil and Gas brokers and/or Attorneys in your area of interest. (Brokers are typically listed under energy land services)
6. Go to your local courthouse to see who is working there and ask who they are working for and if their broker may be in need of a forensic genealogist
7. Understand the difference between the genealogist's fees and Landmen's fees
8. Join Oil and Gas networking groups on LinkedIn.
9. Further your education in forensic genealogy and the Oil and Gas Business through continuing education opportunities.

Conclusion

Forensic genealogists interested in pursuing oil and gas work should contact land companies and Landmen to make them aware of their area of expertise. There is a potentially huge untapped market waiting for the forensic genealogist, which can lead to developing a steady clientele.

FGI Door Prizes Announced

CAFG has received some excellent door prizes for this upcoming event, and the list continues to grow.

At this time the following door prizes have been donated:

- **Ancestry.com** – a one-year World Explorer subscription
- **GenealogyBank** - a one-year subscription
- **Mocavo** – 2 one-year Gold subscriptions
- **Fold3** – 2 one-year subscriptions
- **Newspapers.com** – 2 one-year subscriptions
- **find my past** –
 - 1 six-month subscription
 - 1 twelve-month subscription
 - 2 T-shirts
 - 1 Leather portfolio w/zipper
- **Genealogy and the Law** by Freilich and Freilich. Donated by Connie Lenzen
- **Courthouse Indexes Illustrated** by Christine Rose. Donated by Wanda Smith
- **The Lost Ancestor**. Donated by Juli Whittaker

Note: If you already have any of these subscriptions and win, your subscription will be extended.

Members in the News

Janice Sellers was selected by the Calaveras Genealogical Society to be the speaker at their annual Family History Seminar on Saturday, April 18, 2015. She has also been chosen to be a speaker at the Northwest Genealogy Conference August 13-15 in Arlington, Washington.

In addition to working in forensic genealogy, **Liesa Healy-Miller** is now a licensed private detective. Along with handling estate cases, she now also locates witnesses and traces missing persons across the U.S. and abroad. Her new company is called Healy-Miller Associates at: www.healymiller.com.

Debra Osborne Spindle will be teaching 4 modules in “The Five Civilized Tribes” course at IGHR at Samford University in Birmingham Alabama in June. Topics include:

- Federal Agencies in the early Federal Period, 1789-1801
- Records of Religious Missions among the Five Civilized Tribes
- Research at the Oklahoma Historical Society
- Researching the Five Tribes Online: Record Availability and Foibles

She has also published a 4-page laminated guide to conducting genealogical research in Oklahoma through the Oklahoma Historical Society Research Division. The guide contains a timeline and overview of Oklahoma history, a list of key resources, and information on records and repositories.