June 2, 2024

My dear mother-in-law passed away yesterday. Why do we always, ALWAYS think we have more time? How many times have I told you or any number of family members that you need to talk to your oldest family members while they’re still here and still remember? Well, apparently I don’t take my own advice. When an older person dies, it’s as if a library burns down. So, now I’m starting again to follow my own advice and start labeling the back of pictures that I know. The boxes of old pictures that I don’t know who is in them, I’m working extra overtime to try to find out who they are, label the back, scan them in my computer, and attach them to the correct person in my Family Tree Maker program. I’ve heard horror stories of when people pass away and their pictures are not labeled in some way, those pictures will go in the trash. This gives me anxiety just thinking about it.

Here’s how I’m going about trying to identify my unidentified pictures:

1. Take a picture of each one and send one at a time to my Mom. Have an ongoing conversation with her about these pictures and anything she remembers about them. She has identified three pictures for me and given me a couple of stories about them.
2. Share with one of two private family groups on Facebook. I have one private group for my Mom’s side of the family and one for my Dad’s side. I’ve already gotten five pictures identified this way and I’m continuing with this tactic. It has seemed to renew an interest in talking about our family to these cousins.
3. When these methods fail, I’m going to scan the pictures and send to Deadfred.com. This is a website for pictures that you can’t identify. Under the main heading it says, “23414 Surnames, 160066 Records, 3362 Reunions. Now, I probably don’t have quite 3362 pictures that are unidentified, so I think I at least have a chance. Check this website out!
4. Submit a query along with a picture to the County genealogy society. Someone from that area might just recognize your picture and contact you.
5. I have also renewed my determination to better organize the picture files I have in my Family Tree Maker program. In order to be able to find things more quickly, I am trying to name my files in a logical way and do this the same every time. I’m making progress with this, I just have to keep up working on them.

What can you do today to ensure that your pictures will last for the family that comes after you?

Answer our poll question below and I hope to see you at our last program of the year on June 11, 2024, 6:00 pm Central at Willard Library.

Talk to you soon,

Kim Van Vorst

President, Tri State Genealogical Society