

Stars

## **GENEALOGY**

### **RADIO-NAVIGATION SATELLITES CAN AID IN GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH ; GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEM CAN HELP LOCATE REMOTE, HARD-TO-FIND CEMETERIES.**

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This summer I have added a new tool to my genealogical research kit - a hand-held Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver.

GPS is a world-wide radio-navigation system made up of a network of 24 satellites, placed into orbit by the U.S. Department of Defense, and their ground stations.

These satellites emit signals that permit GPS receivers to pinpoint one's exact location on the planet.

GPS was originally intended for military applications; in the 1980s the government made the system available for civilian use.

GPS works in any kind of weather, anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day and it's free.

GPS records the exact latitude and longitude of each named feature. You can use GPS technology to record locations or to find locations. All you need are the latitude and longitude coordinates of the locations.

I am using GPS to record small rural cemeteries where my ancestors are buried. I will then enter this information into my data files so that others will be able to find our relatives located in remote and hard-to-find cemeteries. This technique can also be used to record grave sites in large cemeteries.

My husband has used GPS for several years while fishing. Dick sets the latitude and longitude coordinates of the beginning of his trip. No matter what the weather conditions, or how far he may have wandered in his boat, GPS always brings him back home. Dick has even used GPS to guide fishing captains when they were unable to see because of fog.

If I know the name of a cemetery but not the location, I can look at the U.S. government's Geographic Names Information System. The GNIS database serves two purposes for genealogists. First, it gives precise locations of every village, mountain, river, airport, bay, beach, bridge, etc. in the United States. This information includes the exact latitude and longitude of each named feature. Next, it also is useful for finding locations mentioned in old documents.

The GNIS also lists many cemeteries, although not all of them. If I know that my great-grandparents were buried in Riverside Cemetery in Altmar, the GNIS describes the exact location. If I know the name of the cemetery but not the town, the GNIS database will find all cemeteries of that name in the state. It can tell you where you are, within a few

meters.

The GNIS is available online at: [mapping.usgs.gov/](http://mapping.usgs.gov/) . The same basic database is also available on CD-ROM disk.

The price of GPS receivers has fallen into a price range of \$100 to \$1000. The lower-priced units are just as accurate as the more-expensive units. As you move up in price the number of options increase. The higher-end units will have built-in maps, larger displays and color displays.

GPS receivers have many uses besides genealogy. You can navigate strange roads, find residential addresses that would be elusive otherwise and even find fast-food restaurants while on trips. A GPS receiver is an excellent tool, both for cemetery hunting and for non-genealogy purposes.

If you own a GPS receiver, the next time you visit an ancestral site of any sort, you should record its geographic coordinates into your database. You can also find similar information by consulting topographic maps.

Tip: We all know how easy it is to enter the data we find into our databases and to promise to enter the source citations later on. Now is a good time to take your materials, evaluate their origins and the sources and enter those source citations. They will be important to both you and subsequent researchers viewing your work. If you have your data files on a computer, once written, you can easily copy and paste a citation to other places.

Queries from readers

Note: All locations are in New York state unless otherwise specified.

Q-1462: Seek information on parents and siblings of Celia BERRY. She married Gay MILLS of Van Buren. Celia was born in New York in 1855; she died in Onondaga County in 1928 and is buried in Riverview Cemetery, Baldwinsville. - TerriAnn Mills Braley, 14469 Route 104, Red Creek, NY 13143.

Q-1463: Looking for descendants of Civil War soldiers who were in the following units with three of my ancestors. My great-great grandfather, William H. BROWN, was a private in Co. H 16th NY Heavy Artillery. William Henry LYON was in Co. H 185th Regiment NY Vol. Infantry and Clark SPENCER was in Co. D 1 Militia Rifle. All three were from Scott, Cortland County. Does anyone have information, photos, or letters on soldiers in these units? I would like to have a group gathering to meet the descendants of our Civil War soldiers. - Sharon Brown, 21 Washington St. No. 1, Cortland, NY 13045-6105 or FAX (607) 758-8496.

Q-1464: Seek marriage date and location of Frances L. FAIRBANK and Ann Eliza HUSTED, possibly in Lee, Oneida County about 1830. Was Frances also called Lewis? FAIRBANK family lived in Morrisville about 1804-1832. The HUSTED family lived in the Westernville area. Frances and A. Eliza lived in Deansboro, Oneida County from the 1830s to 1891. - Patti Haggerty, 6802 Holliston Circle, Fayetteville, NY 13066.

Readers may submit queries, typewritten or printed, with a Central or upstate New York connection. Include name and date. Send queries to: Genealogy, Stars Magazine, The Post-Standard, Attention: Sheila Byrnes, P.O. Box 4915, Syracuse 13221.