

ROGUE VALLEY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

**3405 S. Pacific Hwy.
Medford, OR 97501**

The Rogue Digger is a publication of the Rogue Valley Genealogical Society (www.rvgsociety.org), a non-profit organization located in Medford, Oregon, which operates the Jackson County Genealogy Library (www.rvgslibrary.org). To submit an article, contact our editor caradavisjacobson@gmail.com and copy president@rvgslibrary.org. Cover images and design © RVGS, 2008.

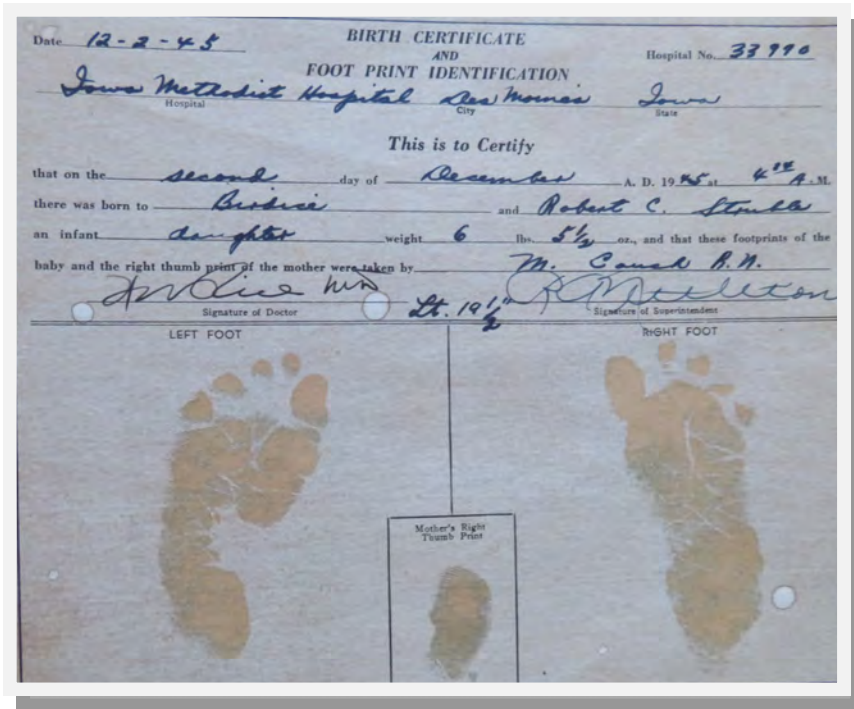
THE MYSTERY OF THE BABY BOOK FOUND IN SAN DIEGO

by Anne Billeter

My name is Carol Ann Struble. I was born on December 2, 1945, at the Iowa Methodist Hospital in Des Moines, Iowa. You know this from my baby book, in its original box, accompanied by a few photos and documents.

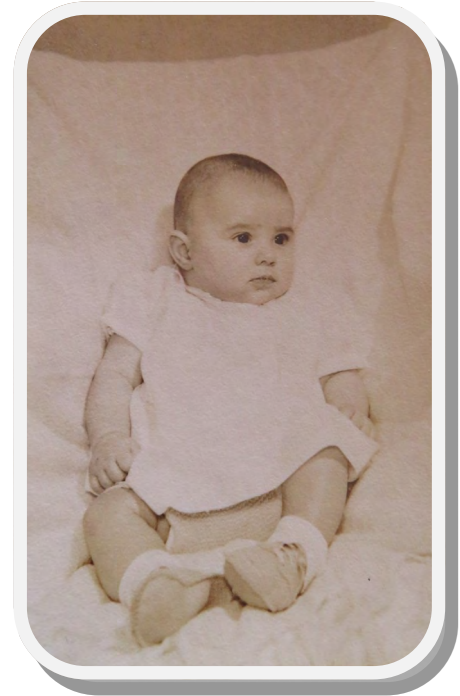


Below, left, is my birth certificate with my footprints and my Mom's right thumb print. My parents were Birdice and Robert C. Struble.



At right is a photo of my Dad when he was two months old, with his whole name (Robert Charles Struble) and weight (11 lbs.) written on the back.

Here are two photos of me when I was four months old and weighed 15 lbs, 4 oz.



**R. C. STRUBLE DIED
AT NEW HAMPTON**

Funeral services were conducted Saturday afternoon, March 1, at New Hampton, Iowa, for Robert C. Struble whose death occurred the preceding Thursday.

Mr. Struble is survived by his wife the former Birdice Clough of Guthrie Center and a 15-month-old daughter, Carol Ann. A number of more distant relatives and many friends also remain.

Death occurred at the home in New Hampton following an illness which had continued over a period of several months. Sympathy will be extended to the widow and daughter in their loss.

Here is an undated newspaper clipping about my Dad dying in New Hampton and “survived by his wife, the former Birdice Clough of Guthrie Center and a 15-month-old daughter, Carol Ann.”

Below is a three-page letter from the Navy Department Bureau of Naval Personnel, providing my Mom with a synopsis of my Dad's naval service. He enlisted in the U. S. Naval Reserve in August of 1941, and was appointed Pay Clerk in July 1944. He was sent to New Hampshire; San Pedro, CA; and Astoria, OR, where he reported to the USS *Clinton*. He was released from active duty and returned home just in time for my birth on December 2, 1945.

F-19

NAVY DEPARTMENT
BUREAU OF NAVAL PERSONNEL
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

25 MAY 1948

Mrs. Birdice Mary Struble
New Hampton, Iowa

In Re: Pay Clerk Robert Charles Struble
United States Naval Reserve

Dear Mrs. Struble:

Realizing that the naval service of the above-named officer must be a source of pride to you, a copy of the synopsis of his record, compiled by the Bureau, is herewith enclosed.

This synopsis will be of help to you in filling out applications for benefits. Upon request, the Bureau will be glad to furnish additional data from the files to assist you.

By direction of Chief of Naval Personnel.

Sincerely yours,
H. E. Staley
H. E. STALEY
Lieutenant Commander, USN
Officer in Charge
Casualty Section

Encl.



NAVY DEPARTMENT
BUREAU OF NAVAL PERSONNEL
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

PAY CLERK ROBERT CHARLES STRUBLE, SC, UNITED STATES NAVAL RESERVE,
INACTIVE, DECEASED

Re: Service of

1918 Sept 8 Born in New Hampton, Iowa.

ENLISTED SERVICE

1941 Aug 29 Enlisted in the U. S. Naval Reserve.
1944 Jul 15 Appointed Pay Clerk (T), USNR.

OFFICER SERVICE

1944 Jul 15 Appointed Pay Clerk for temporary service, in the U. S. Naval Reserve, to rank from 15 July 1944.
Aug 3 Acknowledged receipt of appointment as Pay Clerk (T). Reported to Naval Advanced Base, Espiritu Santo, N. H. for duty.
Sept 27 Detached from Naval Advanced Base, Espiritu Santo, N. H. and to U. S. Pacific Fleet for further assignment. Further ordered to Service Force, Pacific Fleet for duty in the Supply Officers Pool. Reported 29 September 1944.
Oct 10 Detached from Service Force, Pacific Fleet and to Eleventh Naval District for temporary duty.
Oct 25 Detached from Eleventh Naval District and to Naval Small Craft Training Center Roosevelt Base, Terminal Island, San Pedro, California for duty. Reported 14 November 1944.
1945 Jan 19 Detached from Naval Small Craft Training Center Roosevelt Base, Terminal Island, San Pedro, California and to Naval Station, Astoria, Oregon for duty on board the USS CLINTON (APA 144) when placed in commission.
Feb 1 Reported to USS CLINTON (APA 144) for duty on board.
Mar 13 Classification changed to PCH, in accordance with BuPers circular letter 298-44.
Oct 21 Detached from USS CLINTON (APA 144) and to Separation Center, Great Lakes, Illinois for temporary duty pending release to inactive duty. Reported 19 November 1945.
Nov 20 Detached from Separation Center, Great Lakes, Illinois and to home. Granted 25 days leave.
Dec 15 Released from all active duty.

-1-

Medals: Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with one Bronze Star
World War II Victory Medal

Died: 27 February 1947

Place: New Hampton, Iowa

Cause: Not Enemy Action

Next of Kin: Birdice Mary Struble, Wife
New Hampton, Iowa

-2-

Here I am at age 1, before my Dad died, and at age 2, after he died. Is there a little sadness in my eyes? I'm older in the last photo with my Mom, but I don't know exactly how old.



My baby book has a few details about my first months, but not much more. There are only two clues about my family:

1. “My first Christmas I spent at Grandma & Grandpa Clough’s at Panora. The day I was three weeks old Mommie & Daddy & I went out with Uncle Maurice & Aunt Betty. John Maurice was there too, but Mommie says we both slept most of the time and didn’t pay any attention to each other. I got a war bond from Grandpa Clough, Grandpa Struble & Daddy – and some mittens and rattles.”
2. “On August 26, 1946, while Grandma Clough was keeping me while Daddy was in Rochester, my first tooth came through and hardly bothered me at all.”



What happened to Carol Ann and her mother, Birdice (Clough) Struble? Neither one appeared easy to find coming forward, so the search started by going back. Here’s what emerged about Birdice, from Ancestry.com, familysearch.org, findagrave.com, and newspaper searches.

Birdice Mary Clough was born 18 Sep 1920 in Iowa, the daughter of Raymond Samuel and Helen Mary (King) Clough. In 1925 and 1930, they were living in Taylor County, Iowa. Birdice had 3 siblings: Evelyn N. (or N. Evelyn), born about 1915; Merrill H., born about 1919; and Maurice K., born about 1925. Raymond was a farmer. Luckily *The Guthrie* newspaper (Guthrie Center, Iowa) from 1953 to 1972 is available on *Newspapers.com*. A 1953 “Looking Back” reported that “Fifteen Years Ago, May 5, 1938, Miss Berdice Clough, graduate of the G.C.H.S. [Guthrie Center High School], and a member of the Iowa state championship girls basketball team of 1937, has accepted a position with the Bankers Life Insurance Co. of Des Moines. She will be a member of the Insurance Co. girls basketball team this season.” The *Polk’s Des Moines City Directory* for 1939 lists her as “sten Bankers L Co r1440 Woodland av apt 15.” Her brother Merrill is in the same directory, “acct Look Inc r1503 Pleasant apt.” Birdice is also listed in the 1940 federal census in Des Moines, a lodger, “stenographer, insurance.” She appears similarly in the 1940 and 1943 *Polk’s City Directories*. The *Mason City Globe Gazette* (Mason City, Iowa) reported the marriage of Birdice Clough and Chief Warrant Officer Robert Struble on 28 October [1944], in the Methodist church in Des Moines. “The couple was attended by Mr. and Mrs. Rains of Guthrie Center, brother-in-law and sister of the bride. Mrs. Struble is a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. R. S. Clough of Guthrie Center, where she graduated from high school. Later she attended a Des Moines business college and has been employed by the Bankers Life Company there....The bridegroom is a graduate of the New Hampton high school, a Des Moines business college and attended Iowa State college at Ames. When he entered the Navy in August, 1941, he held a civil service position at the veteran’s hospital at Knoxville. Mrs. Struble will accompany her husband to the west coast after a 15-day leave here.” The article was reported from New Hampton.

Clues gleaned from this article:

- ◆ Since Birdice had only one sister, Evelyn, she must be the “Mrs. Rains” attendant.
- ◆ Since both Birdice and Robert attended “a Des Moines business college” this is most likely where they met. (New Hampton and Guthrie Center are approximately 200 miles apart by highways.)
- ◆ A perusal of Robert’s service chronology revealed that he was reporting for duty on 14 November, at the end of the 15-day leave reported in the marriage newspaper article, to the Naval Small Craft Training Center, Roosevelt Base, Terminal Island, San Pedro, CA.

Ancestry.com produced a valuable file in the database “Iowa, World War II Bonus Case Files for Beneficiaries, 1947-1959.” In that file is a four page application form Birdice filled out, which provided the following valuable list:

- (Widow) Birdice C. Struble, 1544 W. 28th St., Des Moines, Iowa, Age 28
- (Children) Carol A. Struble (same address) Age 3 ½
- (Mother) Alma L. Struble, New Hampton, Iowa, Age 62
- (Father) William C. Struble, New Hampton, Iowa, Age 72

The application confirmed that as of 18 May 1949, Birdice had not remarried. She received a \$500 bonus. Also in the file were a copy of their marriage certificate and a copy of Robert's death certificate. This revealed the horrifying detail that he died of testicular cancer at the age of 28. Upon reflection, the reference in the baby book to "while daddy was in Rochester" may mean he went to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, for diagnosis and/or treatment.

A March 20, 1967, article in *The Guthrian* provided a new clue. It stated, "Name Former Guthrie Girl to Hall of Fame. The first Guthrie county person to be inducted into the Iowa Girls Basketball Hall of Fame came last week at the close of the girl's finals when the former Orvella Rodenbaugh was cited for the state honor...[She] was a member of the Guthrie Center 1937 girls state basketball championship team. In addition to being a member of the team that year when she won first state honors along with teammate Birdice Clough..." "Only three members of the state championship team still live in Iowa...the former Birdice Clough is a California resident." This was not much of a clue, as it did not give Birdice's present name or a more precise location.

The Guthrian on 1 May 1956 reported, "Mr. and Mrs. Emerson Thorsrud and children Carol and Clay of Des Moines spent the weekend at the home of Mrs. Thorsrud's parents, Mr. and Mrs. R. S. Clough." Could this be Birdice and Carol? Luckily both Thorsrud and Birdice are unusual names, and Emerson Thorsrud is also pretty distinctive.

But what happened to Carol Ann? Sadly, her death was reported in the *New Hampton Economist* (Iowa) on 6 Jan 1959. "Carol Thorsrud Funeral Here Tomorrow P.M.; Granddaughter of Mrs. Alma Struble Dies at Age 14; ... Miss Thorsrud, a daughter of the late Robert Struble ... died New Year's Day in San Diego as the result of measles and complications. She was taken ill Christmas Day...Carol Ann was a student of San Diego high school and was active in Sunday School and church work. Just the past summer, she and her parents and half brother, Clay, visited in the home of her grandmother, Mrs. Struble and aunt, Ada Wiedman here."

The obituary indicates the Thorsruds moved to San Diego three years earlier. A search of San Diego news found that Birdice was an official at her local election polling place in San Diego in 1962, 1968, and 1971, the latter two years at a residence at 911 Temple St. A story at nbcсандiego.com, dated 2 Mar 2012, noted that "Fire Destroys Point Loma Home; Clay Thorsrud and his 91-year-old mother lived in the house for over 50 years. A fire raged through a house in Point Loma, blazing across several rooms until it reached the attic. It was a little after 3 a.m. Friday when the blaze started in the 900 block of Temple Street. 'We're just dealing with it minute to minute, hour to hour. There have been no tears, just something that has to be dealt with,' said Thorsrud."

A search of findagrave.com found Birdice and Emerson in the Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery in San Diego, California. Birdice was 93 when she died on 1 Nov 2013. Emerson had served in the Army Air Corps during World War II. He died in 1995.

Carol Ann's baby book, with the few photos and newspaper clippings, must have escaped the fire. After Birdice died in 2013, her son Clay, who was only 3 when his half-sister died, probably did not see a reason to keep these mementos. Somehow they came into the possession of my mother, Barbara (Whipple) Billeter, probably "rescued" by someone and given to her as a genealogical mystery. They were found by my sister as she prepares to move from the house she and our mother shared until our mother's death in 2005. I "rescued" them again, unwilling to let my sister donate them to a thrift store.

I'm glad to know the story of Carol Ann, Robert Struble, and Birdice (Clough) Struble Thorsrud. It was a challenge to research, and unfolded with a lot of sadness, but I appreciate the strength and resilience of Birdice. I too once played high school basketball, I too once had my house burn down, and I too have been widowed. My Mother and Birdice were nearly the same age and lived a long time in San Diego. The story always continues. Can I find a home for Carol Ann's baby book?





STRANGERS IN THE BOX

by Pamela A. Harazim

Come, look with me inside this drawer,
In this box I've often seen,
At the pictures, black and white,
Faces proud, still, serene.
I wish I knew the people,
These strangers in the box,
Their names and all their memories
Are lost among my socks.
I wonder what their lives were like.
How did they spend their days?
What about their special times?
I'll never know their ways.
If only someone had taken time
To tell who, what, where, when,
These faces of my heritage
Would come to life again.
Could this become the fate
Of the pictures we take today?
The faces and the memories
Someday to be tossed away?
Make time to save your picture,
Seize the opportunity when it knocks,
Or someday you and yours could be
The strangers in the box.

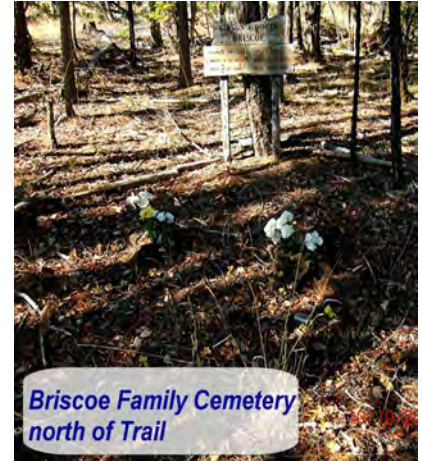
Editor's Note:

Beginning with this issue, we welcome Roger Roberts' articles on local cemeteries. Formerly featured in the eNews, they will now appear in The Rogue Digger. Stay tuned for an upcoming "all cemetery" issue!

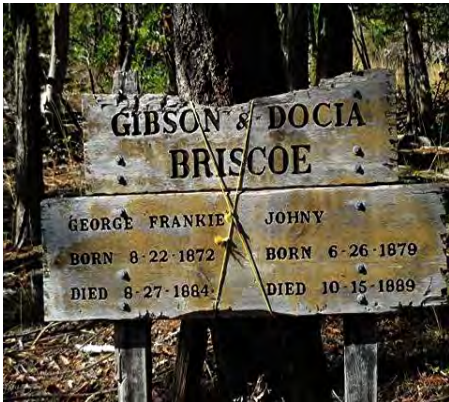
BRISCOE FAMILY CEMETERY

by Roger Roberts

It was a beautiful October day when Judi Boyd, Ron Brown, Chuck Eccleston, and I set out to find the Briscoe family burial site. We had known about this site for some time, but it's exact location was unknown. In the late 1800s, John G. Briscoe applied for and received a U. S. government patent deed for his homestead claim of 160 acres. This was in the Trail Creek area, in Section 6 of Township 33 South, Range 1 West.



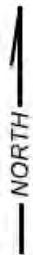
Recently I had been given information that narrowed the search area down to about 20 acres in the southerly portion of the property. After arriving onsite, we split up into two search parties and proceeded to walk the area. It took only about twenty minutes before we spotted a large wooden sign board fastened to a couple of wood posts, shown here in the photo.



We found two obvious graves in front of the sign. Each was marked with a large native stone, sitting upright in a mound of stones. Placed on each headstone was a bouquet of artificial flowers. I used dowsing rods to search the surrounding area and, as shown on the map at the end of this report, found 12 more burials that were unmarked. Ron and Chuck located on the ground the remains of a wood post and pole fence that used to enclose most of the 14 graves.

The sign board having the three names of George, Frankie and Johny caused some confusion. Judi later provided a photo of a headstone in the Antioch Cemetery, shown here, for what appears to be "George E. Brisco." The date of birth and death are identical to the dates listed under "George" on the sign. Therefore I assume it to represent the same person. His remains might have been moved to the Antioch Cemetery. The middle initial on the headstone appears to be an "E." Perhaps it's actually an "F." Perhaps it should have been an "F" and George's middle name was "Frankie" or a variation such as "Frank" or "Franklin."

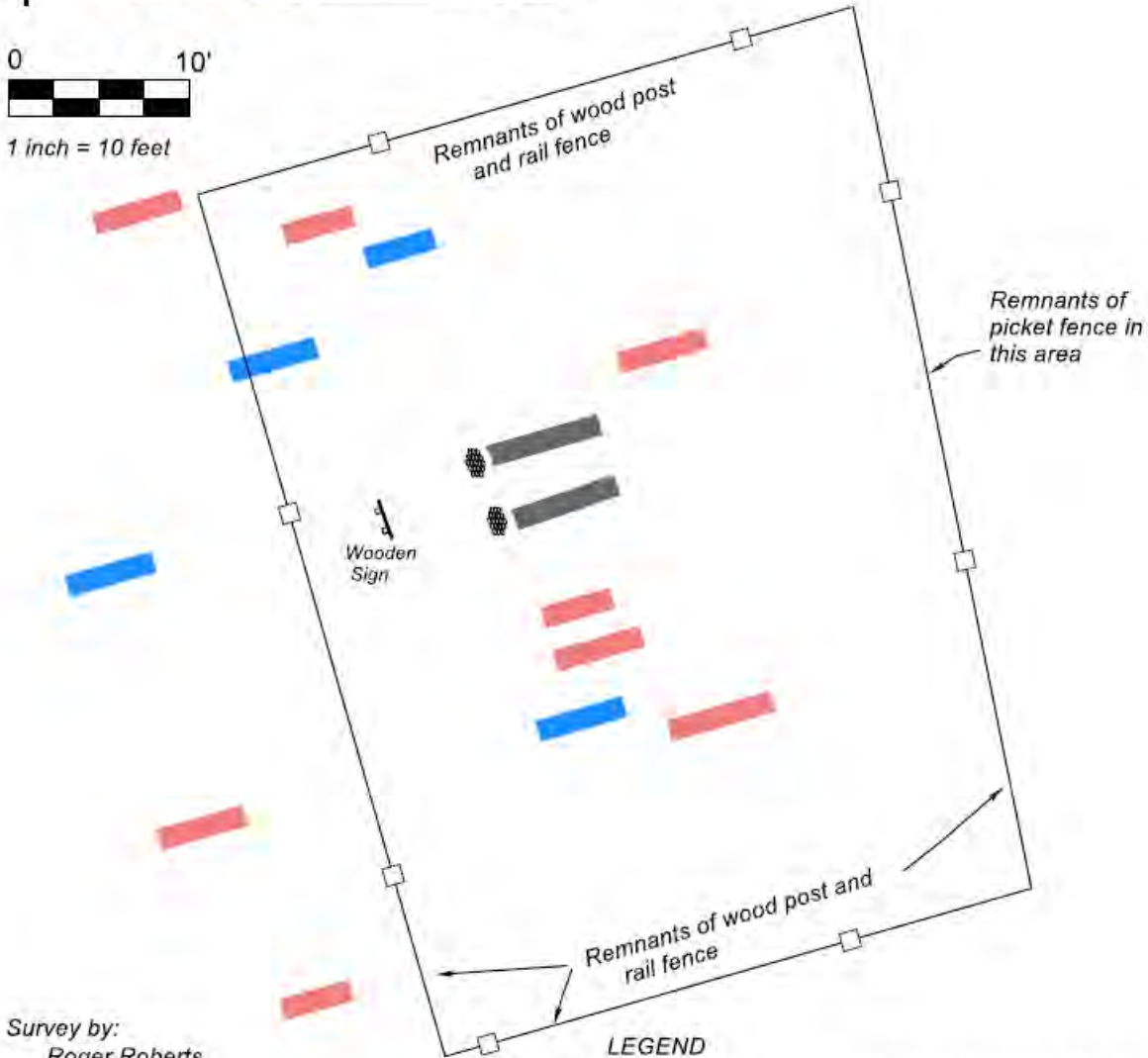
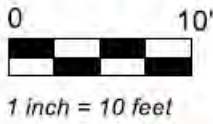




BRISCOE CEMETERY

Located in
 Southwest quarter of Section 6
 Township 33 South, Range 1 West
 Jackson County, Oregon

Lat. N 42°43'28"
 Long. W 122°52'05"



Survey by:
 Roger Roberts
 3365 Green Acres Drive
 Central Point, Or, 97502

Assistants:
 Judi Boyd
 Chuck Eccleston
 Ron Brown

Representing Rogue Valley
 Genealogy Society

October 11, 2015

LEGEND

- = Cluster of native stones found as grave marker
- = Marked grave (male) (2)
- = Possible unmarked male burial (4)
- = Possible unmarked female burial (8)

Total burials: (14)

Unmarked grave locations determined
 using divining rod method.

Help Keep The Rogue Digger Publishing!



Do you have an interesting story about researching your ancestors? Unexpected DNA results that changed your research goals? The story of an object (e.g., a quilt, a ring, a photo) that led you on a search or shed light on your family or local history? Have you found a technique or resource that has helped you in your research or that might help others? Have you discovered something interesting in local history or genealogy that you would be willing to write about and share with our membership?

If so, our publication, *The Rogue Digger*, needs you! *The Rogue Digger* is a genealogical periodical that reports information helpful to members and researchers by sharing the results of genealogical investigations, especially those related to the Rogue Valley or to our membership. Submissions can be a mere page long or up to 10 pages long, with or without photos or illustrations. If you have an idea but don't quite know how to pull it together, our editor can advise and help; contact her at caradavisjacobson@gmail.com.

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