

Geer Family Association

VOLUME 27, NUMBER 1

Gear, Geer, Geere, Gere, Etc (G/G/G)

FALL, 2009



My Grandfather's First Family

Digging up the past - By Donna Lea Gear Loper

It started with my Aunt Mary. She said that her father had 2 children by his 1st wife, whose names were **Bruce & Helen**. She was reluctant to talk about her father and it took years to break through in my research with clues to answer nagging questions about my grandfather Gear. Researching **William Hathaway Gear's** 1st family took hours, but ultimately brought me together with his granddaughter, **Janet Lynn Lockhart**.

I checked census records of this 1st family, and found **Laura, Viola & Lillian** together with their mother, but could not imagine what happened to the 2 oldest children—**Bruce & Helen**. I later learned that they were raised by their maternal Grandmother **Caroline "Libbie" Oakes**, who m. 1) **William E. Cobby** & 2) **John Willard Decker**. Historical newspapers held one snippet that **Lillian (Gear) Lockhart** was survived by 2 children—**Janet** and **Jon Lockhart**. I used

the *DexKnows* search tools to find **Janet Lockhart** in the Dallas, TX area and took a chance and made the call.

It was tricky—how dare a descendant of the *other woman* [the 2nd wife, 20 yrs. younger!] call after the family had fallen apart. On voice mail, I explained that I was the granddau. of **Wm. Hathaway Gear**, doing family research. I hoped this message was being received by **Janet Lockhart**, dau/o **Lillian Blanche Gear**. Suddenly the phone picks up and drops to the floor—rattling in my ear. My heart starts pounding... "Who did you say your name was?" a voice asks.

I respond with my name and she interrupts me to say, "Do you know how long I have been looking for you?" All I could think to say was "Does this mean this is a good thing?" "Oh yes!" **Janet** exclaimed.

Janet and I became fast friends. She had so many questions! Family legend had made the "other" family out to be evil, yet here I was, as open and curious about her and her family as she was about mine. She said we were all just "normal folk after all."

It was an honor to work with her sifting through myths & murk to piece together the fabric of our families. For 2 yrs. we worked together cross-checking our findings. She would hunt through the garage boxes, & I would crawl online databases & scanned records to bring it together. In June 2009

Continued on page 4



Special Guest Speakers at GFA's 2010 Reunion in Scarborough & Portland, Maine



W. Michael & Kathleen O'Neal Gear, WY residents, paleontologists and best-selling authors, will speak about their careers and newest release, Children of the Dawnland. Their books are meant to educate through story, the rich history of North American people & civilizations.





Gene Geer

The committee working on the triennial Geer Family Association meeting in Maine has been going over last minute details and the schedule is pretty much all in place. There have been some changes on the venues for a few activities, and one speaker, **Sam T. Geer**, has been added who will update us on the Patriarchs knowledge that has come out of DNA testing. So, the time to get your reservation in is getting shorter with June just around the corner. Don't forget to bring G/G/G family memorabilia with you to the reunion so maybe we can swap family stories over some nice New England clam chowder.

Our new acting officers, Treasurer **Sandra Marsh**, and Secretary **Audrey Masalehdan**, have dived right in to their jobs and helped guide our ship, the GFA, into calmer waters. I (and I'm sure I speak for all our members here) would like to express my sincere thanks to them.

Our newsletter team, **Donna** and **Ginger**, have put out another great issue, and I continue to marvel at the job they do for us.

And, as always, we ask you to consider a donation to the Geer Hill School Fund to help us preserve one of the most tangible links to the family's storied past.

All the best – *Gene Geer*

Reunion Speakers

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Sam Taylor August

Sam will present a talk on the Geer Family DNA Project with World Family Trees. He has provided extended help to Geer/Gear/Gere families, and is building DNA evidence for Geer clans.



Ginger M. August

Long-time historian of the GFA, Ginger will speak on both the Rockland, ME area granite industry—which drew **David Larkin⁶ Geer** [ID# 489-G] from Stonington, CT to ME, as well as speaking about David's family—the “Maine Geers.”



John Geer August

Military history of the Casco Bay area and Portland. John lives in Scarborough, ME. He attended the 2007 CT Reunion as well as the 2004 New London, MN GFA Reunion.



Rodney Laughton

A Scarborough resident, Rodney is not only keenly interested in local history, but is the Innkeeper at The Breakers Inn, as was his father before him. Some of you may stay there.



Final Schedule of Reunion Events

Note new Locations!!

June 25th—27th in Maine 2010

Scarborough/Portland/South Portland

Our Hosts--the family of David Larkin⁶ Geer [ID# 1060-G] (1819 - 1890)

June 24 – Thursday evening—location TBA

Officers and Trustees meeting-also including
Historian, Registrar, Archivist, Newsletter Chair, past officers.

June 25 – Friday, 11 am to 8:30 pm: Note new location!

First Congregational Church of South Portland, 301 Cottage Road, South Portland, Maine 04106.

Registration/welcome. Tables for G/G/G memorabilia display.

Light lunch and Maine-themed dinner.

Speakers –Some on Fri. and some on Sat.!

* **John Geer August** will speak on the “Military history of the Casco Bay area and Portland.”

* **Rodney Laughton**, Scarborough resident, is not only keenly interested in local history and has written a Scarborough History book, but he is also the Innkeeper at The Breakers Inn, as was his father before him. Some of you may stay there! He will present “A History of Scarborough.”

* **Ginger M. August**, long-time Historian of the GFA, will speak about the Rockland, ME, granite industry, which drew **David Larkin⁶ Geer** (ID#489-G) from CT to ME, as well as about David’s family -- the “Maine Geers.”

* **W. Michael & Kathleen O’Neal Gear**, WY residents, paleontologists and best-selling authors, will speak about their careers.

* **Sam Taylor Geer**, will present updated information regarding the Geer DNA Project.

June 26 - Saturday: 8:30 am Note New Location!

First Congreg. Church, So. Portland, ME (again)

Coffee and pastries followed by our GFA Business Meeting.

11:00 am, box lunch at church, or to-go; Fellowship.

1:30 pm, pre-arranged Casco Bay boat trip with tour guide about the area & lighthouses.

Alternatively: Shop and explore the cobblestoned Portland Old Port area, follow Freedom Trail (find the Underground RR stops in Portland & the Abyssinian Church): visit the Portland Art Museum for a group tour of **Winslow Homer**’s art, or see the Victorian Mansion, or enjoy a narrow-gauge RR museum which can include a short ride near the waterfront.

5 pm – 9 pm: Note New Location! B. P.O.E.--Elks Lodge #188, 1945 Congress St, Portland, ME
Hot dinner, dessert, and fellowship. “Family-Reunion Songs. Fun activities.

For kids: Children’s Museum, boat trip, narrow-gauge railroad.

June 27 - Sunday morning at Higgins Beach, Scarborough

9:00 am Higgins Beach Clubhouse –

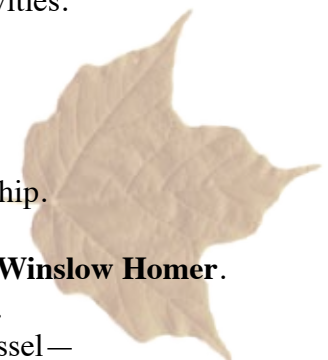
light breakfast, self-tour of certain Geer cottages with cousins, fellowship.

Beach time- bring bathing clothes and towels--bathrooms in cottages,

some parking, car pooling encouraged. Possible talk about local artist **Winslow Homer**.

Optional light Lunch (add’l cost) at Higgins Beach Clubhouse with wrap-up.

For kids: Higgins Beach! Partially submerged shipwreck of coal-carrying vessel—
lucky ones find small remnants of coal lumps.



My Grandfather's Other Family, continued from cover.

Janet was diagnosed with a brain tumor that took her life on 10 July '09. She was in hospice care when she asked to call me. Janet couldn't hold the phone, but through the speaker she could hear my excitement to talk to her, comfort her, & thank her for the treasures we got to share. She said, "*We done good together.*" I miss her. We never met face-to-face, but a kindred cousin-bond it truly was.

I had found all of the 6 children & descendants, but one—**Helen**. I was able to connect with a gracious distant cousin in **Marion Ward-Darrah** of Seattle. **Marion** had the old **Oakes** Family Bible, that was carried through **Caroline "Libbie" Oakes'** brother, **Perry Allen Oakes** to the Salem, OR area. **Caroline** m. **Wm. Cogley**. **Wm.** & **Libbie Oakes** were **Marion Adell Cogley's** parents—and she (**Marion**) was my *Grandfather's 1st wife*.

Of the treasures **Marion** gave me were the original wedding invitations for **Wm. H. Gear & Marion A. Cogley**, the Oakes family Bible, and many exceptional family photographs. My only sorrow is that Janet d. 3 wks. before I met **Marion Ward-Darragh**. Below you will see some of those treasures.

William Hathaway Gear's Life

Wm. H. Gear was b. 16 Sep 1876, in Chanute, Neosho Co., KS. He was the s/o **John Clay Gear & Mary Jane Hathaway**. **John & Mary** moved to Jo Daviess, IL by the time **William** turned 6. **William** falls from records until his Great Aunt **Sophia [Gear] Farrar** names him at age 9, as an heir in her will. **Sophia** d. in 1883 in Galena, Jo Daviess, IL. She lived

in the Galena Stockade with her husb. **Amos Farrar**, a fur trader.

By the 1900 U.S. census, **Wm. H. Gear**, his sister **Myrtha**, & brother **Clayton** are found living with their Grandparents [**Samuel West & Sophronia J. (Taylor) Hathaway**] in Guilford, Jo Daviess, IL. **Wm.** is 25 yrs. old at that time.

William met **Marion A. Cogley** in IL & they were m. in Kendall Co., IL where they had their first 2 children, **Helen & Bruce Allen**, before moving to ND.

Both **Helen** (1903) & **Bruce A. Gear** (29 Apr 1904) were b. in IL. A 3rd child, **Lydia Marion Gear** was b. 19 Aug 1905 in ND. The family relocated to this area near **Marion's Cogley** family, who lived in Albion, MI. Evidence shows the **Gear** family moved from ND to Helper, Carbon, UT, where **Lydia** d. ae 4, of typhoid fever.

Early 1908, **William** had another daughter with **Marion** named **Laura Iris Gear**. **Laura** was b. 3 Feb 1908 in Helper, UT. In the 1910 census, **Wil-**

liam listed himself as a clerk in the R.R. Office at ae 27. His wife, **Adell** – ae 26, **Helen** - ae 7, **Bruce** – ae 6, & **Laura** – ae 2. **Laura** was followed by 2 younger sisters named **Viola Rae Gear** in Oct 1911 & **Lillian Blanche Gear** on 8 Dec 1912. Both these girls were also b. in Helper, UT. **William & Marion Adell Gear** had 6 children together—5 girls & 1 son.

By 1916 however, this family seems to have crumbled. The Davis County Clipper newspaper (15 Sep 1916) reports **William** filed for bankruptcy. By June 1917 **Marion** had left **Wm.** and m. a **Hubbard Henderson**. **Hubbard** lists **Marion** & 3 girls as dependents in his WWI Draft registration. This new



Caroline "Libbie" [Oakes] Cogley with her daughter Marion Adell Cogley, who later married William Hathaway Gear.

My Grandfather's Other Family, continued.

family is found in Butte, Silver Bow, MT in the 1920 US census. **Marion & Hubbard** have a child together named **Maurice Henderson** who is given in adoption to a “Waggoner” family in TX (becomes renamed **Morris Waggoner**), and **Marion & Hubbard** either div. or separated. No records are yet found to follow these 3 people.

Little is known of **William** from 1916-20 when he appears in records living with **Olive Barlow Blood** & her husband in Bountiful, UT at 45. **Olive** is the younger sister of **Hannah Lavon Barlow**, **Wm.**'s future wife. **Hannah** lived with her parents **Ianthus Haven Barlow, Jr. & Alice (Willey) Barlow**.

Hannah Lavon Barlow & William Gear leave Bountiful, UT and m. in Moline, Rock Island, IL on 8 Apr 1921. On 7 Jan 1921, the couple's 1st child, **Donald Barlow Gear** was b. in Cedar Rapids, Linn, IA. **Wm.** was 46 and his young bride was 23 as they started their family together. **William** was listed in the Cedar Rapids city directory in IA in 1922. **Mary Alice**, **Wm.**'s 2nd child with **Hannah Lavon** was b. in Manchester, Delaware, IA on 9 Nov 1922. The IA State census in 1925 (Coggon, Linn Co.) has **Wm.**, **Hannah**, and their 2 children listed.

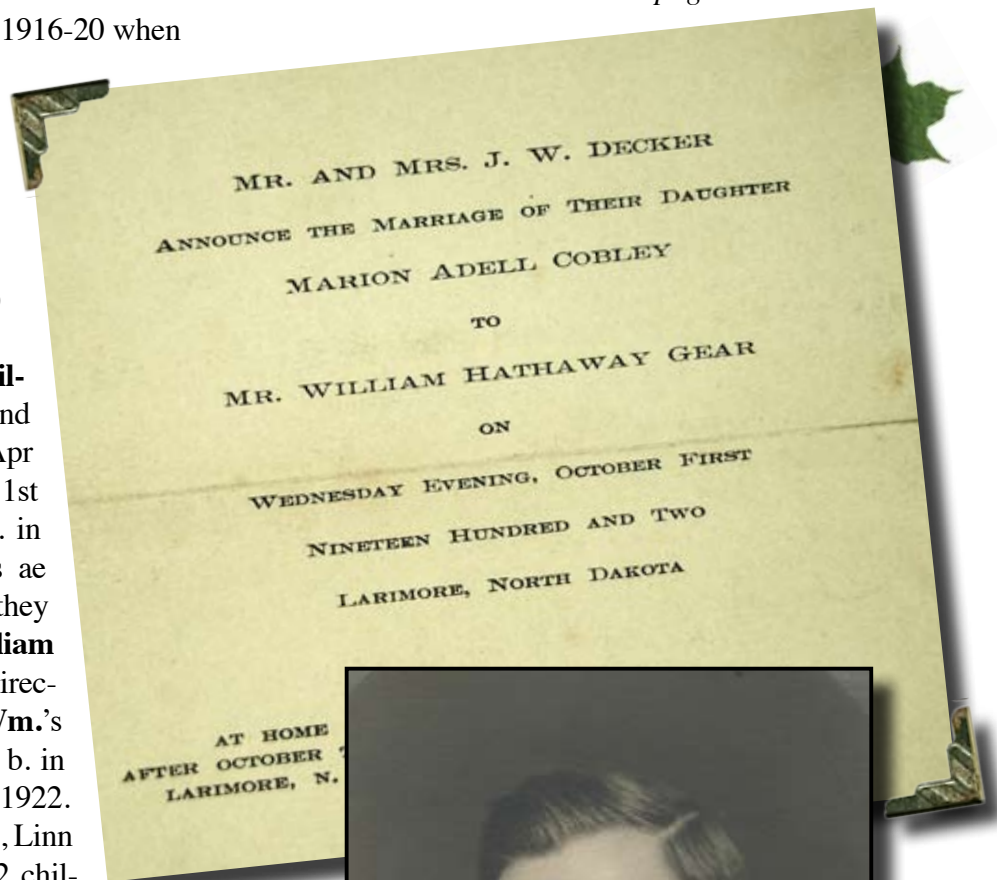
Something changes in their life together in early 1925, and **Hannah** leaves **William** while pregnant with their 3rd child—**Haven Barlow Gear**, my father. **Hannah** moves back to Bountiful, UT and ultimately lives with her Aunt and Uncle on their farm in Pingree, ID. This is where **Haven** is born. **Haven Barlow Gear**'s birth certificate (20 Sep 1925) names **Wm. Hathaway Gear** as his father, who is listed as a farmer b. in IA.

William was not listed in Manchester, IA in the 1930 census. He would have been ca 50 y.o. There are no firm records found to trace **Wm.** after **Hannah** left. No confirming death records, or soc. security record, bur. or cem. info has been found as yet. However, **Mary Alice**, his dau., has a memory that he

was a “traveling salesman” and was passing through Pingree, ID when she was a young girl.

This is the last known fact about **Wm. H. Gear** after 1925. If anyone can help with more info on **Wm. Hathaway Gear** after 1925—please contact **Donna Gear Loper** at dloper3@comcast.net.

Continued on page 6



William Hathaway Gear

My Grandfather's Other Family, continued.



William E. Coble
Set fire to Libbie's notion store in Blue Island, IL near Chicago on Mar 27, 1898, and committed suicide. Shot himself in the head - to be found by fire fighters after the blaze. Was estranged from wife Libbie at the time, and **Marion Adell** (William H. Gear's future wife) was 14 years old at the time.



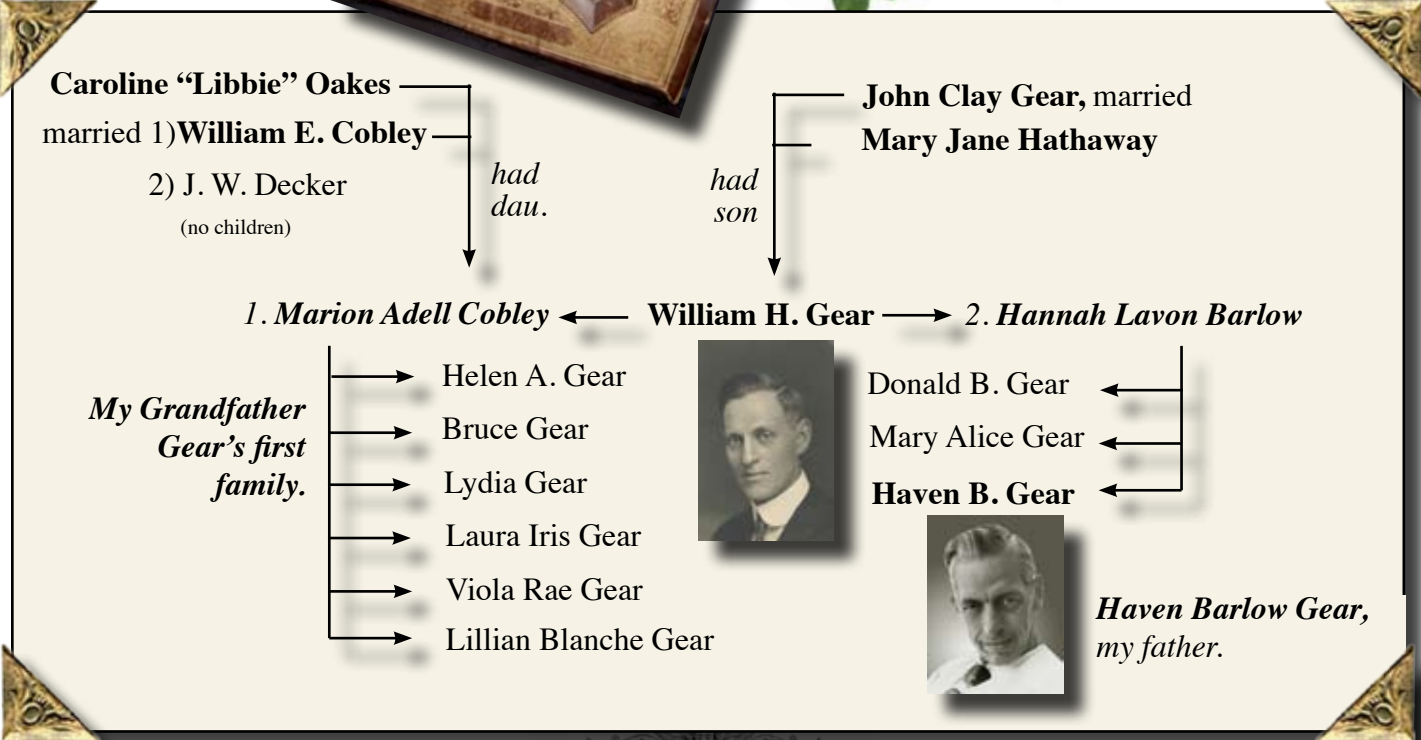
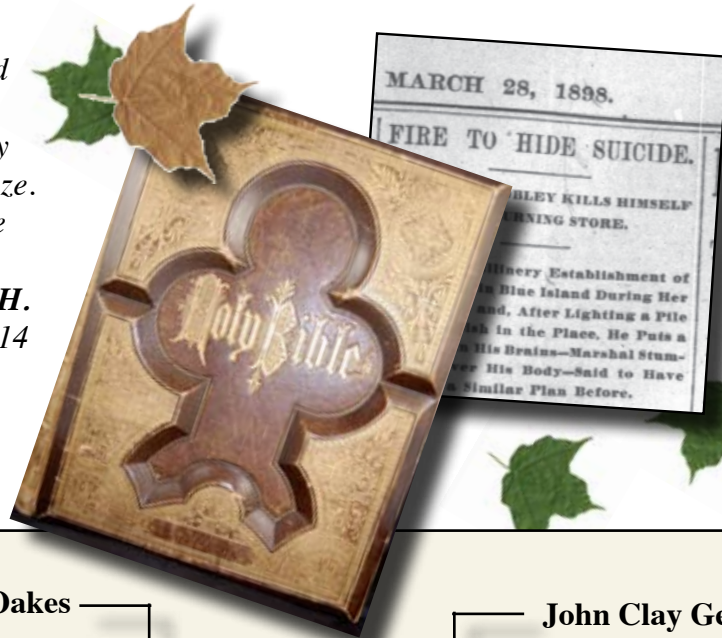
Caroline "Libbie" Oakes



J. W. Decker
(Libbie's second husband)



L-R: Helen & Bruce Gear (grandchildren, and **William & Marion's** first two children - raised by their maternal Grandmother **Caroline "Libbie" [Oakes] Coble Decker**)



Region 1 News: Maine Cousin's Gear-Up for Reunion



Region 1 News---Maine Geers Excited about 2010 GFA Reunion!

I've been hearing news from Maine Geer cousins who now live all over the USA, who are getting their registration forms in and making hotel plans. All are excited about seeing each other again, as well as hosting the GFA reunion! We plan on working together to make meals in the church kitchen, to coordinate the boat tour, to make maps of the area, help out-of-towners with travel tips, and entertain in our cottages come Sunday afternoon! We will be on our best behavior for our new guests! Welcome GFA to Maine!

Ginger M. August, Maine Geers reunion committee coordinator.

Regional Representatives

REGION 1 (ME, NH, CT, RI, PA, NJ, VA, WV, VT, MA, NY, MD, and DE)

ME & NH	Mrs. Judith A. Ewing, judy1@maine.rr.com	(207) 329-0077
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RI	Scott Bill Hirst, 20 Maple Court, Ashway, RI 02804-9630	(401) 377-4643
PA	Jean Creznic, 120 Candlewood Drive, Harrisburg, PA 17112	(717) 545-1839
NJ	Ginger August, 32 Stetson Way, Princeton, NJ 08540	(609) 924-6391

REGION 2 (IN, WS, KY, MI, IL, and OH)

IN	Leona Geer Wiseman, 633 N. Oakland, Mishawaka, IN 46544	(219) 255-0293
WI	Currently no representative. Would you like to volunteer?	Vacant
KY	Teresa M. Klaiber, c/o Deliverance Farm, 22937 Long Branch Rd., Rush KY 41168	tklaiber@wwd.net
MI	Sandra Marsh, 2448 N. Sandstone Rd., Jackson, MI 49201	(517)750-4023

REGION 3 (NC, SC, GA, FL, AL, TN, AR, LA, and MS)

NC	Ann Blanton Howard, Box 475, Spindale, NC 28160	(704) 287-1019
SC	William F. Geer, Jr. (Bill), 406 Skyview Drive, Clemson, SC 29631	geerb@bellsouth.net (864) 654-4812
GA	Robert S. Geer, Jr., 4199 Poplar Hollow Court, Roswell, GA 30075	(770) 645-9085
FL	Jane Geer Hyer, 1008 Brandermill Dr., Cantonment, FL 32533	(850) 937-0963
AL	Fay Geer Elmore, 902 Westover Dr., Homewood, AL 35209	(none available)

REGION 4 (IA, MN, ND, SD, NE, CO, KS, and MO)

IA	Ms. Anna Belle Wacker, 18468 352 Ave., Bellevue, IA 52031	(319) 872-3681
MN	Marilyn Geer, 214 Dogwood St., NE, New London, MN 56273	(320) 354-4135
MN	Eulalie A. Geer, 3909 93rd Ave N, Brooklyn Park, MN 55443	(701) 696-2418
SD	Louraine Hammell, 119 Dove Rd., Pierre, SD 57501	(605) 224-6036
NE	Cheryl Beery, 1851 Brent Blvd., Lincoln, NE 68506	(none available)

REGION 5 (OK, TX and NM)

NM	Mark Geer, 9920 Osuma Rd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87111	(505) 294-4535
OK	Susan Clement Henson, 4014 NW 68th St, Oklahoma City, OK 73116	(918) 520-0626

REGION 6 (WA, OR, ID, WY, MT, HI and AK)

OR	Vesper Geer Rose, GeerCrest Farm, 12390 Sunnyview Rd. NE, Salem, OR 97301	(503) 873-3406
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WA	(Eastern WA) Nelson & Sarah Hall, 2450 NE 5th, East Wenatchee, WA 98002	(509) 884-4461
ID	Jeff & Debbie Geer, 10592 Silver Fox Dr., Boise, ID 83709	(208) 362-3074

REGION 7 (AZ, CA, NV, and UT)

AZ	Arlene Whitlatch, 13019 N 23 Pl., Phoenix, AZ 85022	(602) 493-5177
CA	(Fresno-South) Irving & Vi Miller, 2907 Berkeley St., Bakersfield, CA 93305	(805) 872-0460

REGION 8 (Canada) - Terri Kukla, P.O. Box 787, Denali Park, Alaska 99755 lovesdenali@yahoo.com

Trustees, Officers, and Region Map



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 23 Thomas Road, Ledyard, CT 06339, (860) 464-8657

GFA Dues and Fees Schedule

Regular and Associate Life Membership fee	\$250
Regular and Associate Annual fee for fiscal year 2008/9	\$25
Annual Gift Membership by a member \$5 less than annual fee	
Three-year Membership	\$60
Three-year Gift Membership by a member	\$50

Note: Our expenses keep going up and the paper work of yearly dues paying is increasing. For these reasons, your Board wants to encourage three-year memberships. Please help your GFA organization in this way and avail yourselves of no increase in dues for the next three years.

**Check for updates on
 the GFA Web Site**
<http://www.geerfamily.org>

**Learn about the Geer DNA
 Project headed up by Sam T. Geer**
[http://www.worldfamilies.net/
 surnames/geer/pats](http://www.worldfamilies.net/surnames/geer/pats)

The GFA General Store: Special Note - PayPal now on Web Site!

Sale Items and Fees (within USA). Pay Pal now available on the web site !

With exception of newsletters, international orders will be charged additional applicable airmail rate.

Dues and Newsletter.\$25 per year, covering the period from July 1 thru the following June 30. Includes three newsletters: Fall, Spring, and Summer issues. \$20 one year special offer for paid members giving gift membership(s). **Life Membership: \$250.00**

College of Arms Report: A report on the Geer Crest to date. 11 Pages Price: **\$2.00**

1926 Geer Family Association Meeting and Membership List: Price: **\$1.00**

Individual, Family Group and Pedigree Blank forms for recording genealogical information: Price: free for **\$1.00** postage.

Geer Crest: A good Xerox color reproduction of the Geer Crest (8 1/2 x 11), as seen on the cover of the 1991 supplement. Price: **\$3.00**

Annotated Bibliography of Books on Geer People: Including books with chapters devoted to G/G people/places/events.

..... Prepared by Ginger August. About 58 pages, updated annually. Price **\$15.00**

Historical Sketch and Genealogy of George and Thomas Geer from 1621 to 1856: By James Geer, printed by Elibu Geer in 1856.

Hard Cover

Members..... **\$30** + \$3.00 Postage & handling (p& h)*

Non-Members **\$55** + **\$3.00** p& h* (includes one year GFA membership)

Reprint of 1923 Geer Genealogy by Walter Geer: Hard, imprinted cover, hand bound.

The basis of current George and Thomas Geer descendants' ID # system. 460 pgs, 32 photos.

Members..... **\$40** (Postage & handling included)*

Non-Members **\$65** (Postage & handling and one year membership included)

Reprint of 1991 Supplement to '23 Genealogy: 950 pages, complete indices of

George and Thomas descendants, w/ appendices. 3 hole drilled, loose-leaf, coverless, shrink-wrapped.

Members..... **\$35** (Postage & handling included)

Non-Members **\$60** (Postage & handling and one year membership included)

A Second Supplement to the 1923 Geer Genealogy (CD-ROM Only): Full text search of George and Thomas descendants.

Members..... **\$35** (Postage & handling included)

Non-Members **\$60** (Postage & handling and one year membership included)

USE THIS FORM TO ORDER ANY OF THE ABOVE ITEMS (Postage & handling included for each item, unless otherwise noted).

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Amount Enclosed (Payable to Geer Family Association)

Note: Minimum purchase for Non-Members is \$20.00

Send Completed Form and GFA Check to: Sandra Marsh, GFA
ActingTreas., 2448 N. Sandstone Road, Jackson, MI 49201

Email and/or Phone number where we may contact you with any questions: _____

Qty	Price Ea. =	Sub- total	Item Description
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_____	\$250.00	\$ _____	Life Membership @ \$250 per person
_____	\$2.00 ea	\$ _____	College of Arms Report @ \$2.00 ea.
_____	\$1.00 ea	\$ _____	1926 Geer Assoc. Meeting & List @ \$1.00 ea.
_____	\$1.00 ea	\$ _____	Individual, Family Group & Pedigree @ \$1.00 ea. Members only
_____	\$15.00 ea	\$ _____	Annotated Bibliography @ \$15.00 ea.
_____	\$33.00 ea	\$ _____	Hist. Sketch & Genealogy of G. & T. Geer @ \$33.00 ea.
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_____	\$3.00 ea	\$ _____	Color Copy of Geer Crest @ \$3.00 ea.
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_____	\$20.00 ea	\$ _____	Special Gift Membership @ \$20.00 for one year given by paid Members
			If more than one Gift Membership is to be given, please attach a separate sheet with additional names/addresses.
	Grand Total: \$	_____	

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DATED MATERIAL



Geer Homestead Photo



Milton Geer House in 2009 on Ann Arbor Rd., Superior Twp., Washtenaw Co., MI. See centerfold and pages 12-13 in this issue for more on this family. Subm. by Jodi Adragna

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