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## **Genealogy Pointers (09-15-09)**

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### **24-Hour Price Break on the "Bible" of New England Genealogy**

*(Sale price in effect until 11:59 PM, EDT, Today, September 15, 2009)*

James Savage's [Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England](#) (originally published in four volumes between 1860 and 1862) is still regarded as the greatest piece of scholarship in New England genealogy--nearly 150 years after its original publication. Savage's achievement was to identify virtually every individual who arrived in New England before 1692, giving the date of each male settler's marriage and death; the dates of birth, marriage, and death of his children; and the names and birthdates of his grandchildren--thus recording the beginning of the third generation in New England.

Savage's [Dictionary](#) is a staggering achievement, and it belongs on the bookshelf of every genealogist with significant New England ancestry. For the next 24 hours you can get your copy of this "Bible" of New England genealogy at a substantial savings. This four-volume set ordinarily sells for \$185.00. Buy it before 11:59 PM, EDT, tonight, and you can own it for only \$109.95!

That's right, you can save more than \$75.00 off the list price of this authoritative source on New England genealogy. If you've been considering adding this remarkable reference work to your genealogy library, now is the perfect time.

[http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main\\_page=product\\_info&item\\_number=5170&NLC-GenPointers1](http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=5170&NLC-GenPointers1)

### **Of Related Interest:**

If you are looking for the perfect companion work to go with your set of Savage, it has to be our recently published Female Index to James Savage's Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England, compiled by Patty Barthell Myers.

Because Savage's [Dictionary](#) was originally published one volume at a time, in

alphabetical order, the author never produced an index to the work as a whole. This limitation has always made it difficult to find female ancestors. (Dexter's index to Savage, added in 1884, is just a surname index and of no help in finding females.)

Now, however, thanks to the heroic efforts of Patty Barthell Myers, the difficulty of finding females in Savage's *Dictionary* is a thing of the past. In her new book, aptly titled [Female Index to "Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England" by James Savage](#), Mrs. Myers identifies every woman/girl to be found in the *Dictionary*. Each female appears in the Myers [Index](#) under a maiden name and, separately, under the name of her husband. As a matter of fact, in the Myers [Index](#), maiden names jump right out at the reader when they are shown under their husbands' names because the maiden names are listed in parentheses right after their given names. This dual arrangement makes it possible for researchers to discover their female ancestors, especially widows who remarried one or more times--otherwise nearly impossible in Savage's original work. These qualities make Patty Myers' [Female Index](#) the perfect companion to the Savage opus.

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## **Locating Church Records, by Val D. Greenwood**

### **Problems and Solutions:**

Church records are of no value if you cannot find the ones that fit your specific problems. In America, where church and state are separate and where people with ancestry from all over Europe lived side by side and inter-married, there are two main problems:

1. Determining the church with which your ancestor had affiliation.
2. Locating the records of that church in the locality where your ancestor lived.

Clues to solve the first problem might come from many sources. Perhaps the family's present affiliation can help you, or the national origin of the family, or family tradition. You might find your answer in a will or a deed or on a tombstone. It may be in an obituary. Or there may be a clue in the locality where your ancestor resided--it may have been the settlement of a particular religious denomination--but you must know the locality's history to determine this. (A person may have belonged to several churches during his/her lifetime. This was quite common on the frontier because if a town had only one church, that was usually where the town's residents [especially the Protestants] went to worship, regardless of former affiliation.) In later years obituaries, death certificates, hospital records, etc., contain statements of religious preference.

The second problem may be the more difficult of the two. There are some helps and reference tools to assist in locating church records, but even these are quite incomplete and may be misleading if we are not aware of their limitations. There is, in fact, no complete guide to American church records. This is an area that lies wide open to further study. The personnel at the LDS Family History Library have done some studies on the location of church records, but they have a long way to go before the true objective is attained.(1)

Some useful studies were made in the 1930s and early 1940s as part of the Historical Records Survey under the auspices of the Works Projects Administration (WPA) of the New Deal. The "Inventories of Church Archives" that resulted from these studies were excellent for the geographic areas and the churches they covered at the time they were made, but much of the information in them is now outdated. Many of the records have since been moved, and many that were in private hands are now completely untraceable.(2)

We must not assume that church records do not exist just because we have been unable to find them; on the other hand, it would be foolish to say that no church records have ever been lost or destroyed, because many of these records are, indeed, no longer in existence. The following biographical sketch (obituary) of George Washington Bassett tells some of the history of the Immanuel Church:

"In the year 1843, soon after his removal to his estate in Hanover, Mr. Bassett became much concerned at the prostrate condition of the Church in his neighborhood and the adjoining counties of King William and New Kent. The parishes had died out and been without rectors or church services for more than half a century."

Was this common? What of records during this "more than half a century"? What about records of the earlier period before the church "died out"? All of these questions should be considered in a study of American church records. The same thing may have happened in hundreds of other churches. What does happen to the records when a church becomes defunct? It has been suggested by some that many records of the English Church met their doom during the Revolutionary War as part of an action of reprisal against the British, but I am unaware of any specific situations of this nature.

### **Finding the Records:**

If you can find early American church records they are peerless as a source of genealogical evidence, so let's consider some steps you might take:

1. First consider that the records are still in the custody of the church where they were kept, if that church still exists.
2. An advertisement in a local newspaper will often lead to the whereabouts of available records, especially those in private hands.
3. Don't be afraid to ask questions--of ministers, chambers of commerce, old-timers; anyone who might know.
4. The records of many churches have been published, especially in genealogical and historical periodicals, and are thus available. These are generally not too accessible either from the standpoint of finding the proper magazine or of knowing that an article of value is within it. One of the best approaches is to use the various periodical indexes listed in Chapter 6 [of [The Researcher's Guide to American Genealogy](#)].

A few church records are also published in book form (both alone and in conjunction with other records), and you should be aware of this possibility. Look under the locality of interest in your library catalog, for example Hinshaw's work on the Quakers.(3) These seven volumes (in eight) contain abstracts of Monthly Meeting records, are indexed, and are quite useful as far as they go; but they certainly do not cover all Quaker records. They are, however, a representative example of published American church records. In using published church records, as with all published sources, remember that they present secondary evidence and frequently contain copying errors.

5. Many church records are now being microfilmed by the churches themselves and by other agencies. Historical societies often preserve microfilm copies as well as originals, and copies are frequently available for sale or for reading. The LDS Family History Library has microfilmed the records of many churches throughout the U.S., and you may find it worthwhile to check its holdings before making a lot of other searches.

Libraries and historical societies have collected many church records (especially in their local areas) and these are readily available for searching. One of the big problems is to determine just who has the records. The "National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections" can be useful in that effort.(4)

***Editor's Note: Some Record Locations***

This article was excerpted from Chapter 23 of Mr. Greenwood's book, [The Researcher's Guide to American Genealogy, Third Edition](#). Among other things, this chapter includes an extraordinarily detailed, if still partial, list of church record depositories in states east of the Mississippi.(5)

**Footnotes:**

(1). See Jimmy B. Parker and Wayne T. Morris, "A Definitive Study of Major U.S. Genealogical Records: Ecclesiastical and Secular" (Area I, no. 36), World Conference on Records and Genealogical Seminar (Salt Lake City: The Genealogical Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1969).

(2). See chapter 10 of [The Researcher's Guide to American Genealogy](#) for a list of the guides to the WPA inventories of church records in the several states.

(3). William Wade Hinshaw, , 7 vols. (in 8), 1936. ([Vols. 1-6](#) have been reprinted by Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore. Vol. 7 is available from the Indiana Historical Society.)

(4). See bibliographic references under "bibliographies" in chapter 6 of [The Researcher's Guide to American Genealogy](#) and footnote number five in chapter 9, and the textual discussion relating thereto.

(5). The researcher should become familiar with Peter G. Mode, *Source Book and Bibliographical Guide for American Church History*, 1921 (Boston: J. S. Canner & Co.,

1964 reprint). This scholarly work is a peerless reference for the genealogist and historian who seek a better understanding of church history and religious development in America. Another important reference work is E. Kay Kirkham, *A Survey of American Church Records*, 4th ed. (Logan, UT: Everton Publishers, 1978).

For more information about *The Researcher's Guide to American Genealogy*, please access the following link:

[http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main\\_page=product\\_info&item\\_number=2362](http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=2362)

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## Genealogy in Old Newspapers

Like their present-day counterparts, old newspapers are a great source of marriage and obituary notices. In fact, early newspapers are sometimes the ONLY source of genealogical information for a particular county or city at a particular point in time. Since 18th- and 19th-century newspapers have not come down to us with their own indexes, it's daunting to contemplate scouring them--whether in the original or on microfilm--for their "buried" genealogical content.

Fortunately, a number of dedicated genealogists have taken on the assignment of sifting through the complete run of various early newspapers to find these buried genealogical nuggets. In the majority of cases, their efforts have yielded book-length collections of marriage, death, or other vital records; they've also yielded lists of passengers, public officials, college graduates, members of committees of correspondence, and addressees of unclaimed letters, as well as other items of genealogical value. Below you'll find 11 publications featuring genealogical information extracted from newspapers in North America and the British Isles. If you haven't turned up that missing ancestor in other sources, you may just discover him or her up in one of the following collections:

### [Kentucky Obituaries, 1787-1854 from the "Register of the Kentucky Historical Society"](#)

These 5,000 obituary notices give, for the most part, the name of the deceased, place of residence, name(s) of wife or husband, parents or other survivors, date of death, and other genealogical details.

### [Genealogical Data from Colonial New York Newspapers](#)

This work consists of abstracts of genealogical data from four of New York's earliest newspapers--the *New-York Gazette* (1726-1744) and the *New-York Weekly Journal* (1733-1751), the two earliest city papers, and the *New-York Mercury* and the *Weekly Mercury* (1752-1783). The abstracts yield information concerning marriage, birth, death, age, status, place of residence, and place of origin covering the years 1726 through most of 1783. The abstracts refer to colonists from New Jersey, New England, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, as well as New York.

### [10,000 Vital Records of Eastern New York, 1777-1834](#)

This volume focuses on the interior county of Otsego and on the 300-mile strip

comprising the easternmost counties of Clinton, Essex, Saratoga, Rensselaer, Albany, Columbia, and "Old Dutchess," which, prior to 1812, included the territory of present-day Putnam County.

#### [10,000 Vital Records of Central New York, 1813-1850](#)

These 10,000 vital records were drawn from the marriage and death columns of various central New York newspapers published before 1850, specifically those published in the section of the state between Geneva and Utica. In the absence of "official" vital records for the area, it stands as an almost perfect substitute.

#### [10,000 Vital Records of Western New York, 1809-1850](#)

The 10,000 vital records in this work were drawn from the marriage and death columns of five western New York newspapers published before 1850: the *Republican Advocate* of Batavia, the *Steuben Farmers Advocate* of Bath, the *Geneva Gazette*, the *Jamestown Journal*, and Palmyra's *Wayne Sentinel*. All persons who were subjects of death notices are listed in alphabetical order, marriage officials are identified in the appendix, and all others mentioned in the text are listed in the index.

#### [Index to Marriages and Deaths the New York World, 1860-1865](#)

James Maher has compiled an index to 3,500 marriages and about 8,500 obituaries for the period 1860 to 1865. The marriages are arranged in two alphabetical sequences: one for grooms and the other for brides. Each marriage entry gives the full names of the bride and groom and the date of the marriage. The death notices are arranged alphabetically, giving each decedent's name and date of death. Persons seeking additional information from a particular marriage or death notice (age at death, place of birth, name of minister, groom's residence, etc.) may contact Mr. Maher, who has transcribed all the genealogically significant data from the notices and stored them in a separate database.

#### [Genealogical Data Relating to the German Settlers of Pennsylvania](#)

This is a compilation of abstracts of articles, advertisements, and paid notices that appeared in the five principal German newspapers published in Philadelphia and Germantown from 1743 to 1800. The data covers death notices, advertisements for runaway servants, notices of arrival and removal in the Pennsylvania area, and notices placed by persons seeking news of relatives and friends.

#### [Index to Obituary Notices in "The Religious Herald," Richmond, Virginia, 1828-1938](#)

This work contains 19,000 references to persons who were either members of or connected to Baptist churches in Virginia. The notices are arranged alphabetically by surname and thereunder by given name. All the notices give the decedent's date of death, and some indicate whether the decedent was married, give the name of a spouse, or indicate military or other professional rank.

#### [Local Newspapers, 1750-1920 in England and Wales, Channel Islands, Isle of Man: A Select Location List](#)

In the mid-18th century the provincial press in England began to carry news of local events, including news of births, marriages, and deaths. Such papers are of obvious value

to the genealogist, and the author of this work, Mr. Jeremy Gibson, has produced a fine location list to these publications.

[American Data from the "Aberdeen Journal," 1748-1783](#)

In this book, David Dobson has extracted and noted all the genealogical references to the Americas made in "Scottish" sources appearing in the *Aberdeen Journal* between 1748 and 1783. By "Scottish," Mr. Dobson refers only to sources within Scotland and not to data that the "Journal" published from English or colonial sources. The period covers the years when the Chesapeake tobacco trade was under the control of Glasgow merchants, and Scottish emigration to the colonies was becoming significant.

[Scots in the West Indies, 1707-1857](#)

In the compilation of this volume, David Dobson combed archives and libraries in Scotland, England, and Denmark to yield the first listing devoted to Scottish inhabitants of the West Indies for the period between 1707 and 1857. While the full impact of Scottish settlement in the West Indies has yet to be fully researched, Mr. Dobson has clearly broken new ground where immigration source material is concerned. Arranged alphabetically by surname, many of the entries in this volume were culled from Scottish newspapers, like the *Aberdeen Journal*, in which notices would appear seeking to employ managers and servants. In all, nearly 3,000 Scotsmen are identified by full name, island inhabited, date, source of the information, and, sometimes, by occupation, parent(s) name(s), and education.

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**Lineage Record CD Promises to Shortcut Your Research**

What two things do the Society of the Crown of Charlemagne, National Society of Sons and Daughters of the Pilgrims, DAR, National Society Colonial Dames XVII Century, Order of Americans of Armorial Ancestry, Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Delaware, and a half-dozen other hereditary organizations have in common? First, their lineage records establish their members' ancestry back to the 19th, 18th, 17th, or earlier century. If you can tie in your ancestors to one or more of the members of these organizations, it's kind of like hitting the Daily Double--you get to advance your genealogy by centuries with a minimum of effort. Second, you can search their published lineage records with the click of a mouse on our CD-ROM publication, [Lineages of Hereditary Society Members](#). This CD also contains an electronic index to the 440,000 persons named! A search on a single name will turn up all references to that name found in any of the 25 volumes contained herein. And these 25 books represent the single best collection of published lineage records available in electronic format!

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## Revolutionary War Desertions, by Joseph Lee Boyle

*(Excerpted from the Introduction to Mr. Boyle's new book, [He Loves a Good Deal of Rum': Military Desertions During the American Revolution.](#))*

The Patriot cause suffered throughout the war from a chronic shortage of men. One of the fundamental problems with the Continental Army was that many Americans were reluctant to establish a European-style professional army with long-term enlistments for fear of a strong military leader seizing the government. Short-term enlistments were initially the standard, and these continued to some degree throughout the war. Without a professional attitude, soldiers were much more likely to be casual about remaining in ranks for the full term of their enlistment period.

Men were both hesitant to enlist and deserted for a number of reasons. One of these was the harsh punishments inflicted for relatively minor violations. Civilians refused to enlist as they heard stories from deserters and returning soldiers about the arrogance and severity of the Continental officers. Stories such as a man who received 50 lashes for cutting up his blanket, did nothing to encourage military service.

The average number of lashes in 1775 was 39, whereas British soldiers sometimes received 500 to 1,000. After Congress passed new Articles of War in 1776, the average penalty was 100 lashes, unless there were additional violations such as deserting to the enemy. Then they might be sentenced to serve for the duration of the conflict, to service on a Continental man of war after receiving 100 lashes, or to death.

Service in the Continental Army was indeed the stuff of legend for the fortitude and perseverance of those who stayed. Hardships due to poor or non-existent food and clothing, infrequent paydays, rampant monetary inflation, fear of combat, homesickness, family problems, crowded unsanitary life in camp, and rampant disease were all contributing factors to soldiers refusing to join or abruptly leaving military life. Washington wrote happily in June 1777 that, "By paying off the Troops and keeping them well supplied with provisions &ca. desertions have become much less frequent." Unfortunately, this was the exception not the rule.

Bounties, a cash bonus for enlisting, were offered by both the states and Congress. At one point Virginia offered 400 dollars and 300 acres of land to men who would enlist for the duration of the war. The "bounty war" resulted in states bidding against each other for the services of a potential soldier. This motivated some men to enlist, receive a bounty, and then desert and re-enlist in another unit, in order to get another bounty. A soldier who was executed in 1778 had been convicted of deserting seven times.

In America, for most of the war a skilled workman could earn far more than a soldier, and even common laborers could earn more. This was particularly true during the prime agricultural season when farmhands were in short supply. In July 1777, when private soldiers were paid 6 2/3 dollars a month, David Grier lamented to Anthony Wayne that laborers were being paid a dollar or more per day, "which Intirely Prevents any success in

Recruiting therefore."

Some deserters went to the enemy, but more often they seem to have gone home. Though the army sent detachments out to get them, their friends and families sheltered them. In 1781 Washington wrote that in many instances, "Deserters which have been apprehended by Officers have been rescued by the People." Others moved to Vermont or west of the Alleghenies to avoid capture. In 1783 Washington wrote that the "Grants," a mountainous area between New Hampshire and Vermont, were "populated by hundreds of Deserters from this Army."

The most thorough study of the subject estimates the average desertion rate in the Continental Army at 20 to 25 percent. The desertion rate declined significantly in the latter years of the war, as the army became more professional. In 1777 the New Jersey line had a 42 percent rate of desertion, but after 1778 the rate averaged about 10 percent. It is likely that any compiled figures are too low, as the reports of sick absent soldiers contained many who had deserted.

The most severe penalty for desertion was death, usually by hanging. One study found that of 225 sentences of death only 40 to 75 were actually carried out. Last-minute reprieves were common. In May 1780 eleven men were scheduled to be executed, all but one for desertion. Their graves had been dug, eight were on ladders with the ropes around their necks, when a reprieve for ten of the men came from Washington. The one man who was executed, James Coleman, was considered more culpable than the others and was convicted of having forged discharges enabling more than 100 soldiers to leave the army, including himself.

In addition to the laws made by Congress, each state had its own law for dealing with deserters from state and militia units. But these do not seem to have been very effective either. And, of course, the British, Hessians, and French all had their codes and punishments.

Occasional mass pardons to deserters were not uncommon in armies of the period. Washington offered general pardons four times, the first on April 6, 1777. In 1782 a pardon was even made to deserters who joined the enemy.

The Americans tried to entice the Hessian mercenaries to desert, playing up the frictions between the British and German troops. After the French army arrived in America, they also tried to bolster their ranks from the enemy. In 1780 a proclamation "To GERMAN DESERTERS" promised "proper encouragement" for those who enlisted in the French regiments.

Both sides enlisted prisoners of war and deserters despite repeated bad experiences and various cautions. While the Continental Congress forbade enlistment of prisoners of war in 1778, the continual push to fill the ranks ensured that it still occurred. If a soldier was a prisoner of war and escaped from the usual loose security where he was being held, was he still a POW, or a deserter? Recruiters hungry for cannon fodder were unlikely to

discriminate.[END]

***Editor's Note:***

This article was excerpted from the Introduction to Joseph Lee Boyle's authoritative new two-volume collection, [He Loves a Good Deal of Rum': Military Desertions During the American Revolution](#). Mr. Boyle's volumes name 7,500 deserters whose identities were culled from advertisements printed in 38 newspapers published from Massachusetts to North Carolina from 1775 to 1783. Here is a representative example:

"Deserted from my company, in Col. Craft's battalion of colony train of artillery, Michael Carrick, 31 years of age, about 5 foot 8 inches high, with a cut over his right eye brow, well set, black hair, and buck skin breeches. He had on a grey out side jacket and striped waist coat, a new cotton shirt, and carried away with him a French musket and bayonet. Any person who shall stop said deserter and thief, shall have a reward of FOUR DOLLARS, and all charges paid by JOSEPH BALCH." *The Boston Gazette and Country Journal*, July 22, 1776; July 29, 1776.

Old initial printing of [He Loves a Good Deal of Rum](#) sold out in three months. We have replenished our supply, so the volumes are available anew. Please consult the following links for ordering and other information about these recently transcribed, underutilized source from the American Revolution

**Volume 1, 1775-June 30, 1777:**

[http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main\\_page=product\\_info&item\\_number=9946](http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=9946)

**Volume 2, June 30, 1777-1783:**

[http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main\\_page=product\\_info&item\\_number=9947](http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=9947)

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**Blog: Writing Well—Resources for the Family History Author**

After all the hard work genealogists put into researching and compiling their family histories, they are usually excited to give copies of their findings to family members, friends, and anyone else who might be interested. Unfortunately, like the horse brought to the trough that cannot be forced to drink, our loved ones are most likely to actually read our genealogies IF we also write them intelligently and with some imagination. That's why Carolyn Barkley has prepared this week's posting on our blog, [www.genealogyandfamilyhistory.com](http://www.genealogyandfamilyhistory.com), expressly with that goal in mind. Don't miss it.

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