Pea River Historical & Genealogical Society Newsletter

Identifying, collecting, preserving, archiving, researching, and promoting interest in historic and genealogical materials and records of Coffee County and the Pea River Region of South Alabama

June 2013

Larry Herbst 1927 - 2013



It is with deep sadness that we report the death of Lawrence "Larry" Herbst on June 9 at his home in Dothan. Until his retirement in 2010, Larry served faithfully as Director of the Depot Museum.

Larry was born in Brighton, Michigan, on September 18, 1927. He worked as a Master Planner with Civil Service. He is survived by his wife Christine of Dothan, daughter Susan F. Akins (Bill) of Marbury, sons Dwight L. French of Reno, Nevada, and Robert R. French (Linda) of Antrim, New Hampshire, along with four nieces and a nephew, eleven grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. Larry was buried in Meadowlawn Cemetery in Enterprise. In May 2010, we held a covered dish dinner at the Citizens Bank Community Room in Enterprise honoring Larry for his many years of service as Director of the Depot Museum.

(Below) Georgia Fleming, 1st Vice President, on behalf of the Society, presented Larry with an engraved plaque recognizing his service.

If you would like to contribute to the Memorial Fund for the purchase of a fixture for the Depot Museum in memory of Larry, send a check or money order payable to PRHGS and marked "Herbst Memorial Fund" to the PRHGS at PO Box 310628, Enterprise AL 36331. We would like to thank Goolsby Bros. Plumbing and Electric for their initial donation which allowed us to establish the Fund.





Troy Civil War Forum

June 3, 2013

Our Great Ancestors

Even if they're unknown to the world and have never accomplished anything of significance, the siblings of our grandparents are still "great," aren't they? In my family, the terms "great-uncle" and "great-aunt" described my grandmother's brothers and sisters. Most people I "talk genealogy" with use the terms in the same way, and I've found numerous references in printed and on-line genealogies.

But they aren't correct. Following that path can lead to confusion in trying to name earlier generations. If Grandma's sister is my greataunt, then Grandma's *father*'s sister is my greatgreat-aunt (two greats). But Grandma's father himself is my great-grandfather – only one great. Continuing back in time, my great-great-greatgrandfather (three greats) would have sisters who would be my great-great-great-great-aunts (four greats) – *if* I begin by calling my grandparents' siblings my "great" uncles and aunts.

Using the correct terminology solves this problem. The siblings of grandparents are *grandaunts* and *granduncles*. The number of "greats" used for the direct ancestor is the same Members of the Pea River Historical & Genealogical Society attended the Troy Civil War Forum on June 3 at the Troy Public Library.

Pictured at left in the center are Forum Director Margaret Stewart of Troy, and speaker Henry Howard of Montgomery. Around them are PRHGS members (L-R) Donna Clark, Joe Clark, Brian Fleming, Mack Lott, and Georgia Fleming.

Henry Howard is a volunteer docent at the First White House of the Confederacy in Montgomery. He presented an interesting program on the history of the home.

as that used for the siblings of the direct ancestor. Thus, the sister of my 7-times greatgrandfather is my 7-times great-aunt. --GF

G

Ancestry If you could see your ancestors all standing in a row, Would you be proud of them? Or don't you really know? Strange discoveries are often made, in climbing the family tree. Sometimes one is found in line who shocks the progeny.

If you could see your ancestors all standing in a row, Perhaps there might be one or two you wouldn't care to know. Now turn the question right about and take another view. When you shall meet your ancestors, will they be proud of you? -- Anonymous Folsom Birthplace Historical Marker



On May 30, an enthusiastic crowd gathered to watch the unveiling of an Alabama Historic Marker at the birthplace of Governor James E. "Big Jim" Folsom. The marker was purchased and placed by the John Coffee DAR Chapter as a Historic Preservation Project. Folsom's oldest daughter Rachel was a charter member of the Chapter, which is celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year.

Chapter Regent Nell Gilmer presided over the program. Attendees were welcomed by Mickey Murdock, Mayor of Elba. Frank White, executive director of the Alabama Historical Commission, spoke to the crowd on the importance of historical preservation.





Folsom was born October 9, 1908 near Elba, the only Governor of Alabama born in Coffee County, and only the second person to have served two full terms in office. (1947-1951 and 1955-1959). He was the son of Joshua Marion Folsom and Eulala Cornelia Dunnavant.

Governor Folsom's daughters (pictured above), Rachel Lichenstein and Eulala Cunningham, both of Fairhope, Alabama, unveiled the marker.

Another historic landmark – the old Coffee County Jail – can be seen behind the marker.

The Folsom home, at left, was placed on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage on September 21, 1976. In 2002, it was moved to its current location on Putnam Street in Elba, from its original location near Folsom Mill Creek and Tabernacle communities.

The Pea River Historical & Genealogical Society contributed to the DAR fund for the purchase of the marker. We are proud to be able to support this outstanding preservation work.

Queries & Requests

If you have a question, request, or something else to share with your fellow members, this is the place for it. E-mail Georgia at <u>hyacinth@ala.net</u> if you can answer questions or fulfill requests, and I will put you in contact.

- □ Wanted: a map showing the location of Simmons Mill
- □ Wanted to buy: <u>Pea River Reflections</u>
- Wanted: a photograph of "The Houseboat", a teen hangout in the 1960s and early 1970s on Highway 84 near New Brockton.

Mark Your Calendars!

July 1 – Troy Civil War Forum, 6:30 pm at the Troy Public Library, 500 E. Walnut St. The Forum is open to the public; there is no charge for attending. Clark Boutwell will present a program about Thomas Jefferson Carlisle.

July 3 – Freedom Fest, Festival Fields, Fort Rucker, 4:00 pm – 10:00 pm. Vendor booths, food, entertainment, children's fun zone and rides, and fireworks. There is no admission fee. July 7, 14, 21, and 28 – Heritage Forums, Landmark Park in Dothan. The Park will present programs on state and local history. Admission is charged, reservations are recommended (call 334-794-3452).

How Many Ancestors?

by Georgia Fleming

Have you ever contemplated how many ancestors you have, at a given point in the past? There is a handy formula for calculating the answer:

NPR = 2^x

(where NPR is the number of parental relations and X is the number of generations back from me). For example, going back one generation, X = 1:

NPR = 2^1

NPR = 2

I have just calculated that I have two parents.

I knew that, and that I have four grandparents and eight great-grandparents. But how many great-great-great-great-great-grandparents do I have? That's seven generations back:

$NPR = 2^7$ NPR = 128

The math is easily done on a scientific calculator. If you don't have one, entering "scientific calculator" in the Google search box on the Internet will cause one to pop up for your use. Use the x^{y} key.

The results of our calculations produce the familiar "ancestor pyramid":

ME

2 Parents 4 Grandparents 8 Great Grandparents 16 Great Great Grandparents 32 Great Great Great Grandparents 64 Great Great Great Great Grandparents 128 Great Great Great Great Great Grandparents 256 Great Great Great Great Great Great Grandparents 512 Great Great Great Great Great Great Grandparents 1024 Great Great Great Great Great Great Grandparents

Our formula, and the concept of the pyramid, works well for a while. The above pyramid represents ten generations back. Using 25 years as the average length of a generation, those 8-times great-grandparents should have been born about 250 years before the birth year of "ME". Using my mother Virginia Smith Fleming as the base generation, the estimate is close to accurate. She was born in 1918. Her 8-times great-grandfather Phillip Pendleton was born in 1654 – a difference of 263 years.

However, the exponential growth of the pyramid will eventually present a problem. While ten generations back (1,024 8-times great-grandparents) is perfectly reasonable, *thirty* generations back yields 1,073,741,824 28-times great-grandparents. Using our generation average of 25 years, those 28-times great-grandparents would have lived in the High Middle Ages. We should have an even more impressive number of ancestors 64 generations back, living during the age of the Roman Empire – 18,446,744,073,709,552,000 to be exact. *Saying* that number would begin, "Eighteen quintillion, four hundred forty-six quadrillion ..."

Here's the problem: according to the Population Reference Bureau, the number of people who have ever been born on Earth is about 108 billion. I can't have quintillions of 62-times great-grandparents, because quintillions of people have never existed. I can't even have a billion 28-times great-grandparents living primarily in Britain in the Middle Ages, because the population of the entire world in the year 1200 is estimated to have been only about 450 million people.

What happened to our formula that worked so well for several centuries? The answer is *pedigree collapse*, a genealogical term that means our cousins married each other. My mother's great-great-grandparents, for example, were first cousins. Therefore, their children had fewer unique ancestors than would the offspring of two unrelated people – six great-grandparents

rather than the normal eight. Even if your research hasn't found any cousin marriages, rest assured, they are there. *Any* cousin relationship in a marriage means there's a common ancestor.

Marriage between cousins was more frequent centuries ago. People lived in smaller communities and didn't travel often (if at all). They were likely to be at least distantly related to everybody else in their village, and possibly to everybody within walking distance. So at some point, our pyramid begins to look more like a diamond, with the number of ancestors in a given generation decreasing rather than increasing. A given individual may occupy two, or even more, places in our tree.

At some point, we reach a maximum number of ancestors. Some experts believe that point to be around the year 1200, and the maximum number to be around 2,000,000.

Remembering ... 1955

- Among those born in 1955 were: actors Bruce Willis and Kevin Costner, entrepreneurs Bill Gates and Steve Jobs (d. 2011), Arkansas politician Mike Huckabee, cellist Yo-Yo Ma, and "Science Guy" Bill Nye.
- In the news: The American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations merged to become American's largest labor union federation, the AFL-CIO; a mutual defense treaty, the Warsaw Pact, was signed by eight communist nations in eastern Europe; the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) was formed to block further communist gains in Southeast Asia; President Eisenhower sent the first U. S. advisors to South Vietnam.
- Ernest Borgnine won an Academy Award for Best Actor for his role in *Marty*, which also won Best Picture.
- The average annual income in the U. S. was \$4,962.
- Unemployment in the U. S. stood at 4.9%; the minimum wage was 75¢ an hour.
- A first-class stamp cost 3ϕ -- unchanged since 1933.
- A loaf of bread cost 18¢, a gallon of milk was 92¢.
- The average house cost \$17,600.
- Dwight D. Eisenhower (Republican) was President of the United States; Richard Nixon was Vice President. Eisenhower would defeat Adlai Stevenson again for a second term in 1956.
- James E. "Big Jim" Folsom, Sr. was serving his second term as Governor of Alabama. His major successes were the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Bill and the inland docks program.
- Popular books published in 1955 were *The Return of the King*, the third and final installment of J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings; Auntie Mame* by Patrick Dennis; and *Marjorie Morningstar* by Herman Wouk.
- Stan Musial (St. Louis Cardinals) hit his 300th home run. The Brooklyn Dodgers (finally) won the World Series, defeating the New York Yankees 2-0 in the 7th game of the Series.
- Among the top songs of 1955 were: "Rock Around the Clock" by Bill Haley and His Comets, "Sincerely" by the McGuire Sisters, and "Sixteen Tons" by Tennessee Ernie Ford.
- Top television shows in 1955 were: *I Love Lucy* and *The Ed Sullivan Show*, along with a new show that debuted on CBS in 1955 -- *Gunsmoke*, which ran for another 20 years. Also new on TV in 1955: the popular game show *The \$64,000 Question, Alfred Hitchcock*

Presents, *The Lawrence Welk Show*, and an ABC show aimed at kids, *The Mickey Mouse Club*.

- Life expectancy in the United States was 66.7 years for men, 72.8 years for women (it is now 78 for males and 81 for females).
- The polio vaccine developed by Dr. Jonas Salk was announced a success after testing.
- General Motors Corporation became the first American corporation to make a profit of over one billion dollars in one year.
- First seen in 1955 Ray Kroc's first McDonald's restaurant opened in Des Plaines, Illinois, on April 15 -- the same day that Kroc incorporated his company as McDonald's Systems, Inc. (which he would later rename McDonald's Corporation); Coca Cola in a can was first produced in 1955 for a test market of American troops overseas; factory seat belts in an American made car (Ford); Disneyland opened in Anaheim, California, at a cost of \$17 million to complete; legislation was approved that made the phrase "In God We Trust" mandatory on all U. S. coins and paper currency; the first nuclear-powered submarine, USS Nautilus, put to sea from Groton, Connecticut; and Swiss electrical engineer George de Mestral patented his invention of fabric strips with hook-and-loop fasteners useful for making temporary bonds between two surfaces, a product he called Velcro.
- Last seen in 1955 Notable deaths in 1955 included actor James Dean; Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of penicillin; Albert Einstein; legendary baseball pitcher CyYoung; and former U. S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull;

The Census

Census Taker: "Good morning, madam, I'm taking the census."

Old Lady: "The what?"

Census Taker: "The c-e-n-s-u-s!"

Old Lady: "For lan's sakes! What with tramps takin' everythin' they kin lay their han's on, young folks takin' fotygrafs of ye without so much as askin', an' impudent fellows comin' roun' as wants ter take yer senses, pretty soon there won't be nothin' left ter take, I'm thinkin'."

--1890 Harper's Weekly

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