



# Introduction



## Our Unique Opportunity

Using today's technology – the Internet, exciting, new computer tools, and new, readily available, rapidly-expanding databases of records from all over the world – genealogy and family history work is possible with ease and in record-breaking time. No people in history have ever had the opportunity to connect with their beloved ancestors, learn about their lives and challenges, and grow to appreciate our heritage as easily and readily as we do today.



J. Richard Clarke  
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### The Most Beautiful Family Tree

“Through family history we discover the most beautiful tree in the forest of creation – our family tree. Its numerous roots reach back through history, and its branches extend throughout eternity. Family history is the expansive expression of eternal love. It is born of selflessness. It provides opportunity to secure the family unit

forever.” (J. Richard Clarke, *Ensign*, May 1989, 60)

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## Suggested Activities

1. Begin to feel a “connection” to those who have gone before you.
2. Plant a seed in your heart for loving your ancestors that can sprout, and that you can nourish so it can grow and get root and bring forth fruit for you and your family for many generations.
3. Read, ponder and experiment upon the suggestions in this book; be persistent and patient.
4. Discuss ways your family can honor your ancestors.
5. Plan a special evening with your family to tell stories and enact a skit based upon your ancestors life.

# Family History Insights - 1



**Bruce C. Hafen**  
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## A Bond that Ties Generations Together

"There really can be a bond and a sense of belonging that ties together generations. ... This bond gives us a sense of identity and purpose. Our ties with the eternal world suddenly become very

real, sharpening our life's focus and lifting our expectations. ... We can discover within ourselves a reservoir of patience and endurance that we never will find without the deep commitment that grows from a sense of real belonging. Exerting such immovable loyalty to another person teaches us how to love – indeed, how to be more like the Savior. Our sense of belonging to one another... foreshadows our belonging in the eternal family of God. Our willingness to discipline our individual desires enough to honor [our] loved ones prepares us to belong to Him who is our Father." Bruce C. Hafen, *Liahona*, June 1998, 16



**Alex Haley**

## Link to Our Past

"In every conceivable manner, the family is our link to our past, and the bridge to our future." Alex Haley



**George Washington**  
by Rembrandt Peale

## Prayer About Eternal Life

George Washington (1732-1799), the Father of our country, prayed regularly and earnestly. Here's one of his recorded prayers about being reunited with his family and friends after death:

"Daily frame me more into the likeness of thy son Jesus Christ, that living in thy fear, and dying in thy favor, I may in thy appointed time attain the resurrection of the just unto eternal life bless my family, friends & kindred unite us all in praising & glorifying thee in all our works begun, continued, and ended, when we shall come to make our last account before thee blessed saviour, who hath taught us thus to pray, our Father, & c." W. Herbert Burk, *Washington's Prayers*, 1907



**Abraham Lincoln**

## Man Was Made for Immortality

"Surely God would not have created such a being as man, with an ability to grasp the infinite, to exist only for a day! No, no, man was made for

immortality." Abraham Lincoln, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* edited by Roy P. Basler, Volume I, "Address Before the Young Men's Lyceum, of Springfield, Illinois (January 27, 1838), Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1953, p. 109.



**Shakti Gawain**

## Guided by Intuition

"...we need to be willing to let our intuition guide us, and then be willing to follow that guidance directly and fearlessly." Shakti Gawain, author



**William Wordsworth**

## We Come From God, Who is Our Home

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting: The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star, Hath had elsewhere its setting, And cometh from afar: Not in entire forgetfulness, And not in utter nakedness, But trailing clouds of glory do we come From God, who is our home." William Wordsworth (1770-1850), English Poet and Author.

## The Greatest Blessings



**Gordon B. Hinckley**  
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"God is the designer of the family. He intended that the greatest of happiness, the most satisfying aspects of life, the deepest joys should come in our associations together and our concerns one for another as fathers and mothers and children". Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, May 1991, 74

# Why Family History?



Unaware to some, *a quiet power* is sweeping the earth as millions of people worldwide are discovering new meaning in their lives. They are doing this by simply connecting with their extended family and loved ones – whether it’s a real life reunion or making a new connection with ancestors. Just the prospect of discovering one’s family roots and heritage, and possibly reuniting with missing loved ones from long ago is absolutely *thrilling*. For many, it’s a rewarding, deep-seated driving force. Family history is about families. And it’s changing how some people see life, and helping them gain a sense of identify and purpose in life.

People all over the world, of all faiths, creeds and races, are inspired to search for their family roots and stories. Thus, they are increasingly enabled to more fully appreciate and value their precious and unique heritage, and rightfully honor their forefathers who have gone before them.

As generations pass, people and their lives may be forgotten, but researching your heritage gives you the opportunity to discover who your ancestors really are. And helps bring your family together. As you do this, your knowledge of your

forebears will increase, you will gain strength by learning how your ancestors met life’s challenges, you will gain a sense of identify and purpose in life, you will feel a sense of belonging that ties generations together, and your family will grow closer.

## Connecting the Generations

I think that most people on earth believe, or want to believe, that life does not end at death, and that marriage and the family will continue beyond the grave. I believe that the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children and that we can be united with our family and loved ones in the hereafter.

Families can be forever. And tracing your family roots and stories helps establish a sense of belonging that bonds generations together. This bond gives you a sense of identity and purpose in life.



Sullivan Ballou

### “Till We Meet No More to Part”

Many people have an unshakeable faith that families can be reunited after death. One such person was Major Sullivan Ballou who wrote one of history’s most beautiful and moving love letters to his wife Sarah

during the American Civil War.

Sullivan Ballou had overcome his family’s poverty to start a promising career as a lawyer in Providence, Rhode Island. Sullivan and Sarah hoped that they could build a better life than they had known growing up for their two sons, Edgar and Willie. In addition to being a successful lawyer, Sullivan also served twice as the Speaker of the Rhode Island House of Representatives.

At the age of thirty-two, being a strong opponent of slavery and devoted supporter of President Abraham Lincoln, Sullivan felt the need to serve the Union, leaving what would have been a very

promising political career to enlist in the 2nd Rhode Island Volunteers in the spring of 1861.

On July 14, 1861, Major Ballou was stationed at Camp Clark, near Washington, D.C., while awaiting orders that led him to Manassas, Virginia. When he heard they were leaving, and that in the very near future they were to do battle with the Confederate Army, and not knowing if he would ever get another opportunity, he sat down and wrote a poignant letter to Sarah. A week later on 21st July, 1861, Major Sullivan Ballou was critically injured when a cannon ball shattered his leg and killed his horse during an attack by the Confederate Army at Bull Run, along with four thousand other Americans. He died July 29, 1861, eight days after the Battle of First Bull Run, Manassas, Virginia.

Though Sullivan had many noteworthy achievements to his credit, it was this letter to his wife for which he will always be remembered. His words professed his eternal love for Sarah, his unwavering belief in his cause, his heartfelt desire for the happiness of his sons, and his faith that they would be reunited after death. It is a truly moving and beautifully written piece which to this day, serves as a glowing testimonial to the love of a Father for his family. *Yankee* magazine published an article on the letter in which they stated "... his words of undying love brought millions to tears". His letter is on the next page.

When Sullivan died, his wife was age 24. She later moved to New Jersey to live out her life with her son, William, and never re-married. She died at age 80 in 1917. Sullivan and Sarah Ballou are buried next to each other at Swan Point Cemetery in Providence, RI. There are no known living descendants.



### Passages from The Holy Bible About Family and being Reunited

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."



(Romans 8:16, *King James Version*)

The spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

(Ecclesiastes 12:7, *King James Version*)

God has...planted eternity in the human heart. (Ecclesiastes 3:11, *New Living Translation*, Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996)

This world is fading away, along with everything it craves. But if you do the will of God, you will live forever. (1 John 2:17, *New Living Translation*, Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996)

"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven..." (Matthew 16:19, *King James Version*)

"Neither is the man without the woman...in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 11:11, *King James Version*)

"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." (Mark 10:9, *King James Version*)



Reverend Billy Graham

### The Soul of Man is Eternal

The Reverend Billy Graham delivered a message entitled *What Happens When You Die?* published in *Decision* magazine in June 2003. He was referring to the April 2003 death of NBC journalist David Bloom who died in Iraq of a blood clot.

In the article, he stated that it's not possible "that a Creator would...allow His highest creation...to become extinct at death." He went on to say that while our body is temporary, our spirit or soul is eternal and will live forever. You can read the full article at <http://billygraham.com/ourMinistries/decisionMagazine>. Billy Graham, "The Reality of Eternity," *Decision* magazine, June 2003, Charlotte, N.C., BGEA

## Major Sullivan's Letter to His Wife Sarah

July 14th, 1861  
Washington D.C.



My dear Sarah:

The indications are very strong that we shall move in a few days -- perhaps tomorrow. Lest I should not be able to write you again, I feel impelled to write lines that may fall under your eye when I shall be no more. ...

I have no misgivings about, or lack of confidence in, the cause in which I am engaged, and my courage does not halt or falter. ... I am willing -- perfectly willing -- to lay down all my joys in this life, to help maintain this Government....

Sarah, my love for you is deathless, it seems to bind me to you with mighty cables that nothing but Omnipotence could break; and yet my love of Country comes over me like a strong wind and bears me irresistibly on with all these chains to the battlefield.

The memories of the blissful moments I have spent with you come creeping over me, and I feel most gratified to God and to you that I have enjoyed them so long. And hard it is for me to give them up and burn to ashes the hopes of future years, when God willing, we might still have lived and loved together and seen our sons grow up to honorable manhood around us. I have, I know, but few and small claims upon Divine Providence, but something whispers to me -- perhaps it is the wafted prayer of my little Edgar -- that I shall return to my loved ones unharmed. If I do not, my dear Sarah, never forget how much I love you, and when my last breath escapes me on the battlefield, it will whisper your name.

Forgive my many faults, and the many pains I have caused you. How thoughtless and foolish I have oftentimes been! How gladly would I wash out with my tears every little spot upon your happiness, and struggle with all the misfortune of this world, to shield you and my children from harm. But I cannot. I must watch you from the spirit land and hover near you, while you buffet the storms with your precious little freight, and wait with sad patience till we meet to part no more.

But, O Sarah! If the dead can come back to this earth and flit unseen around those they loved, I shall always be near you; in the garish day and in the darkest night ...always, always; and if there be a soft breeze upon your cheek, it shall be my breath; or the cool air fans your throbbing temple, it shall be my spirit passing by.

Sarah, do not mourn me dead; think I am gone and wait for thee, for we shall meet again.

As for my little boys, they will grow as I have done, and never know a father's love and care. ... Sarah, I have unlimited confidence in your maternal care and your development of their characters. ... O Sarah, I wait for you there! Come to me, and lead thither my children.

Sullivan