



NEWSLETTER OF GENCOM THE COMPUTER GENEALOGY GROUP SHREVEPORT, LA.

November 26

Sunday 2:00 Hamilton Library

Program: Heraldry

The history and production of Coat of Arms

Presented by Jim Whittington

"Heraldry"

**The History of Coat of Arms
and their Production**



A coat of arms or armorial bearings (often just arms for short), in European tradition, is a design belonging to a particular person (or group of people) and used in a wide variety of ways. Unlike seals and emblems, coats of arms have a formal description, that is expressed as a blazon. Coats of arms have their origins in the designs used by medieval knights to make their armour and shield stand out in battle or tournaments and enable quick recognition by allies or spectators.

- ◆ We welcome back Jim Whittington, who gave us the fine program on Scottish lore in February
- ◆ Jim is an artist, sculptor, and historian. One of those people who by sharing their knowledge and interests.... makes our lives more exciting!

Jim Whittington
(Seumas Mc Whitt)

Showing Scottish artifacts at the March 2006 GENCOM meeting

The Many First Thanksgivings — TEXAS?

The first thing you learn when you begin researching Thanksgiving traditions — is that most of what we "know" about the holiday is fictitious.. Where was the first thanksgiving celebration in North America?

Most people assume it was the well-known 1621 harvest celebration of the Pilgrims in New England. But beyond the many myths associated with that event, there are other claims to the first American thanksgiving celebration.

Spanish explorer, Francisco Vasquez de Coronado, led 1,500 men in a thanksgiving celebration at the Palo Duro Canyon. Coronado's expedition traveled north from Mexico City in 1540 in search of gold. The group camped alongside the canyon, in the modern-day Texas Panhandle, for two weeks in the spring of 1541

The Texas Society Daughters of the American Colonists commemorated the event as the "first Thanksgiving" in 1959. *(Topic continues page 6)*

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Our SEVERAL First Thanksgivings

By Natalie Troyer
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

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For years, Virginians have protested history books' teaching the Old Dominion's children that America's first Thanksgiving was celebrated in Massachusetts in 1621.

Nonsense, say the Virginians: Thanksgiving began at Berkeley Plantation in 1619, a full year before the Pilgrims set foot in New England.

Now, the old rivalry faces new competition from those who say the true first Thanksgiving was celebrated many decades before the English arrived at either Jamestown or Plymouth Rock.

In Florida. In Spanish.

Que pasa?

It was at the Spanish colony of St. Augustine, Fla., in 1565 that Pedro Menendez de Aviles and 800 Spanish settlers shared a communal meal with the Timucuan Indians.

"Schools today only place emphasis on the English settlement in Plymouth, but the Spanish were here long before them," said Jay Humphrey, communications director for the St. Augustine Visitors and Convention Bureau. "The first urban renewal plan for St. Augustine was dated in 1620. ... So, while the Pilgrims were starving in the woods and fighting off the Indians, there had already been a thriving city here for over three generations."

The first Florida feast in 1565 most likely included wild turkey, venison, salted pork stew and vegetables, said historian Michael Gannon, author of "The Cross in the Sand," about Florida's early Colonial history.

Expressions of thankfulness to God probably were commonplace among the first Spanish arrivals in the New World, Mr. Gannon said. But because the British ultimately edged out the Spanish — and French and Dutch — in colonizing North America, he says, our history books have ignored those other celebrations.

"The British Empire created the myths and holidays regarding Thanksgiving," Mr. Gannon said. "It's as if the Spanish were never even here."

Yet, here they were: Ponce de Leon explored Florida in 1513, and Hernando de Soto traversed the South in the 1540s. But there was not a permanent European set-

tlement in what was to become the United States until the Menendez expedition reached the Florida coast on Sept. 9, 1565.

"St. Augustine became the first permanent, official colony, all thanks to Mr. Menendez," Mr. Gannon said.

St. Augustine is not the only claimant for a pre-Pilgrim Thanksgiving en Espanol. Texans — never ones to back down from any battle for bragging rights — say that a 1541 Catholic Mass celebrated in the vicinity of modern-day Dallas by the expedition of Francisco Vasquez de Coronado qualifies as the nation's first Thanksgiving. If that's not good enough, Texans say, Spanish settlers crossing the Rio Grande celebrated Thanksgiving in El Paso in 1598.

It's unlikely, however, that those earlier celebrations ever will be routinely portrayed in grade-school pageants the way American children for decades have dressed up in Indian and Pilgrim costumes to act out the famous Thanksgiving of Plymouth Rock fame.

The English settlers who had survived the bitter first winter at the Plymouth Colony gathered in the fall of 1621 with the local Wampanoag Indians for a three-day feast that included turkey and venison.

Everything known about that New England feast comes from two paragraphs in a December 1621 letter by colonist Edward Winslow, who declared to a friend in England: "And although it be not always so plentiful as it was this time with us, yet by the goodness of God, we are so far from want that we often wish you partakers of our plenty."

Folks in Virginia say they don't begrudge the Pilgrims their thankfulness.

"I think anyone who rode over to America in one of those little boats in the dead of winter would give thanks to God upon their arrival," said Sandy Wainright, a tour guide at Berkeley Plantation in Charles City. "Berkeley, however, has the only officially documented Thanksgiving celebration."

The Smyth of Nibley papers, she says, are the first official papers to document a Thanksgiving celebration — held on Dec. 4, 1619, by Capt. John Woodlief and his 38 men upon their arrival at Berkeley. The men had a religious celebration in order to give thanks to God for their safe travel.

The folks in Massachusetts acknowledge that such ceremonies were commonplace.

"Thanksgiving celebrations were probably held all over the nation," said Paula Fisher, marketing manager of Plymouth County Convention & Visitors Bureau. "The misconception is that the Pilgrims were the first people to arrive in America at Plymouth, but we know there were other people before them."

Yet, the tradition we now celebrate began at Plymouth, Mrs. Fisher said.

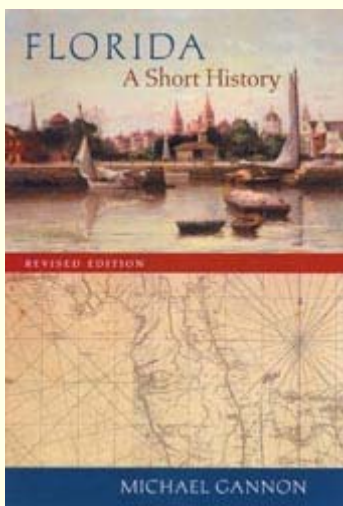
"The Pilgrims instituted the tradition of feasting and fellowship that Thanksgiving is known for today, and they are to thank for that," she said.

In fact, the official national holiday is of more recent origin. In 1863, President Lincoln declared a national day of thanksgiving after the Union's 1863 victory in the battle of Gettysburg. Congress didn't make Thanksgiving a federal holiday, however, until 1941.

Although St. Augustine now is proud to boast of the nation's Thanksgiving, the historian whose research is the basis of that claim says the long battle over the turkey-day title isn't as important as the celebration itself.

After all, Mr. Gannon says, there is only one line in "The Cross in the Sand" that even mentions that first Florida feast.

"I didn't make a big deal out of it," he said. "People in New England call me the Grinch who stole Thanksgiving ... but I'm not on a crusade. Thanksgivings are a time of celebration and fellowship. ... That's all that really matters."



Michael Gannon is Distinguished Service Professor of History at the [University of Florida](#). He is author of *The Cross in the Sand: The Early Catholic Church in Florida, 1513-1870* (UPF, 1965, 1983),

Operation Drumbeat (1990), the novel *Secret Missions* (1994),

[*The New History of Florida*](#) (UPF, 1996)

[*Rebel Bishop :Augustin Verot, Florida's Civil War Prelate*](#)

(UPF, 1997).



REMEMBER ROOTS-L

There are many mail lists (over 30,000) now.

I would suggest that you go to :

<http://lists.rootsweb.com/>

and find a list most likely to be informed about your problem.

Try a SURNAME, COUNTY PAGE, or STATE list or one of the many miscellaneous lists that might relate to your subject.

Ordering Civil War Pension Records Union & Confederate

<http://www.genealogybranches.com/civilwar/>



This webpage may also be helpful...

Online Civil War Indexes, Records & Rosters

<http://www.militaryindexes.com/civilwar/>

How to Find Compiled Military Service Records for Civil War Soldiers

<http://www.genealogybranches.com/civilwar/servicerecords.html>

Bob Reed of Houston sends us this tip!
National Atlas of the United States -

<http://www-atlas.usgs.gov/>

You've seen other atlases. They're typically big books of paper maps. The pages in this atlas are here on the Internet whenever you need them. This is a new portrayal of America in maps. We use new technologies, but we honor traditions of accuracy, reliability, and innovation. You've found the single best Federal source for national maps and geographic information on the Web. The people and places of the United States are here.



Searching 1940 and Later U.S. Census Records



The U.S. federal decennial census records are released to the public 72 years after the census was taken. So the 1940 census will be available in 2012. You can have the Census Bureau search the 1940 and later censuses for a fee. There are restrictions and requirements:

Age Search Service

The Census Bureau provides an "age search" service to the public:

We will search the confidential records from the Federal population censuses of 1910 to 2000 and issue an official transcript of the results (for a congressionally mandated fee).

NOTE: Information can be released only to the named person, his/her heirs, or legal representatives.

Individuals can use these transcripts, which may contain information on a person's age, sex, race, State or country of birth, and relationship to the householder, as evidence to qualify for social security and other retirement benefits, in making passport applications, to prove relationship in settling estates, in genealogy research, etc., or to satisfy other situations where a birth or other certificate may be needed but is not available.

Age Search Fact Sheet

FEE REQUIRED: \$65 for a search of one census for one person only. Personal checks and money orders accepted. No credit cards.

YEARS SEARCHED: 1910 through 2000.

ACCESS: Census records with individual names are not on computer. They are on microfilm, arranged according to the address at the time of the census. Most agencies require the earliest census after the date of birth.

REQUIRED: A completed BC-600 Application [PDF 56k] for Search of Census Records, signed by the person for whom the search is to be conducted. This person may authorize the results be sent to another person/agency by also completing item 3 of the application.

Minor children - Information regarding a child who has not yet reached the legal age of 18 may be obtained by written request of either parent or guardian. A guardian must provide a copy of the court order naming them as such.

Mentally incompetent persons - Information regarding these persons may be obtained upon the written request of the legal representative, supported by a copy of the court order naming such legal representation.

Deceased persons - the application must be signed by (1) a blood relative in the immediate family (parent, child, brother, sister, grandparent), (2) the surviving wife or husband, (3) the administrator or executor of the estate, or (4) a beneficiary by will or insurance.

IN ALL CASES INVOLVING DECEASED PERSONS, a copy of the death certificate **MUST** be provided and the relationship to the deceased **MUST** be stated on the application. Legal representatives **MUST** also furnish a copy of the court order naming such legal representatives, and beneficiaries **MUST** furnish legal evidence of such beneficiary evidence.

RESULTS: An official census transcript will list the person's name, relationship to household head, age at the time of the census, and state of birth. Citizenship will be provided if the person was foreign born. Single items of data such as occupation for Black Lung cases can be provided upon request. If a person is not found, a form will be sent with that information.

Additional data on the same person (Full Schedule) - The full schedule is the complete one line entry of personal data recorded for that individual **ONLY**. This will be furnished in addition to the regular transcript. There is an additional charge of \$10.00 for each

October 18, 2006

Genealogy Bank is now Online

As predicted March 19, 2006, Genealogy Bank has gone online with millions of documents of genealogical interest. In fact, the site just "went live" this morning.

The new online database will contain images of millions of documents of genealogical interest. Ninety-nine percent of these documents have never been available before in electronic format, and perhaps 50% of the documents have not even been available on microfilm. Many have never been available in any format other than the original paper documents, if you could find them. Now these millions of documents will be available to everyone in a new online database that will contain the equivalent of 100,000 books, fully indexed and searchable by every word. You will be able to see images of the original documents on your computer screen.

This site is expected to expand significantly within the next few years. According the Genealogy Bank announcement, the new web site is launching with the following databases in place today:

Historical Newspapers 1690 - 1977

Quickly find names and keywords in millions of articles, obituaries, marriage notices, birth announcements, and other items published in more than 500,000 issues of over 1,300 historical U.S. newspapers. New content added monthly!

Historical Books 1652 - 1900

A unique source that provides you with complete text of more than 17,000 books, pamphlets, and printed items, including: genealogies, biographies, funeral sermons, local histories, cards, charts, and more - all published in the U.S. prior to 1900. New content added monthly!

Historical Documents 1789 - 1930

Find military records, casualty lists, Revolutionary and Civil War pension requests, widow's claims, orphan petitions, land grants, and much more, including all of the American State Papers (1789-1838) and all genealogical content carefully selected from the U.S. Serial Set (1817-1930). More than 81,000 reports, lists and documents. New content added monthly!

America's Obituaries 1977 to current

Obituaries contain helpful information such as names, dates, places of birth, death, marriage, and family information. Over 22 million obituaries make this the most complete collection from the 20th and 21st centuries - includes more than 800 U.S. newspapers. New content added daily!

Social Security Death Index 1937 to current

Search more than 78 million death records and get genealogical information crucial to your family research.

The following are "works in progress" that will be added soon:

Dallas (TX) Morning News, 1885-1977 Philadelphia (PA) Inquirer 1860-1918 San Jose (CA) Mercury 1884-1914

Richmond (VA) Enquirer 1804-1838 ...and much more.

You can conduct searches free of charge. A search will tell you that it found possible matches and will even display a tiny "thumbnail" image of the original document. However, to view the full document, you must purchase a subscription. NewsBank is available at an introductory price of \$19.95/month. That price will give you access to all the records on the site.

NewsBank is a company that is well-known to historians and librarians but not as well known within the genealogy community. For several years NewsBank has provided subscribing libraries with online databases containing the following:

Early American Newspaper Collection (scanned images of old American newspapers) America's Obituaries

U.S. & World Newspaper Collections, American State Papers, Early American Imprints (1639-1819) U.S. Congressional Serial Set
The new service is built with many of the same resources but with new ones added. Also, for the first time, NewsBank is offering these services directly to consumers.

I'll repeat this one more time as it is important: the new database contains scanned images of original documents, the most accurate sources available. The service is completely indexed and searchable by every word. You can quickly find documents and then view images of the original documents on your own computer screen.

You can find more information or even sign up for the Genealogy Bank service at <http://www.genealogybank.com>.

Posted by Dick Eastman on October 18, 2006 | [Permalink](#)

Tom Kemp's influence at work. It's great to see him turning NewsBank into a major content player in the genealogy world so quickly after leaving Godfrey.

*Thanks to all of you who made GENFEST
such a pleasant day! With your generous contributions of*



*delicious food , and your
effort in setting up the
room!*

*And most of all
THANKS*

*For your
presence!*

Patte

Notes of GENFEST!

The speakers at GENFEST, Kathy and James Jackson, the Book Doctors, and Bill Hunter who taught us so much about scanning and repairing old photographs were delightful guests. Kathy told me that James was infected by the genealogical bug after his day with us.....has spent the last month finding his great grandfather...and is intrigued with the search! And, Kathy said she was pleased to finally understand land records from Will Mc Gilvrays interesting (and amusing) presentation. Will's career as an A.F.navigators and his natural bent in that area apparently makes this complicated study easy for him. We do thank him for trying to teach us about a most important resource for the genealogist.

Julious Windham upholds the avowed purpose. of GENCOM." *To keep abreast of all the new technological developments that affect Genealogy*".

Julious reported on the Windham DNA project and the results of his new found cousin from Seattle. He has just returned from a trip to Britain with records and pictures of Dunareel Castle, the ancestral home of the Wyndhams.

Don Davis's review of the new version of Family Tree Maker inspired me to get version 2006 so I could get the free latest version 16. It downloaded flawlessly and I am enthused with the hope of producing scrapbooks for my kids in time for Christmas.

As an organization develops, we establish traditions that become important to us, and it makes planning of programs and events easier and more meaningful as time passes. Hopefully future presidents and program chairmen will be able to use records and pictures that can help them establish a pattern. Such as our GENFEST. **Another proposal!** We have had several requests for recipes of the dishes that were brought.. Why don't we make that a part of our annual festival? A selection of favorite recipes that we can assemble and publish in Connections and give to Jeanice for our scrapbook. The Graham cracker cookies were a special favorite... Who brought them? And the lovely salads? Let me know and we will publish in Dec. Connections. And speaking of food.... Do have a happy Thanksgiving!



Sir Thomas Wyndham

Patte Bettis

GENCOM

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2006-2007

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Thelma Windham

GENFEST Coordinator:

Carolyn Franklin

Historian: Jeanice Vaughn

Newsletter Editor: Patricia Bettis

pbettis@sport.rr.com

Our dues are still just \$15.00

The GENCOM year begins in July

Checks may be sent to Treasurer-
Charles Byrd

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Bossier City, LA. 71111