

You Need an Eye to Detail

By Jeannette Holland Austin

A number of clues exist in public records which help the genealogist to locate lost relatives.

One ancestor which I had researched for many years was discovered by reading Revolutionary War Pensions for that surname. It was Joseph Lane, resident of Missouri whose application stated that he had two sons who'd left home years ago, one who went west and the other to either Kentucky or Georgia.

Although no given names were provided, my detailed notes provided two brothers in Georgia fitting that description. From there, I studied their estate records, viz, inventories, sales, annual returns and vouchers to see who was listed and where they resided. The names given in these types of records bear close relationships to the deceased.

I found one lost ancestor by searching Jasper County annual returns (for everyone with that surname) and discovered that a trip to Kentucky was an item paid for and listed in the annual returns.

This linked "the origin" of the family. Other great digs are deed records where heirs sell their inheritance and name other heirs in the deed. Every single record of that surname must be researched for little clues.