



# THE Forum Insider

Newsletter of the Genealogical Forum of Oregon  
Volume 35 • Number 8 • May 2024

## New Home Committee Eyes Opportunity

In 2021, our 75th anniversary, the GFO established a fund to purchase a permanent home. The announced target date to purchase and move into our own building was late spring, 2026. This date was chosen because we have a short window every five years to renew our existing lease.

We are still two years short of that target date. Nevertheless, over the past year, a few members have watched the real estate listings for affordable properties that would meet our needs. The problem with buying a property “early” is that our lease obligation would overlap expenses for utilities and maintenance. But we wanted to keep our eyes open for an exceptional opportunity, one that was so good, it would make up for many months of redundant expenses.

In the last couple of months, there has been a tangible slump in the commercial real estate market. Suddenly, we are seeing buildings the size we need



become affordable. We have even toured a few hot prospects.

The New Home Committee could use more volunteers. Our greatest needs are continuing the New Home Campaign, selecting a building, identifying needed renovations, researching permits, and

working with architects.

Occasionally, a member sends in a suggestion for a building to look into. We regularly monitor LoopNet, but many properties never get listed there. If you come across a plausible property, feel free to email us with its address, what you like about it, and ideally, a photo of its “For Sale” sign.

For more information, contact [newhome@gfo.org](mailto:newhome@gfo.org).

## Mayflower Presents Index to Silver Books

On March 30, the Mayflower Society of Oregon presented the *Mayflower Families Index* to GFO. This three-volume set was published this year and contains a name index to all 41 Mayflower families’ books (also known as the “silver books”). This will be a useful reference for anyone who is researching a family connection to this very well-researched set of genealogies.



From left to right, Mayflower members Dunny Sorensen; Jenney Whittier, Vice Governor; Debra Sorensen, Governor; and GFO members Geoff Smith, President; and Harold Hinds, Jr., Director-at-Large

# Genealogical Forum of Oregon

2505 SE 11th Ave., Suite B18  
Portland, OR 97202-1061

## Mission

To inspire and empower every person to *discover* and *engage* with their family history.

## Contact Us

503-963-1932  
[info@gfo.org](mailto:info@gfo.org)

## Visitor Information

Library Hours  
Sunday 1–5 p.m.  
Monday & Tuesday 9:30 a.m.–5 p.m.  
Wednesday 1–5 p.m.

## Executive Board of Directors

President <b>Geoff Smith</b>	Treasurer <b>Rebecca Tait</b>
Vice President —	Director at Large <b>Harold Hinds</b>
Secretary <b>Alexa Waddle</b>	Director at Large <b>Tina Rainer</b>

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New Home <b>Geoff Smith</b>	Webmaster <b>Ed Vandehey</b>


## Submissions to *The Forum Insider*

Please send short stories, news, announcements, comments, and corrections to **Geri Auerbach, AG®**, and **Keri Logan**, Editors, at [insider@gfo.org](mailto:insider@gfo.org).



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Follow us 

*The Forum Insider* [ISSN 1051-5666 (print), ISSN 2377-469X (online)] is the newsletter of the Genealogical Forum of Oregon Inc., 2505 SE 11th Ave., Suite B-18, Portland, OR 97202-1061. Dues are \$51 per year for individual memberships and \$77 for joint memberships. Membership includes digital subscriptions to *The Bulletin* (March, June, September, and December) and *The Forum Insider* (January, February, April, May, July, August, October, and November). Material from *The Forum Insider* may be reproduced provided credit is given to the publication, the author of the article, and the Genealogical Forum of Oregon. *The Forum Insider* staff includes Geri Auerbach, AG®, and Keri Logan, Editors. Many thanks to our proofreaders April Ober, Tanya Goffman, and Harry Auerbach.

# Open House Returns for Another Successful Year

The GFO’s annual Open House took place March 16–24, 2024. We enjoyed 21 online presentations, attracting more than 1,100 attendees.

Like last year, we staffed the library every day with research assistants to conduct tours, help beginners, and answer questions from the handful of passers-by who noticed our sign on the sidewalk. We also experimented with some new initiatives:

- We held two hybrid classes, with our speaker in the library.
- We set up a Zoom viewing room in the library.
- We organized the lineage society panel presentation.

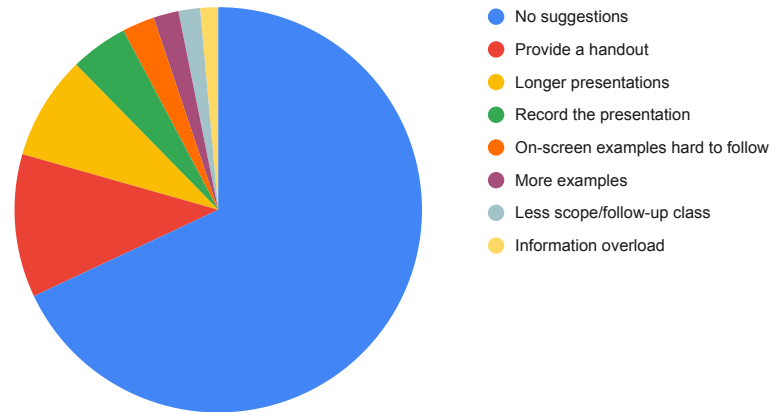
Open House is always invigorating, as attendees are sparked by new resources and approaches. We had more than two dozen presenters who freely contributed their time to create and present informative sessions.

At the end of every presentation, we asked attendees to answer a brief optional survey. We did not provide any multiple-choice options because open-ended questions are more insightful, although typically more difficult to quantify.

The most interesting set of responses was to the question: “What could be improved in this presentation?” We received 364 responses, with 370 quantifiable suggestions. (Some answers had more than one suggestion.) Suggestions that came up five times or more are summarized here:

- Most attendees (238) offered no suggestions for improvement.
- The most prominent suggestion (40) was to provide a handout.

Suggestions for Improvement



- The next most prominent suggestion dealt with the length of the presentations. Twenty-nine participants felt the presentation should have been longer; six suggested reducing the scope and adding a follow-on class; and five said that too much information was presented.
- Sixteen participants wished for a recording.
- Finally, nine participants found the on-screen examples to be hard to follow (generally too small on the screen), and seven wanted more examples.

Even the most critical survey question reveals that Open House participants want more of the same!

We will share survey results with each presenter. In the meantime, please join us in thanking the many volunteers who organized and conducted the event, including our wonderful speakers who invested many hours to make Open House a success.

As we wrap up the event, the Education Committee would love to hear any further feedback at [education@gfo.org](mailto:education@gfo.org).

## THERE'S ANOTHER WAY TO GIVE TO GFO! Donate a Vehicle



GIVE TODAY >



# Records, Not Revenue Announces Improvements to the U.S. CIS Genealogy Program

A new fee schedule for certain immigration records held by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service began on 1 April 2024. The **USCIS Genealogy Program** manages historical immigration documents. The program provides two services, an "Index Search" and a "Records Request." Previously, the cost of either of these services was \$65.00. The new fee is \$30.00.

The records held by the USCIS are

- Form AR-2 (Alien Registrations Forms)
- C-Files (Naturalization Certificate Files)
- Visa Files
- Registry Files
- A-Files (Alien Files)

The reason that these documents are of interest to genealogists and family historians is that any

immigrant who arrived on or after 1 July 1924 should be found in one of these record sets. Additionally, people who naturalized after September 1906, had contact with the INS after April 1944, or who were registered as an alien in 1940 would have records.

An additional improvement to the program is that if an index search finds forms that have already been digitized, those forms will be provided without any additional fee. Only AR-2s and C-Files have been digitized so far.

For more information on the program and the fee changes, see the press release of 31 January 2024 by Records, Not Revenue: **Records Not Revenue Celebrates "Small Victory."** There is also the opportunity to sign up for emails to keep aware of this issue, as the group advocates on behalf of genealogists.

GENEALOGICAL FORUM  
OF OREGON GENTALK



## DOCUMENTING

### the Historic Columbian Cemetery

The GFO holds the records for the Historic Columbian Cemetery in Portland, Oregon.

#### LEARN

- how we are making the records available
- about our efforts to document the burials and photograph the markers
- about upcoming GFO field trips
- tricks for taking good photos of cemetery markers with a smartphone

**MAY 18 • 2:30 PM PT**

**[gfo.org/gentalk](https://gfo.org/gentalk)**



**Speaker: GFO Library Chair  
Laurel Smith**



# Don't Miss GFO General Meeting on June 15

## *Meeting Will Be Followed by GenTalk on Research for the Imprisoned*

The GFO General Meeting will be held virtually on June 15, 2024, at 2:30 p.m. Learn about next year's proposed budget, witness the investiture of the newly elected board members, and find out if a new member will join the GFO **Hall of Fame**.

Immediately after the General Meeting, stay for our June GenTalk, "Let the Tower Lights be Burning: Genealogical Research for the Imprisoned." The GenTalk will be presented by Keith and Darlene Pyeatt. Keith is a fifth-generation Oregonian while Darlene is a native of Indiana. Both are graduates of Brigham Young University. Keith is a

former member of the Board of Directors of the GFO, and creator and past chair of the Italian Special Interest Group for our organization.

The couple recently served a mission for their church, digitizing genealogical materials for FamilySearch at the Allen County Public Library located in Fort Wayne, Indiana. They now serve as volunteers at the FamilySearch Center in the Mesa Temple Visitors Center located in Mesa, Arizona, where they teach and assist patrons with their family history research.

**Register** to attend this free meeting.

### GENEALOGICAL FORUM OF OREGON GENTALK

## Let the Tower Lights be Burning

### Genealogical Research for the Imprisoned

## June 15, 2024

**2:30 Annual Membership Meeting**

- Induction of officers elected in 2024
- Hall of Fame awardee (if any)
- Adoption of budget for 2024-2025

**2:45 GenTalk**

**Speakers: Keith and Darlene Pyeatt**



**Free Registration:**  
[gfo.org/gentalk](https://gfo.org/gentalk)



# GFO Donates Books to Senior Center

GFO was pleased to present a modest collection of genealogy books to the library of the Mary's Woods senior living community in Lake Oswego. The presentation was made on November 30, 2023, in response to a proposal from Cherill Vencil, Mary's Woods librarian. Many may recognize her as a long-time GFO member. She specifically wanted books suitable for people just beginning their research. Cherill is looking for residents who are interested in starting a genealogy club.



*Pictured, from left to right, Mary's Woods residents Linda Criddle, Malcolm Miller, Robin Walters, Maureen Olbrich, Cherill Vencil, Mary's Woods librarian, and Geoff Smith, GFO President*

# NGS Membership Adds Member Benefit

## *Access to NewspaperArchive an Additional Feature for All Members*

The National Genealogical Society recently announced that members will now have access to NewspaperArchive. **NewspaperArchive** is a database of more than 280+ million pages of digitized newspapers. The publications start as early as 1736 and include content from all 50 states. The National Genealogical Society website states that NewspaperArchive is adding one to two million pages of new content monthly.

The NewspaperArchive website search function is similar to other newspaper sites, such as Newspapers.com and Historic Oregon Newspapers, with



both a simple and advanced search feature.

Membership in the National Genealogical Society is \$85.00 for one year for an individual, \$105.00 for a family, with discounts for multiple year memberships. NGS **members** can access NewspaperArchive from their website.

# ConferenceKeeper is now part of NGS

**ConferenceKeeper** has joined with the National Genealogical Society. ConferenceKeeper is a free website and database with searchable genealogical educational offerings in the United States, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, and Israel. The site has listings for conferences, individual webinars, and even travel, tours, and cruises.

Many, many of the listed offerings are free and virtual. You can also explore the site for additional subjects such as awards, contests, jobs, podcasts,



and more. The GFO lists its educational offerings with ConferenceKeeper, and this has led to many participants joining us from across the globe. The next time you are looking for a new class or conference, check out ConferenceKeeper.



# Online Events for May

## Wednesday, May 1

### Learn & Chat

10 a.m.–12 p.m.

[SIGN UP >](#)

## Saturday, May 4

### Virginia Roots and Vines

10 a.m.–12 p.m.

[SIGN UP >](#)

Land platting 101

Join us for a hands-on session to understand State Land deeds and learn how to plat the land from the description in your ancestors' deeds.

Supplies you will need:

- Pencil (sharp point or mechanical)
- Eraser
- Ruler
- Calculator
- Paper, plain or **graph**
- Protractor or **printed version of a land compass**
- Deed: You can use the new FamilySearch **full text search** to locate deed records with a corresponding text abstract.

### German Group

1–3 p.m.

[SIGN UP >](#)

## Monday, May 6

### RootsMagic

10 a.m.–12 p.m.

[SIGN UP >](#)

## Wednesday, May 9

### The Q Review

6–7 p.m.

[SIGN UP >](#)

## Saturday, May 11

### Access GFO Resources

10 a.m.–12 p.m.

[SIGN UP >](#)

## Sunday, May 12

### The Writers' Room

2:30–4:30 p.m.

[SIGN UP >](#)

## Tuesday, May 14

### Board Meeting

6:30–8:30 p.m.

All GFO members are invited to attend. To receive a link to this online meeting, or request an agenda item, send an email at least 24 hours in advance to [president@gfo.org](mailto:president@gfo.org).

## Wednesday, May 15

### DNA Q&A: The Basics

1–3 p.m.

[SIGN UP >](#)

## Saturday, May 18

### Genealogy Problem Solvers

9:30–11:30 a.m.

[SIGN UP >](#)

### African American Ancestry

12–2 p.m.

[SIGN UP >](#)

### GenTalk: Documenting the Historic Columbian Cemetery

2:30–3:30 p.m.

[SIGN UP >](#)

What happens when a genealogical library becomes the custodian of a pioneer cemetery archive? The GFO holds the records for the Historic Columbian Cemetery in Portland, Oregon. Learn what we've been doing to make the records available to family historians, and about our efforts to document the burials and photograph the markers. Attendees will also hear about upcoming GFO field trips to the cemetery where they can try out tips and tricks for taking good photos of cemetery markers with their smartphone.

## Sunday, May 19

### Family Tree Maker

1–2:30 p.m.

[SIGN UP >](#)

## Saturday, May 25

### British Group

1–3 p.m.

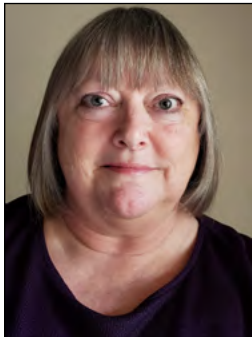
[SIGN UP >](#)



# GFO *Star*

## April

### *Dawn Carlile*



Dawn did an exemplary job in corralling the panelists for the Open House Lineage Panel program, working with them to develop an outline for the presentation part, and then moderating the panel. It was more work than anyone on the Education Committee expected, but it sure paid off! Thanks for a job well done!



**Registration** for Rogue Valley Genealogical Society Interest Groups. All times are Pacific Time.

**May 8, 2024**  
10:30 a.m.–12 p.m. **Genetic Genealogy**

**May 9, 2024**  
6–7:30 p.m. **Genealogy Newbies**

**May 10, 2024**  
1:30–3 p.m. **Irish**

**May 11, 2024**  
10:30 a.m.–12 p.m. **Brick Wall Roundtable**

**May 14, 2024**  
11 a.m.–12 p.m. **German**  
1:30–3 p.m. **Family Tree Maker**

**FamilySearch & IGHR**

**2024**  
Family History and Genealogy  
**Expo**

**SATURDAY**  
**MAY 4, 2024**  
11:00 AM - 6:00 PM EASTERN

**FREE online**     [ighr.gagensociety.org/expo](http://ighr.gagensociety.org/expo)

## Free Genealogy Expo Coming in May

The Institute of Genealogical and Historical Research (IGHR) and FamilySearch have partnered to offer a free, virtual genealogy expo on May 4, 2024. Sessions include topics relating to FamilySearch.org, as well as genealogy software, the Digital Library of the Caribbean, and more. There will also be a virtual exhibit hall with genealogical and historical organizations and vendors.

The expo is free to attend, but registration is required. To learn more, see the day's schedule, and register, visit IGHR's [web site](http://ighr.gagensociety.org/expo).





# GFO Special Interest Groups

SIG meetings occur virtually in Pacific Time. They are open to the public. Learn more about our SIGs at our [SIG page](#).

## **AFRICAN AMERICAN GROUP**

Led by Janice Sellers  
[african\\_american@gfo.org](mailto:african_american@gfo.org)

## **BRITISH GROUP**

Led by Duane Funk  
[uk@gfo.org](mailto:uk@gfo.org)

## **DNA – Advanced**

Led by Tim Janzen  
[dna@gfo.org](mailto:dna@gfo.org)

## **DNA Q & A – The Basics**

Led by Lisa McCullough  
[dna\\_qa@gfo.org](mailto:dna_qa@gfo.org)

## **FAMILY TREE MAKER**

Led by Johnna Waldon  
[ftm@gfo.org](mailto:ftm@gfo.org)

## **FRENCH CANADA GROUP**

Seeking leader  
[president@gfo.org](mailto:president@gfo.org)

## **GENEALOGY PROBLEM SOLVERS**

Led by Katie Daly  
[gps@gfo.org](mailto:gps@gfo.org)

## **GERMAN GROUP**

Led by Tia Cobb  
[german@gfo.org](mailto:german@gfo.org)

## **GREAT LAKES**

Led by Kim Thurman  
[greatlakes@gfo.org](mailto:greatlakes@gfo.org)

## **IRISH GROUP**

Led by Karen Hubbard, Peg Kenaga,  
and Erinn Sears  
[irish@gfo.org](mailto:irish@gfo.org)

## **LEARN & CHAT**

Led by Sandy Alto  
[learnandchat@gfo.org](mailto:learnandchat@gfo.org)

## **THE Q REVIEW**

Led by Alexa Waddle  
[qreview@gfo.org](mailto:qreview@gfo.org)

## **ROOTSMAGIC**

Led by Barry Wolff  
[rootsmagic@gfo.org](mailto:rootsmagic@gfo.org)

## **VIRGINIA ROOTS & VINES**

Led by Judi Scott and Carol Surrency  
[virginia@gfo.org](mailto:virginia@gfo.org)

## **WRITER'S ROOM**

Led by Geri Auerbach, AG®  
[writers@gfo.org](mailto:writers@gfo.org)



## Get Help at PMUG Clinic

**Every Tuesday Evening  
6:00 – 7:30 pm on Zoom**

- Get Free Help for your Macintosh, iPhone, iPad, iPod or Apple Watch
- For info on how to attend, contact us at:

[info@pmug.org](mailto:info@pmug.org)





Genealogical Forum of Oregon

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*from home*

FREE, LIVE INSTRUCTION  
WITH LAUREL SMITH

REGISTER >

NEXT CLASS: SATURDAY, MAY 11, 2024 AT 10 AM PACIFIC TIME

## Treasurer's Report

Contact: [treasurer@gfo.org](mailto:treasurer@gfo.org)

### MARCH 2024 INCOME

Book Sales & Misc. Income	\$ 901.05
Contributions	\$ 659.63
Grants (unrestricted)	\$ 0.00
Interest & Dividends	\$ 2,516.86
Library & Research	\$ 151.78
Memberships	\$ 4,511.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 8,740.32</b>

### MARCH 2024 EXPENSE

Facilities & Equipment	\$ 9,882.59
Administration	\$ 359.16
Other	\$ 626.20
Publications	\$ 379.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 11,247.28</b>

Net Income for the Month	\$ -2,506.96
Year-to-Date Net Income	\$ 25,495.82

Donor-restricted Donations	\$ 256.63
Liabilities (Restricted Grant)	\$ 0.00
Unrealized Gains/Losses	\$ 11,971.56
<b>Total Adjustments</b>	<b>\$ 12,228.19</b>