

family historian

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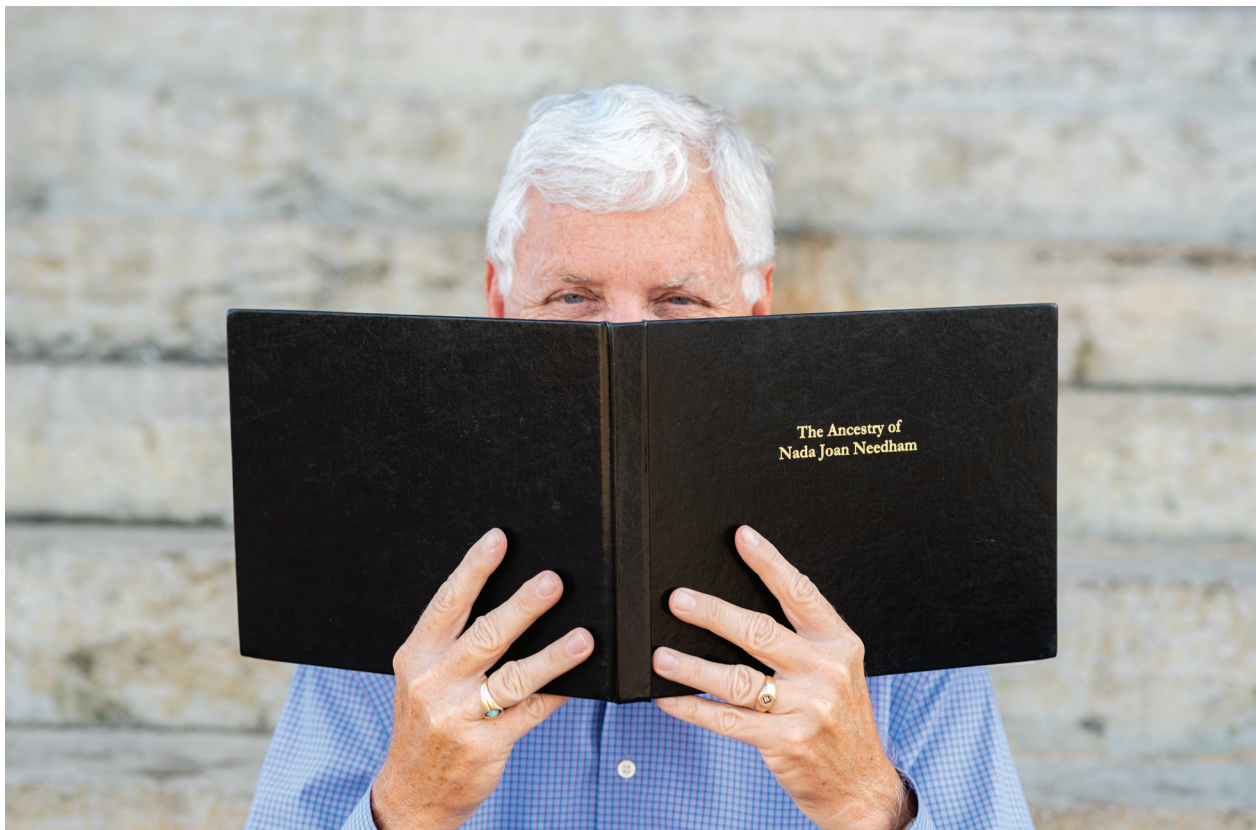
DAN NELSON, OWNER OF DANCESTORS GENEALOGY, HELPS CLIENTS DISCOVER THE LEGACY OF THEIR ANCESTORS

MAYA ANGELOU WROTE, "I HAVE GREAT RESPECT FOR THE PAST. If you don't know where you've come from, you don't know where you're going."

Though the past may not define us, it certainly has shaped who we are today. Dan Nelson, owner of Dancestors Genealogy is helping families discover their family history and honor the generations that have come before them.

Dan's affinity for history and genealogy began at an early age.

"Since I was a young boy, I always found it fascinating to hear stories about my ancestors. I would listen to my grandparents and great uncles and aunts tell stories of the past," he says. "I inherited a love for genealogy from my mother, who began researching our family's history after retiring in the late 1980s.



"In the early 1990s, I took up where my mom left off in her research," Dan says, adding that because he travelled for his career, he was able to fill in the family tree through visits to libraries, historical societies and family members.

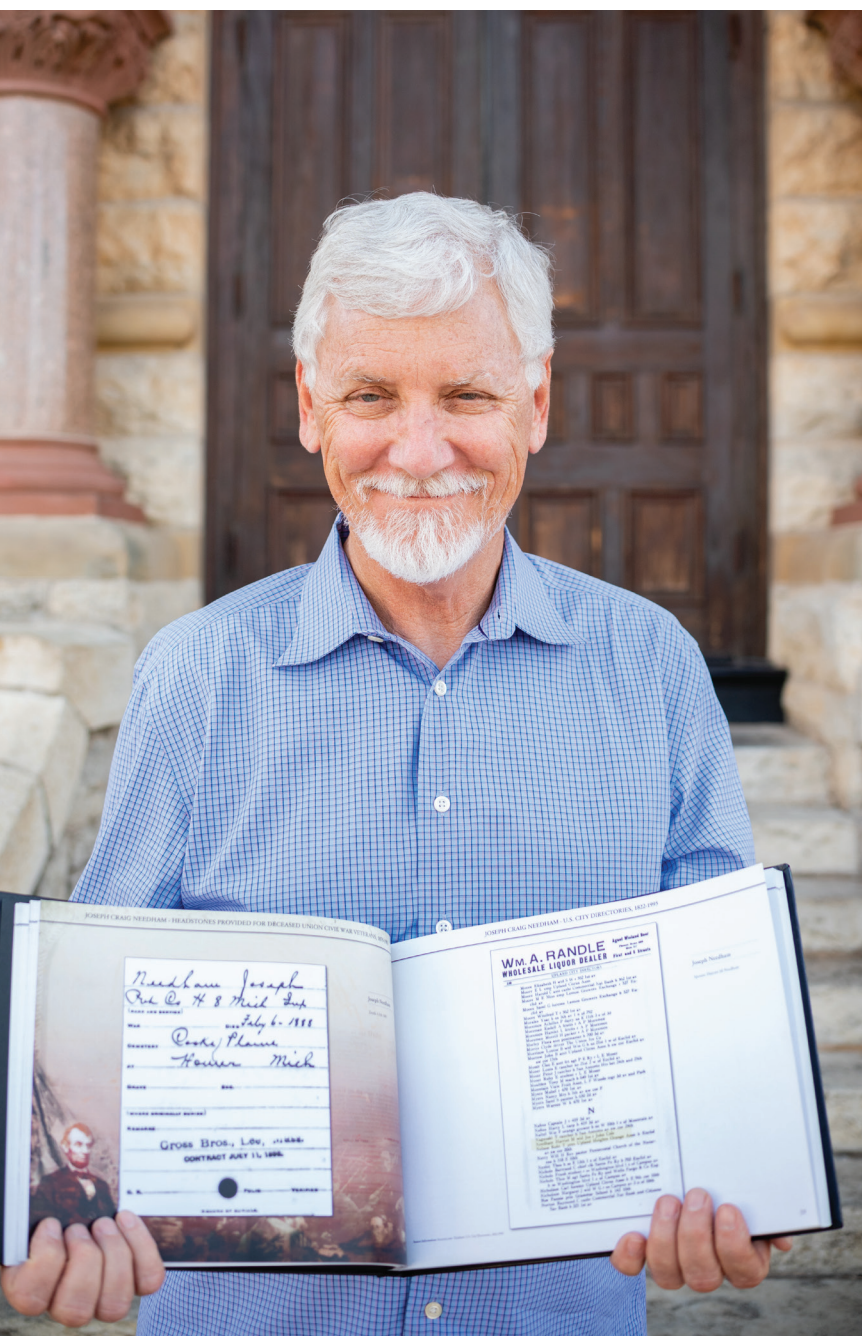
"Today, these research techniques are still relevant, but digital resources have greatly enhanced the genealogist's tools. I am fortunate to have pursued genealogy at an early age when the story-holders could still explain their history. Since then, many have passed away, and their stories are lost or diminished in fact," he says.

Dancestors offers a simplified process of discovering one's family history. Dan meets with clients to share expectations and begin the family tree, and then begins a three-phased approach. Phase one is the initial background exploration and DNA submittal. Phase 2 is "the hunt"- fleshing out the data for the family tree and

beginning the narrative/story document, as well as finding DNA cousins. Phase three includes non-digital research.

When the process is complete, clients receive an Online Ancestry Tree; a GEDCOM File, a standard genealogical file containing tree data important to other programs; a printed pedigree chart; DNA ethnicity and cousin contacts; online documentation accessible for future generations; and a beautiful Narrative Family Legacy Book, which includes documents and pictures of the family.

Though the process does not typically include the traveling and in-person meetings of the past, the Narrative Family Legacy Book assures that clients' stories are not lost, and they have a tangible tool to tell the story of their history to future generations. **CONTINUED >**





“There is nothing more personal than capturing the story of where you came from and who you are.”

“The book includes a narrative and supporting visuals showing their entire family history,” Dan says. “The visuals include photos, historical documents and maps. The narrative contains stories, legends and other information about your ancestors.”

The response from clients has been overwhelming, he says, adding that there typically are “tears of joy and extreme happiness.”

“There is nothing more personal than capturing the story of where you came from and who you are,” Dan says.

There are many reasons clients visit Dancestors. More broadly, many seek to validate family stories and find out about their ancestors. Others hope to trace medical conditions, find their birth family

or get in touch with living relatives. No matter the reason, Dan says it always is important to find out more about one's past.

“The bottom line is, no one later in life says, ‘I wish I had not spent so much time listening to grandpa's family stories.’”

Occasionally, Dan says, clients will discover interesting characters from the past. Though rare, this could include royalty, witches and even founding fathers.

“Yes, royal connections are not common, but they did occur. Typically, they came from the third son of royalty, who with primogeniture (the oldest son getting the land), the second joining the military, the third son would enter the clergy and be sent to America

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FAMILY HISTORIAN (CONTINUED)

to convert the Native Americans. Once we confirm someone is of royal heritage, a plethora of information becomes available," Dan says. "A recent client has all kinds of Kings as her ancestors, but it is 25 to 30 generations back from today."

Other clients' ancestors have infamously been dubbed Salem witches, Dan says. "I seem to have a lot of clients whose ancestry runs back through Salem. Some were hung as witches, like my wife's great grandmother Mary Towne Easty," Dan says. "The same client had ancestors that were the accusers, the accused witches, the judges, the defenders and the condemners. At least four different clients had ancestors who were hung as witches, another pressed to death with stones, and many others were accused but were able to avoid execution."

Dan says one client was surprised to find out her ancestor played a pivotal role in the establishment of America.

"She was excited when I found her ancestor was Robert Morris, signer of the Declaration of Independence and financier of the American Revolution," he says.

Regardless of who or what clients discover on their journey of ancestral discovery, they are rewarded with the knowledge of their past. And Dan says, this year, more than most, his clients have craved such knowledge.

"I believe it is because we have all had a heightened sense of our mortality," he says.

For those seeking to find out more about their family history, visit dancestorsgenealogy.com. Custom gift certificates are available and make perfect Mother's Day or Father's Day gifts.

