



Highlander News



Number 2

July, 2019

Highlander News, Number 2

And the beat goes on...

John Sutherland

Highlander's View of History

Review and Brief Summary

Highlander News Number 1 provided some background on the humble beginnings of Highlander History, as well as some genealogical information.

As an FYI, I'll keep a copy of these newsletters locally so that they are available for e-mail request. I will also post them on Highlander so that you can review and/or download them yourself. If you do a Highlander search for the term 'News' these newsletters will show up in the search results. Here is a direct link to newsletter number one:

<https://highlander.com/blog/news-commentary/highlander-news-number-1-mar-2019/>

Where Are We Today?

While the website addresses both generic human history as well as specific family research history, the online library for both focus areas is getting larger by the day. Today there are about 450 books and documents stored online at Highlander.

I will admit, however, in the last few months my own library upload focus has shifted and changed back and forth between genealogical books and documents, and historical books and documents. I often follow bread crumbs when I'm doing my own research and study, and that works its way over into my other areas of work as well.

And, along the way I've also come across a few

really good investigative journalists and constitutional attorneys that have influenced what I store in the Highlander library. That is/was a wonderful series of events to have happen.

And, to add a bit of additional and unexpected flavor to the mix, I have been recently overwhelmed by the sudden and dramatic increase in online censorship by the big online service organizations like FaceBook, Google, YouTube, Twitter, etc.

These big technical companies are doing to their users what governments cannot do – they are censoring everything that they deem is against a certain foreign military regime, its people, and against some other rather covert subject areas. Censorship is so immature and stupid. IMO.

I, as well as everyone I deal with online, find this sort of immature and unconscionable censorship extremely frustrating, maddening, and simply repulsive. If anything is going to destroy their businesses, this censorship insanity may be the one.

So, the censorship problem has me consciously reacting and causing me to save everything I see online that is important, truthful, and honest. This includes documentation as well as video reports.

Thus, in addition to books and documents, I also now have a fairly large local farm of videos, both old and new.

At some point in the future I may consider adding videos to the Highlander library, but because I try to work within the copyright protection system, this may take a while to design and implement. Videos have owners, just as do books and documents.



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What about the Website Itself?

Operationally, the website is in pretty good shape, but I suspect that there will continue to be changes and upgrades as time passes.

I'm a bit surprised that my original design thoughts for this website have held fairly true, in spite of the fact that my own initial efforts at creating a WordPress website failed miserably.

Which brings me to make a suggestion - if you ever get the urge to create your own website, and you are like me, a conscious incompetent with WordPress, you should find yourself a good web designer.

In my own search for a good web designer, I came across **Laurie Swoboda**, and she has done an admirable job of creating the website and making the changes and upgrades that were needed for Highlander.

I will acknowledge, however, that Laurie and I don't always agree on some specific course of action. I tell her what I am thinking about doing, and she gives me the yea or nay answer back with regard to if and how the job can be done. I need that kind of interaction. I push ideas, and I need someone to tell me I'm crazy when I am, in fact, acting crazy.

Recent Website Changes

There are really only three website areas I get concerned about, namely website looks (i.e. sex appeal), website functionality, and website search results as a function of Internet users doing searches on Google, DuckDuckGo, etc.

I have not yet had any complaints from website users about how the website looks, so I suspect that area may be reasonable.

There were a few initial user complaints about site registration difficulties in the early months, and those anomalies were caused by the WordPress plugin's requirements for the use and entry of ASCII characters only – no underscores or special characters, etc. Once that rule was established, the data entry problems seem to have gone away.

There is one unused section of the website that I have not yet turned on, and that's a website store. I originally believed that at some point I should probably offer products for sale that were supportive of both history and family research.

But, offering products for sale implies being in business, and I'm retired, so I have dragged my feet getting this part of the website operational. Having noted that, I am meeting with a CPA on Monday next about business possibilities.

So, in that regard, if you have some ideas about products and/or services (like genealogical research) that might be welcome to history and genealogists, please let me know.

For example, I have considered making the 'ABCs of Family Research' PDF document available as a paperback book. I have had relatively little feedback on how well the PDF version of that book is doing in user's hands, but the small feedback I have received so far has all been positive. I was really hoping that people would tell me what was wrong or what was missing in the book.

So, if you have already read and/or downloaded the book, and have some feedback you would like to send back to the author (that would be me), please do so. Use the website contact form.

If you have not yet reviewed the book, here is a link (below) that will allow



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***you to read it online or download it.
Your call.***

<https://highlander.com/js-abcs-of-family-research-prelim/>

Regarding the website functionality, I have recently had Laurie make some changes that will help make the onsite searches a bit easier to find and to execute.

When I upload books and documents, I spend a fair amount of time reviewing the book or document for key words that can be used by the Highlander search engine. Sometimes the numbers of key word quantities are in the high decades. This is done to help people searching for individual or family names.

Laurie has also made some link changes that will hopefully provide improved Google search results. In that respect, only time will tell.

So, the website seems to look OK, appears to be operationally pretty functional, and hopefully is more easily found by Google and other search engines. I have found in the past that when I am looking for a specific search term on Google, if I add in the phrase 'highlander' to the search string, Highlander results show up at the top.

This whole Google search thing is like trying to read someone's mind. Google changes their search algorithms frequently, and so what worked yesterday may not work today. I hate trying to mind-read. I am so bad at it.

So, in summary, the site is much better today than it was in March. And, as long as I am able, it will continue to get better. That's my goal.

But that now brings us to another topic I have not raised before. Money.

I operate this website on a personal level, and it costs money. I have never asked for money, but if you like this website, and if the website has helped you in your own research efforts, perhaps you can consider making a donation to help run the website.

I subscribe to the school of thought that everything counts, so any donation amount will be helpful. Thank you.

History Document Update

I go back and forth between uploading genealogical books and general history books, and in that regard, Highlander now has several early US history books, including the 12 volume set of "The Writings of Thomas Jefferson." Here is a link to all of the Thomas Jefferson books, including this set of his writings.

<https://highlander.com/?s=thomas+jefferson>

Also of keen interest to one constitutional attorney (**Mario Apuzzo**) who was researching Barack Obama's natural born citizenship eligibility, is a two volume set of early American history by David Ramsay.

David Ramsay (April 2, 1749 – May 8, 1815) was an American physician, public official, and historian from Charleston, South Carolina. He is considered to be one of the first major historians of the American Revolution.

<https://highlander.com/david-ramsay-history-of-the-american-revolution-vol-1/>

Another early history book, or actually a documented Yale University course, is one offered by **Prof. Joanne Freeman** of Yale.

"The American Revolution entailed some remarkable transformations – converting British colonists into American revolutionaries,



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and a cluster of colonies into a confederation of states with a common cause -- but it was far more complex and enduring than the fighting of a war.

“As John Adams put it, “The Revolution was in the Minds of the people... before a drop of blood was drawn at Lexington” – and it continued long past America’s victory at Yorktown. This course will examine the Revolution from this broad perspective, tracing the participant’s shifting sense of themselves as British subjects, colonial settlers, revolutionaries, and Americans.”

<https://highlander.com/joanne-freeman-the-american-revolution/>

And there is more. All of the history books and documents are available in PDF format and all have the text layer included for PDF document search functions. You can read them online or download them for free.

Genealogical Notes

When I do my own family research, I create and maintain a family tree that is started from my own children, so that when completed (if trees are ever finished) they will know in some detail where they came from. This, of course, implies that I do family research on my wife’s side of the family as well as my own side. No problem. I just takes time.

On my wife’s side, there are Drummonds and there are Burkes, and in my earlier research (some years ago), I found a helpful Burk (Burke) online document from a website entitled Grandma’s Cabin. It was an interesting website and it led me to some of my wife’s ancestors that had been previously unknown to me. It turns out that one of the Drummond ancestors had helped add information on both Drummond links and Burke background. So the linkage was very

helpful, and yes, the website is a good website.

Some years pass, and then recently (a month ago) I was doing some more Burke research and came across the Grandma’s Cabin website once again.

<http://grandmascabin.org/burke.html>

The site material was so interesting that I contacted the website owner for permission to reprint and upload a copy of the Burke family history onto Highlander. Lo and behold, Grandma has passed, as had her daughter, the book’s originator, and I end up corresponding with the granddaughter, Lisa. Great linkage.

Long story short, yes, I could republish the website document, and so the work on my end began. It turns out there were a few pages missing, and some pages were not copied as clearly as possible, so I went through the document page by page and finally had a complete document, all 167 pages.

<https://highlander.com/nancy-machuga-some-descendants-of-john-rachel-burk/>

I tell you this story to suggest that 1) family research is never completed, and 2) that it often pays to go back and re-look at earlier research material. In my case, I was able to add a few members to the family tree, and I am able to help others who may have Burkes in their own family tree. Have a great day!

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