

PREFACE

family Bible of Isaac W. Underwood, my great-grandfather, and to provide me with copies of the information from that important source.

I must share with you one of my experiences. It seems that at every place we visited in our research, we met a very nice gray-haired lady who knew where to find everything we wanted to look at, and who knew the local history. It was quite funny. Now when I visit a new place to do research, the first thing I do is to look for the RLGHL (Resident Little Gray-Haired Lady). I don't mean this as a put-down to these lovely ladies. They have been a valuable source of information to me, and I'm sure to others as well. I hope they will always be there.

I consider myself a novice at genealogical research, but I have learned a little over the years. I will list a few things I've learned that may be of help to others who decide to trace their family roots.

1. Perhaps the most important thing I have learned is that nothing you have been told can be considered to be absolutely accurate. We tend to believe that official documents in courthouse records, and federal government census records are accurate. Well, often they are not. All of these

records were recorded by Humans. We all know that some people lie, some are forgetful, and some like to liven up an old family tradition by telling the story just a little bit differently than the way it was told to them. You can usually trust the information contained in Wills, but census records are full of errors.

2. When you find records listing someone as, say, John Jr., and another listed as John Sr., don't jump to the conclusion that they are father and son. If two people with the same name lived near each other, they may have been referred to as Jr. and Sr., even if they were not related. I know of one case of a man and his grandson listed as Senior and Junior, respectively.

3. Documents found in the record books at county courthouses are copies of the original documents recorded there by the Clerk of the Court, and quite often mistakes are made in the transcription. Names may be spelled wrong, and in one case, I found the names of two parties transposed.

4. Don't rely on information obtained from the published work of others. Go directly to the source of the information if at all possible. This also saves you the trouble