



THE Forum Insider

Newsletter of the Genealogical Forum of Oregon
Volume 36 • Number 5 • January 2025

President's New Year Message

Geoff Smith, President

First off, thank you to everyone who pitched in to make our 2024–2025 Annual Appeal a success! We will still be tallying your contributions when *The Insider* is delivered, but the trajectory as of mid-December, combined with our experience over the past few years, suggests that we will be very close to our goal.

The Annual Appeal is vital to the organization—we rely on this end-of-the-year campaign for about a third of the budget. There are still a few days left before we tie it up. Please visit gfo.org/appeal to make a last-minute contribution.

GFO is fortunate to be able to lead our annual fundraiser for operating expenses with a list of accomplishments. This year was no different!

We strengthened the library collection through both purchases and many donations; we maintained and added to our enviable educational programs; we added another subscription database that members can access remotely; and we completed work with the Delmas grant, the largest grant that we have ever landed, which has strengthened

our manuscript collections. I'm especially pleased with two developments:

The Historic Columbia Cemetery records have been inventoried, organized, and digitized to make them accessible to researchers. This is significant as it represents one of our few forays into preserving primary records.

The New Home Committee has engaged more members and turned to actively searching for a permanent home. This is significant to establish our long-term financial security.

This year's accomplishments strengthen the GFO.

Looking ahead, while we certainly want to continue what we're doing, my focus will be to

Press on with the vital New Home effort and position ourselves to act quickly when the opportunity arises;

Look for more opportunities to preserve primary records;

Enhance our educational program by establishing a regular program of classes for beginners.

Please join me in looking forward to a productive 2025!

Dudley Family Genealogy Added

The Mill Valley Public Library History Room donated *Llyfr Dudley*, a family history of the Oregon Dudley Family. Cathy Salomon, archivist, noted that the volume falls outside the scope of her library's collection.

The title apparently comes from the family's Welsh origins. The author's ancestors migrated to Oregon in the mid 1800s from Virginia and the Carolinas, and his great-grandfather Spencer Dudley was a founder of Silverton. The author was living in Mill Valley in the 1970s.

We are happy to add this book to the family history section of the library. The GFO library currently has 4,864 family histories on our shelves!



Cathy Salomon and Natalie Snoyman, archivists at Mill Valley Public Library



Genealogical Forum of Oregon

2505 SE 11th Ave., Suite B018
Portland, OR 97202-1093

Mission

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

Contact Us

503-963-1932
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

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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.



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Invitation to Join the Editorial Team at the GFO

Do you love genealogy? Are you a natural storyteller or someone eager to try their hand at editing? The Genealogical Forum of Oregon is searching for a new editor (or editors) to guide our award-winning newsletter, *The Forum Insider*, into its next chapter. Keri Logan and Geri Auerbach are stepping down after the May issue and will be available for training and support.

This role offers:

- The chance to spotlight genealogy research and discoveries.
- Opportunities to collaborate with GFO members and contributors.
- A creative outlet for anyone who loves to write, edit, and curate.

Whether you're an experienced editor or simply passionate about genealogy and eager to learn, we welcome your interest. Training is available, and we'll support you every step of the way.

Join us in shaping the stories that keep our community thriving! Contact us at insider@gfo.org or president@gfo.org to learn more or volunteer.



Finding Your Family in Norway and Sweden

January 18, 2025 ♦ 2:30 p.m. PT





**Presented by
Jill Morelli, CG**

Free registration gfo.org/gentalk 



Finding Lost Family

Wendy Negley

In 1962, when I was in the eighth grade, age 13, my Social Studies teacher gave us an assignment to interview our grandparents about our ancestors. Then we were to research them in the library and give a presentation to the class with what we found. This started me on a lifetime of research in genealogy. One of the first things I was given was a typewritten pedigree for my paternal grandmother's (Elizabeth Hudson Peterson 1896–1982) Hudson family. It was written in the early part of the twentieth century, typed on onionskin paper. Over the years, I have researched it all, finding much was correct but much wasn't. What I want to talk about here was the family of my great-great grandfather, Benjamin Lester Hudson (1828–1917).

When you research in genealogy, you get names, dates, places, sometimes events (birth, marriage, death, a census, a military record, a deed), but unless you find a diary or letters or such, you don't get the stories, what people felt and experienced. But I've also found that the story can be perceived from the dates, names, etc. if you look. This is true with Benjamin Lester Hudson.

Benjamin Lester (I have to include the name Lester because his son, my great grandfather was also named Benjamin but with the middle name of Melvin) was born on 13 September 1828 in Huntingdon, Quebec, Canada. He moved to Bristol, Quebec, with his parents, and there he married Mary Yuill in 1834. They had six children, and then, in 1868, they moved with his father and several of his brothers and sisters, to Saginaw, Michigan. They were lumbermen, and I believe that the lumber industry in Canada was on a decline, while in Michigan, it was booming. Four more children were born in Michigan with one dying at three months and the last dying at birth along with the mother in 1874. This left Benjamin with five children living at home, ranging in age from three to thirteen years old. I believe that he was distraught with grief. No document tells me this, but his action suggests it. He farmed his children out and left town. His three older boys were placed in a logging camp. In the 1880 census, they are listed there as "rafts-



From left, Robert Brick Hudson, Edward Wesley Hudson, Benjamin Lester Hudson, and Edwin Robert Hudson. Photo taken 29 December 1912 in Saginaw, Michigan. Courtesy of Wendy Negley.

men." Alfred was reportedly 21, Robert, 19, but Benjamin Melvin was only 15—a young age for a dangerous profession. (A raftsman guided logs down the river by standing on a raft and using a pole.) His two younger children, Archie and Jennie, joined his sister, Eliza, in Whitney, across the bay from Saginaw. They are seen in the 1880 census as well. Benjamin Lester, however, doesn't show up in the 1880 census, and I didn't know what happened to him.

I found him back in Michigan in a marriage record in Midland in 1890. He married Elizabeth Roberts. In the 1900 census, he is shown living with Elizabeth and having a son, Bartlett Hudson, age 21. My family's assumption has been that Bartlett was Benjamin and Elizabeth's son. But they got married in 1890,

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Find Lost Family, from page 4

and Bartlett was born about 1879.

My great grandfather, Benjamin Melvin, was estranged from his father due to this abandonment, as likely were the other brothers and sister. Benjamin Melvin moved to Texas and was not around when his father returned to Saginaw. His two older brothers, Alfred and Robert, remained in the area, and they seem to have reunited with their father. In my family, it was not known what had happened to Archie, and they knew nothing about Bartlett, assuming he was the son of Elizabeth (who seems to have been not well liked.) Indeed, Benjamin Lester divorced her in 1903. This was initiated by him, and the cause is listed as “extreme cruelty.”

Seeing this, I decided to look for Bartlett. I found him in the 1880 census as James Bartlett Hudson, age 1, living with his mother, **Mary** (not Elizabeth) Hudson. Mary was described on the census as married, but her husband was not listed in the household. I have not been able to find Benjamin Lester in the 1880 census. Perhaps he went to Canada for work in 1880 but returned to the US before the 1881 Census was taken in Canada (I checked that one, too.)

Continuing to research James, I found him in Montana where his marriage records listed his parents as Benjamin Hudson and Mary Halliot or Halett. With this data I found Mary in the 1850–1870 censuses with her parents. Her father’s first name was James and her mother’s maiden name was Bartlett, thus James’s name. I could not find Mary after 1880, though. I believe that she died before 1890. In James’s obituary, it says that his father died when he was young, and his mother remarried. I believe that this data was provided by his wife at the time, and she got it in reverse. His mother died when he was

young, and his father remarried.

Thus, the story that I see is that Benjamin Lester, fleeing Michigan because it was too painful a reminder of his wife, went to Ohio where he married Mary Halliot about 1878, and they had a son. After she died, he returned to Michigan where he married Elizabeth Roberts in order to have a mother for his son. This was not a happy situation for any of them. He divorced Elizabeth, and James went to Montana. James did not have any children, but his story is now told here and on my tree. His mother is now a member of the family as well.

What about Archie? He was noted on the typed sheets as “whereabouts unknown.” I found him in the 1910 census on a construction camp in Napavine, Washington, and in 1920 in Seattle, Washington, as a laborer. He must have been in communication with the family because he is listed in Benjamin Lester’s obituary (16 March 1917) as “Archie of Seattle, Washington.” Archie died on 2 July 1928 in Seattle.

Although there is still missing data, Benjamin Lester Hudson’s story is clear. He lost the wife he loved. Overcome with grief, he portioned out his children and fled to another state. Here he met and married and had a son. Perhaps, he started to heal. But his new wife also died, sparking a return to Michigan. He married a third time, found it intolerable, and divorced. He must have worked on reconciling with his children. His two oldest boys, at least, lived in Saginaw. Eventually, he lived with his son, Robert. The only photo I have of him was taken on 29 December 1912 and depicts four generations: himself, Robert, Robert’s son, Edward Wesley, and Edward’s son, Edwin Robert—a family man, again, at the end of his life.

GFO Inclement Weather Policy

In case of inclement weather, the GFO Library follows the Portland Public Schools guidelines for closure or delayed opening. If it is a day when school is not scheduled, check the GFO website (gfo.org), and call the GFO at (503) 963-1932 to speak with a Research Assistant to make sure that the library is open and staying open.



Help the GFO Find a New Home

As we enter the new year, the New Home Committee can use your help! We have been actively searching for a new, permanent home for the GFO for over a year now.

We have been monitoring the most prominent online listing service, but it has come to our attention that many properties are never listed there. You can help us by notifying us of any properties you are aware of in the Portland area that might meet our needs. The best way to do this is by sending an email to newhome@gfo.org. It is most helpful to take a photo of a for-sale sign, and send that with the street address.

What are we looking for in a new home for the GFO?

The committee has come up with the following requirements (roughly in priority order):

- **Space.** At least 6,000 sq. ft. Desired: 8,000 sq. ft., which is what we have now, plus room for

at least 20% growth.

- **Accessibility & Distribution of Space.** At least 4,800 sq. ft. on the ground floor, capable of supporting bookcases, and with relatively convex space for stacks. Ideally, the building would be just one floor.
- **Central Portland Location.** GFO's members in the Portland area are evenly distributed around the center of Portland (at least in east-to-west terms), or at least near a major highway.
- **Parking.** Parking for at least eight cars.
- **Classroom Space.** Classroom space for thirty people.

The following additional aspects would be desirable:

- Public transit access.
- Walkability to local restaurants.
- Enough parking nearby to accommodate a seminar.

Organizing Your Ancestors From Ancestral Mess to Historical Success

FEB. 15, 2025

2:30 PM PT



Presented by Jennifer Lava

FREE REGISTRATION: [GFO.ORG/GENTALK](https://gfo.org/gentalk)





January Events



Wednesday, January 1

Library Closed

New Year's Day

Learn & Chat

10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Register

Saturday, January 4

Virginia Roots

10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Register

German Group

1–3 p.m.

Register

Sunday, January 5

Library Open

1–5 p.m.

Monday, January 6

Library Open—First Monday

Research Library is free to non-members.

9:30 a.m.–5 p.m.

RootsMagic

10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Register

Tuesday, January 7

Library Open

9:30 a.m.–5 p.m.

Wednesday, January 8

Library Open

1–5 p.m.

Thursday, January 9

The Q Review

6–7 p.m.

Register

Saturday, January 11

Access to GFO Records

10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Register

Sunday, January 12

Library Open

1–5 p.m.

Monday, January 13

Library Open

9:30 a.m.–5 p.m.

Tuesday, January 14

Library Open

9:30 a.m.–5 p.m.

Board Meeting

6:30–8:30 p.m.

All GFO members are invited to attend. Email president@gfo.org to request a meeting link.

Wednesday, January 15

Library Open

1–5 p.m.

DNA Q&A: The Basics

1–3 p.m.

Register

Saturday, January 18

Genealogy Problem Solvers

9:30–11:30 a.m.

Register

African American Ancestry

12–2 p.m.

Register

GenTalk: Finding Your Family in

Norway and Sweden

2:30–4 p.m.

Register

Sunday, January 19

Library Open

1–5 p.m.

The Writers' Room

2:30–4:30 p.m.

Register

Monday, January 20

Library Open

9:30 a.m.–5 p.m.

Tuesday, January 21

Library Open

9:30 a.m.–5 p.m.

Wednesday, January 22

Library Open

1–5 p.m.

Saturday, January 25

DNA Advanced

9 a.m.–12 noon

Register

Sunday, January 26

GFO Work Party

9 a.m.–2 p.m.

Please join us in the GFO Library to work on some easy tasks. It's a chance to visit with others while helping get more projects done.

Library Open

1–5 p.m.

Monday, January 27

Library Open

9:30 a.m.–5 p.m.

Tuesday, January 28

Library Open

9:30 a.m.–5 p.m.

Wednesday, January 29

Library Open

1–5 p.m.



GFO Stars

November

Joann Taylor



Joann Taylor has been a real trooper for handling the chaos left by the closing of our group emailing software, MadMimi.

The GFO is fortunate to have Joann as one of our loyal, hardworking, and trusted volunteers.

December

David Doerner and Chris Wubbenhorst

In early 2024, David and Chris stepped up to form the New Home Search Subcommittee. Since then, they have monitored the commercial real estate listings for exceptional opportunities and developed a checklist to evaluate buildings for our needs. Their efforts are now beginning to bear fruit as buildings have become more affordable.

Plunge into Genealogy!

- 20 free virtual classes
- Pacific Northwest Resources
- Research Library Open Everyday

Join us at
GFO OPEN HOUSE

Coming March 23-29, 2025



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

BRITISH GROUP

Led by Duane Funk
uk@gfo.org

DNA – Advanced

Led by Tim Janzen
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DNA Q & A – The Basics

Led by Lisa McCullough
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FAMILY TREE MAKER

Led by Johnna Waldon
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GERMAN GROUP

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GREAT LAKES

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IRISH GROUP

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and Erinn Sears
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LEARN & CHAT

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THE Q REVIEW

Led by Alexa Waddle
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ROOTSMAGIC

Led by Barry Wolff
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VIRGINIA ROOTS & VINES

Led by Judi Scott and Carol Surrency
virginia@gfo.org

WRITER'S ROOM

Led by Geri Auerbach, AG®
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