The Possible Secret of OUR FOUNDING FATHERS' LONGEVITY

In 1775 a mere two percent of the population was over 65. Yet our first ten presidents lived an average of 77.4 years. Why? Can a person be too busy to die? Can a vital undertaking be so engrossing that there is just no time to answer the door when doomsday comes knocking? Not likely, say the geneticists, insisting that the length of one's life is mainly determined by how long his or her ancestors lived.

But Dr. Kenneth Pelletier, authority on longevity, disputes the geneticists. "Good genes give you an edge," Dr. Pelletier admits, "but that doesn't account for people who live 30 to 40 years beyond average life expectancy. A strong sense of purpose, commitment to higher values, as well as lifelong physical and mental activity play a more important role in longevity than purely biological factors such as hormonal changes." He asserts that the single most important predictor of longevity is enthusiasm for life: staying busy, being curious, feeling that you are accomplishing something worthwhile.

Proof that the 'too busy to die' theory is more than wishful thinking can be found in the long and productive lives of the Founding Fathers. Life expectancy at birth in Colonial America between 1700 and 1775 was 35 years (today it is 72.2 for men and 78.9 for women). But since life expectancy is defined as the number of years an individual of a given age may expect on average to live, once the Colonial American reached 21, odds favored his living another 20 years. And the longer one lived, the better the chances of living to a ripe old age.

Nevertheless, in 1775 a mere two percent of the populace was over 65. Yet an amazing number of Founding Fathers, all born in the perilous 18th century, achieved a longevity far beyond the average.

Our first ten presidents - Washington through Tyler - lived an average of 77.4 years, while our last ten deceased presidents - Theodore Roosevelt through Lyndon Johnson (excluding John Kennedy, whose early death would further lower the average) - lived an average of only 69.9 years.

Of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence, three lived to 90 or beyond (Charles Carroll of Maryland lived to 95); nine more to
News From The Family History Library

There isn't much new happening at the Library. An update Social Security Death Index has been received with over 6 million names in it. Do you use the Library computer to download your data to disk? If so, you may want to run your favorite virus checker on your own PC. It was discovered that the Library computer is infected by the Michelangelo virus. Steps have been taken to remove this virus from the Library Computer as well as other Church computers. Steps are also being taken to scan all disks that are put into the Library computer for viruses so this doesn't happen again. As you use the computer for your family searches, do you find errors in the data you're getting? If so, you can make corrections to the data so it is corrected in the next update. Pick up the handout titled "Correcting Information in Ancestral File" located on the table in the room with the computer. It will instruct you on how to make the changes.

Family History Library Hours

Tuesday 9:30 to 12:30
5:30 to 8:30
Wednesday 9:30 to 5:00
Thursday 12:00 to 3:00
5:30 to 8:30
Saturday 9:30 to 3:00

Library hours are subject to change due to staff availability and weather conditions. Please call the library to see if they are open, when in doubt. (717) 854-9331

HIGHLIGHTS FROM LAST MONTHS MEETING

Last month's meeting was our annual Holiday Party. As usual, there were plenty of calories to go around! The club provided the main meal - cold cut platter, potato and macaroni salad, and sodas. The members brought deserts and a significant other as a guest if they wished. The food was excellent. Santa Silvia visited bearing gifts for all those present. We had a short business meeting. Malcolm informed us that we had over $2500 in the treasury. The program for the month was provided by Buff Nettleship - Creating a Keepsake Album. Dee and I unfortunately had to leave early and were unable to participate. So, y'all are going to have to let me see what you created!

EDITOR'S CORNER

Well folks, we've made it through another year here at STRAPAFUG. Was it a good year for all of you? Did your genealogy information grow this year? I must confess, I didn't touch mine once this year. Dee and I have been working on her side of the family sporadically. We were without a computer for most of the year, so that didn't help matters any. We have since gotten a new '486 with windows - but that one has already been to sunny California for its health, while we've been doing some R&R (ranting and raving)! I hope everyone had a nice holiday and got everything you wanted. And for those few items you got and wish you hadn't - get in line on page 3! Before we start 1995 (I'm writing this Dec. 21st - hey it's my birthday - I'm 19 today! OOPS! Sorry Santa, it was only a little fib!) I would like to take a look at where we've come from. 1994 was our third full year of club activity. During the past 3-plus years, the club has remained relatively (no pun intended) the same. The same officers handled the club's affairs and the monthly meetings. After that period of time we were getting a little tired and a little stale. In October we held our first full blown election. With the exception of Malcolm staying on as Treasurer, we have a new set of Officer's to take us into 1995. We also now have a program committee that will provide interesting programs each month, a Historian to start documenting the club activities for future generations, and a new Editor for the newsletter. I'm looking forward to 1995! That's a real change for me, because this time last year I almost didn't renew my membership! I'm anticipating new programs that are tied to the central theme of being able to write a family genealogy book by year's end. I'm looking forward to my first year as editor of the newsletter. I plan on getting back into my genealogy in preparation for the three family reunions I plan on attending this summer. In fact I'm Co-Chairperson with my wife and my mother in preparing my mother's family reunion this year. So look for some articles on the do's and don'ts of family reunions. It's going to be a GREAT year!!!

HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE!!  

Mark
LONGEVITY - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

80 or beyond; an additional eight to 70 or more; and another 16 reached 60 or more. Benjamin Franklin lived to 84, Paul Revere to 83, Noah Webster to 84, John Jay to 84, Samuel Adams to 81, Charles Bulfinch to 81, John Trumbull to 87, John Marshall to 80.

Some might argue that the Founders must have had long lived ancestors (some did, but most didn't), a privileged background (less than half did), or superior medical care (it didn't exist for anyone, rich or poor).

Perhaps Benjamin Franklin had the best formula for achieving longevity. In his twenties he compiled a list of Thirteen Virtues that would govern his life. Virtue no. 6 was Industry; "Lose no time. Be always gainfully employed. Work as if you were to live a hundred years.

There it is; The Founding Fathers were industrious. They schemed, harangued, wrote, organized, fought - many of them in bloody battles - to free the Colonies. Then while some of them worked furiously to prevent the unhewn nation from falling apart, others rushed back to the workshop to pick up their tools. They were a diverse group; aristocrats, common sorts; college graduates, autodidacts; short-tempered, unperturbable; neat, sloppy; stingy, generous. Some smoked; most drank moderately, mainly wine. Some exercised diligently, others half-heartedly. But they all had one thing in common: They saw life as a heavensent gift, a gift to be utilized, not wasted, not squandered.

Why don't we all try this? See how it works out.

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FIRST TEN PRESIDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>President</th>
<th>Born</th>
<th>Died</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Washington</td>
<td>2-22-1732</td>
<td>12-14-1799</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Adams</td>
<td>11-30-1735</td>
<td>7-4-1826</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Jefferson</td>
<td>4-13-1743</td>
<td>7-4-1826</td>
<td>83</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Madison</td>
<td>3-16-1751</td>
<td>6-28-1836</td>
<td>85</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Monroe</td>
<td>4-28-1758</td>
<td>7-4-1831</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Quincy Adams</td>
<td>7-11-1767</td>
<td>2-23-1848</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td>Andrew Jackson</td>
<td>3-15-1767</td>
<td>6-8-1845</td>
<td>78</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martin Van Buren</td>
<td>12-5-1782</td>
<td>7-24-1862</td>
<td>79</td>
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<td>William Harrison</td>
<td>2-9-1773</td>
<td>4-4-1841</td>
<td>68</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Tyler</td>
<td>3-29-1790</td>
<td>1-18-1862</td>
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</table>

Average age at death: 77.4

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LAST TEN DECEASED PRESIDENTS

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<th>President</th>
<th>Born</th>
<th>Died</th>
<th>Age</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theodore Roosevelt</td>
<td>10-27-1858</td>
<td>1-6-1919</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>William Howard Taft</td>
<td>9-25-1857</td>
<td>3-8-1930</td>
<td>72</td>
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<td>Woodrow Wilson</td>
<td>12-28-1857</td>
<td>2-3-1924</td>
<td>67</td>
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<td>Warren G. Harding</td>
<td>11-2-1865</td>
<td>8-2-1923</td>
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<td>Calvin Coolidge</td>
<td>7-4-1872</td>
<td>1-5-1933</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>Herbert Hoover</td>
<td>8-10-1874</td>
<td>10-20-1964</td>
<td>90</td>
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<td>Franklin D. Roosevelt</td>
<td>1-30-1882</td>
<td>4-12-1945</td>
<td>63</td>
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<td>Harry S Truman</td>
<td>5-8-1884</td>
<td>12-26-1972</td>
<td>88</td>
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<td>Dwight Eisenhower</td>
<td>10-14-1890</td>
<td>3-28-1969</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyndon B. Johnson</td>
<td>8-27-1908</td>
<td>1-22-1973</td>
<td>64</td>
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</table>

Average age at death: 69.9

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By Lawrence Doorley
From the 1994 Old Farmer's Almanac

A child born less than nine months from the time of his parents marriage was referred to as an "engagement child" in old records.
ORIGIN OF NAMES

Between 1864 and 1936 there lived a Spanish writer, poet, and philosopher called Miguel de Unamuno. Writing at great length on many subjects, Unamuno had this to say about the origin of names: "In Homeric times people and things had two names: the one given to them by men and the one given to them by god. We wonder what god calls us?"

While Unamuno certainly had an interesting philosophical question, most of us have been too busy worrying about the names we call each other to give much thought to answering the question.

In the very beginning, the most anybody had was a first name. The Christian or "given" names worked just fine until society became complex; until such things as trade and commerce came into being, then one name just wasn't adequate. For instance, if you told your partner that James owed two pieces of gold, chances are he'd ask, "which James?" To bring some kind of order to a potentially chaotic situation, various "Jameses" were described by the place they lived - "by the mill", "on the hill", and "at the water". So eventually you had Mills, Hills, and Atwaters.

People were also given "names" according to their occupations - butcher, baker, or carpenter.

Another interesting way of giving people last names (surnames) is to derive a name patronymically. That rather impressive term refers to a name based on your father's name. For instance, if your father's name was John and you were his son, chances are, you would have been call Johnson. The variations, of coarse, are unlimited - Peter and Peterson, Robert and Robertson, Michael and Michaelson, and so forth.

As you begin to trace your ancestors, you'll find having some inkling of how names have developed and then changed over the years is going to be very important.

The five most common names in America today are Smith, Johnson, Williams, Brown, and Jones. But remember, that one reason so many foreign immigrants, in an attempt to "Americanize" their names, either translated their names to American equivalents (such as Fox for the French name Renard) or changed them completely when they found their ethnic backgrounds were a handicap.

There were other ways names got changed as well. Many early citizens didn't know how to write their names, so when official documents needed to be prepared, the clerks often used phonetic spelling - a name like Boone could have been spelled Boon or Boonne or Bune or Bunne and so forth. And once a particular spelling got into the official records, it often stuck with a family who began using it because they though it was correct.

Another way names got changed in those early, confusing days was tradition. For instance, Peter the son of John was, of course, Peter Johnson; But Henry the son of Peter became known as Henry Peterson. That means the family surname changes completely every generation. Fortunately, in the middle of the 1500's this surname changing was discontinued. If it hadn't been discontinued, today's genealogical research would be nearly impossible.

Still another way to find yourself called by a new "name" occurred when immigration officials couldn't cope with the sounds or spelling of the foreign name they heard and so made it appear like something they were more familiar with.

Knowing the various ways to spell your name will be an important asset when you begin your genealogical research. When you look through public records, if you haven't given some serious consideration to how someone somewhere may have spelled, or misspelled, your name, you could very well overlook an important part of your heritage.

You may want to try these exercises:

a. Write down every possible spelling of your name that you can think of, no matter how unusual or outlandish it might be.

b. In saying your name out loud, try to remember how people have mispronounced it in the past.

c. Don't be afraid to experiment just a bit - for instance you might make soft consonants hard and hard ones soft; you might replace the C' with K's and vice versa.

You'll certainly come up with some most unusual looking names for yourself, but chances are, somewhere in your past, that's the way it was.

Then, too, depending on your ethnic origin, your search for ancestral identity may take on some very special twists - here are a few:
Norwegians often take a name associated with a family farm.

Many Arabs don't have surnames, only nicknames that usually end when the bearer dies.

Indonesians have only a surname - given names are just beginning to be used.

In Sweden, a national committee is encouraging the building of new family names because so many names had patronymic origins, the system was becoming very confusing.

Spanish families often have two surnames - the first from the father's family and the second from the mother's family.

Most German names are derived from occupations, colors or locations.

Historically, Chinese placed the surname first. However many of the Chinese Americans are following our western custom.

Most American Indian names were given as a result of some experience the young warrior or maiden had when they became an adult. Usually the names just didn't translate well into English. Around 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt encouraged the Indians on a large Sioux reservation to be renamed, so many of the early names were recorded and classified.

If your heritage is African going back to the slavery period, you'll find no surnames were allowed until the slave was free. Original African names were rarely used, instead the slave owner usually picked a name he liked for his slave. After 1865, the newly freed slaves normally avoided the names of their former masters, choosing instead names of other prestigious families - a reason why so many black families have English sounding names.

**VITAL STATISTICS**

Ann Shearer spotted the following article in the York Daily Record and thought it might be interesting to the group.

**HOW TO FIND CERTIFICATES**

Need to obtain birth, death, marriage, or divorce certificates? "Where to Write for Vital Records" is a government publication that can tell you how.

For a copy, send a check for $6.95 payable to "Federal Reprints" to Federal Reprints, Box 70268, Washington DC 20024.

Ann has sent away for a copy. Maybe she would bring it to the meeting and give us a brief description of what's included in the publication? How about it Ann?

**PAF 2.31 SUPPLEMENT**

I have just received my update to Joan Lowery's book. Everyone who purchased a copy should receive an update supplement directly from Joan. If you want a copy of Joan's book, Malcolm still has several copies (with the supplement). I must confess that I haven't had the time to sit down and read through the book yet, but it seems that everyone who has used it praises Joan's efforts.

**GENEALOGY BOOKS BY MAIL**

Remember those advertisements for genealogy books that offer to trace your roots? And when you got it, the only thing it contained was a list of names taken from the phone books, and bound with a bunch of general genealogical material. Well we just bought our second one. Ok, ok you can stop laughing now. Most of these books are coming from a company by the name of Halbert's in Bath, Ohio. This new book was sent to my wife's uncle, and was intitled "The Croyles Since The Civil War". It appears that Halbert's is putting a little more effort into their books. This new book contains a wealth of general genealogy information. For a seasoned genealogist, most of the information is not going to be new. For some one just getting started on their family history, this is the type of information they are going to need to know. The type of general info covered starts with how to begin your search, where to look for information, who to talk to first, where to write for information (it also contains a listing of where to write for vital statistic in each state with current addresses), and it contains several types of forms (pedigree, research log, individual worksheet, etc.) that can be copied and used to start your work. The second part of the book contains two lists of Croyle names, the first alphabetically and the second by state. In the introduction Halberts states that the names
in the alphabetical listing have been pulled from the Social Security Death Index Master File. The names for the state listing were pulled from various national sources such as telephone listings, automobile registrations, election rolls, and other public records. The first list contains 310 Croyle names from the Social Security Death Index. The second list contains 536 Croyle names from other public records.

The book costs $31.38. I feel that this is fairly reasonable when you consider the amount of information it contains. Yes I could have spend several hours pulling the same information from the Church computer or downloading it from online searches in Compuserve, but I think that would have actually cost me more in money and a lot more of my time.

This is not an endorsement for Halbert's products! I would not buy the same book done on the Gagermeier name. There would be very little information for my money. However, if you have a name that is not too uncommon, you will receive a book that is packed with names. Halbert's does not claim to do any pedigree or lineage searches or to link any of the names provided in the book. They simply provide them to you to use as you want.

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FLOWERS OF THE FOREST

One of the worst battle disasters in Scottish history is responsible for the lament commonly played by bagpipers in times of mourning, "The Flowers of the Forest". On 9 September 1513 at the close of the day of the Battle of Flodden, King James IV, an archbishop, two bishops, scores of nobleman and a tremendous number of common men lay dead. It is a common Scottish tradition that following any battle, a piper is asked to compose a "lament". All over the world at times of mourning the pipers recall the lament composed at the Battle of Flodden, "The Flowers of the Forest".

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SOCIAL SECURITY APPLICATION COPIES

There has been a slight change of address for Social Security Application Copies (SS-5) Freedom of Information Officer, 4100 Annex, 6401 Security Blvd., Baltimore, MD 21235. The fee for a search by Social Security number remains $7.

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RUSSIAN RESEARCH

Russian genealogical information and archives are now available to US researchers. Fact Online has assumed the services of Urbana Technologies Inc., of Urbana, IL and is now US agent for MOTEK information Services of Moscow, Russia and is providing US customers with genealogical, diplomatic, business and other archival information. Regional reports and analysis from the former Soviet Union may also be provided. Orders may be sent by US mail or by e-mail through Compuserve, Delphi, and MCI Mail, on the Internet. They are then forwarded to Moscow by e-mail. After order completion, the located materials are returned to Facts Online for shipping and invoicing within the US. Write Facts Online, c/o Julia Petrakis, 812 Vista Drive, Camano Island, WA 98292 for more information.

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INDIAN BLOOD