

Spotlight: GFO's Surname Vertical Files

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Among the most overlooked and under-used research tools in many genealogy libraries are the surname vertical files, typically a hodgepodge of newspaper clippings, correspondence, photos, family research notes, pamphlets, newsletters, and so on; in fact, nearly every conceivable way to present information on paper.

Because the GFO's vertical files have materials collected for decades, they will include some items made redundant by the Internet—photocopies of census pages, military records, pages copied from genealogical quarterlies, and such. But what is left is a goldmine for the family name researcher: Bible records, Oregon Trail diaries, obituaries, hand-written reminiscences from someone's great-grandfather (that's been in the file for 40 years), family group sheets, charts, surname pamphlets (particularly centered on colonial New England), and much more.

But you ask, "What can a file in Portland, Oregon, do for my research on my Tennessee line?"

More than you might realize.

My personal experience while indexing this project included finding a letter related to my STOUT-STOTT connections. Hezekiah Stout married Nancy McGuire, daughter of my fifth great-grandfather, James McGuire, who served in the Revolutionary War from



Virginia. I didn't know until I discovered that letter that I had relatives in Oregon (and some pretty well connected, at that). Hezekiah's son Samuel died in Washington County in 1877. The letter details his family, none of which I would have known about—without looking in the surname file in the library of the Genealogical Forum of Oregon.

Good hunting!

Editor's note: The GFO thanks Jim Rogers for the work he did indexing these files. On the following page is a short segment of the his contribution. The most exciting part of this project is that the information has been added to our online library catalog. So now if you were to search for Sarah Kern, for example, our catalog would bring you to the Surname Vertical File. The index will eventually be on the GFO website, but for now the editors urge everyone to have a look at the indexes on the online catalog.



KAYLER			Henry F KAYLER Oregon land claim (1860)
KEITH			newsletters KEITH and KIN
KELLEY-KELLY			Alfred KELLEY of OH (19th cent); family sheets James Manning KELLY (NY, NJ, OH, WI); Allen Wilson KELLY (PA)
KENNEDY			Samuel KENNEDY-Nancy MADDY; memoir of Wm Claborn KENNEDY (OR pioneer)
KENNEL			booklet: Desc. of John Riehl KENNEL and Sarah DIENER (1985)
KENNEY	MA	18th-19thcent	genealogy of Heman and Nathan KENNEY
KENTON			pamphlet: Simon KENTON Pluckiest Woodsman Upon the Ohio Frontier
KERN			pamphlet: Supreme Court of Oregon in the matter of the estate of Don KERN, dec'd, Sarah Elizabeth KERN vs Allen G FLETCHER
KEVE			History of the KEVE Family; also COLE, FULLWOOD, LaTOURETTE, FLOREY
KIDDER	New England, NY	colonial-19th cent	History & Records of the KIDDER Family (1876)
KILBOURNE			James KILBOURNE of OH (1770-1850)
KILGORE			family of Edward Louis KILGORE of Portland
KIMMEL			Genealogy of Johann Philip KIMMEL and Johann Paul MOSER
KIMSEY			KIMSEY Kinfolks Outwest newsletters
KINCAID			Thomas KINCAID, d Eugene, OR 1866

From our online library catalog (<http://gfo.ind.opalsinfo.net/bin/home>)

The image shows three screenshots of a library catalog interface. Each screenshot displays a search result for a specific surname. The results are as follows:

- Kelly:** Format: Mixed Material. Note: KELLEY-KELLY .. Alfred KELLEY of Ohio (19th Century); family sheets James Manning KELLY (New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Wisconsin); Allen Wilson KELLY (Pennsylvania).
- Kennedy:** Format: Mixed Material. Note: KENNEDY .. Samuel KENNEDY-Nancy MADDY; memoir of William Claborn KENNEDY (Oregon pioneer).
- Kern:** Format: Mixed Material. Note: KERN .. Pamphlet: Supreme Court of Oregon in the matter of the estate of Don KERN, deceased, Sarah Elizabeth KERN vs. Allen G FLETCHER.

Each result includes a vertical file icon on the right side, which is a yellow cabinet with multiple drawers and a 'Print' button on top.

To find this in the GFO catalog yourself, simply select “Surname Vertical Files” in the Location search box and type the surname in the Keyword search box to see what is in the file.