

& DISCOVERING & PRESERVING YOUR ROOTS

When Jeff Davis saw a euphonium in his cousin's home – just like the one in his own garage – he knew he'd found his musician father's side of the family.

Davis knew that his deceased father was born in Oklahoma, but not where. He wasn't even sure about his father's birth name, as his father had taken his stepfather's last name, and even changed his first and middle names.

To Davis' later surprise, Navy records indicated that his father was born in Broken Arrow. Davis, a native Californian, was then living in Broken Arrow. Energized by this discovery, Davis began a genealogical quest into his father's family tree.

The Genealogy Center of the Tulsa City-County Library was Davis' first stop. Once there, genealogical librarians steered him to Broken Arrow's census records, where he found the name Lloyd Leslie Streed, Jr. "When I was in elementary school my dad told me his birth name. I remembered it was something like Streed, but I wasn't sure how it was spelled. But when I saw it, I knew that was it," said Davis.

Next, Davis found his only cousin on his father's side, Nancy Pollard. "Within a month [of contacting her] we made our first trip to east Texas to meet my side of the family," said Davis. That's when he saw the brass band instrument and discovered that Pollard's family was as involved in music as his own. Later, research revealed that their common grandmother, Mary Lou Streed, had been the band director at Broken Arrow High School in the 1930s.

"What was exciting," said Davis, "was not just the similarities Nancy and I had, but the fact that she now had family. Previously, the only family her children knew was her husband's side of the family."

WHERE TO START

As Davis discovered, genealogical research can be exciting and fulfilling. But how do you begin? According to Kathy Huber, genealogy librarian at the Genealogy Center, starting an ancestral chart is the best way to begin. The charts, available at the Genealogy Center, Tulsa Genealogical Society or online through www.ancestry.com, have spaces to record family information. "What you want to do is start with known information and work back," said Huber.

To begin the chart, Huber suggests scouring your house for clues. "Most of us have documents such as birth certificates, family Bibles and death certificates," she said. "Once you have collected materials at home, you can consult us or work online. There are many free websites."

LIBRARY RESOURCES

In addition to free websites, the Genealogical Center pays for four fee-based genealogy websites, available free to Tulsa City-County Library patrons. They also have a large number of county history books because, according to Huber, "sooner or later you'll run into a problem you can't solve online."

The Tulsa Genealogical Society also offers a large number of county court books and other resources, primarily from Oklahoma, but from other states as well. Additionally they offer classes and monthly meetings on genealogy research.

FAMILY STORIES AND PRESERVING MEMORIES

According to Davis, the first thing to do if you are interested in genealogy is to find the oldest members of your family and interview them. StoryCorps, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving stories, is all about interviewing friends and family members. The group offers a "how-to" video, list of questions to get you started, and a free Do-It-Yourself Instruction Guide to help you record your family stories. Visit <http://diy.storycorps.org/participate/> to find these helpful tools, as well as information on how to upload your interview to StoryCorps' collection of stories.

Huber also suggested digitizing everything you can in an effort to preserve precious memories. Although the Tulsa City-County Library does not offer public scanning services, many stores, like FedEx Office Print & Ship Centers and Staples do. "After scanning, put the originals in acid-free boxes or sleeves," said Huber. The Tulsa Genealogical Society offers "how-to" preservation classes and boasts a few members who can provide preservation services.

Davis plans to continue gathering his family history and recording family stories, for as he said, "We are the custodians of our family history for future generations."

by Cindy Webb



The Genealogy Center of the Tulsa City-County Library
Hardesty Regional Library
8316 E. 93rd St., Tulsa, OK 74133
(918) 549-7691
www.tulsalibrary.org/genealogy

The Tulsa Genealogical Society
9136 E. 31st St., Tulsa, OK 74101
(918) 627-4224
www.tulsagenealogy.org

FREE GENEALOGY WEBSITES

 www.familysearch.org
 www.usgenweb.com
 www.findagrave.com
 www.okhistory.org
 www.vitalrec.com

DISCOVER YOUR ROOTS: GENEALOGY 101

Tues., Feb. 24 | 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Learn how to research your family history using the resources available at the Genealogy Center of the Tulsa City-County Library. Using both online and traditional sources, we will cover the basics of how to get started and what to do when you hit a wall. Whether you are a beginner or just need a refresher, join us as we cover the genealogy basics.

Hardesty Library's Maple Room
8316 E. 93rd St., Tulsa, OK

RSVP by calling
(918) 664-9000, ext. 224