

## **Janet and Genealogy**

**Janet S. Spencer** began tracing her ancestry in the early 1970's and had a column, "Finding the Family", in *The Gaffney Ledger* when she worked there as lifestyle editor. The column allowed readers to share names they were studying, ask for help and offer tips to others.

**Janet** retired after working for 35 years as a reporter for the *Spartanburg Herald-Journal*, *The Gaffney Ledger*, *The Blacksburg Times* and **Cherokee Chronicle**. Her "beat" was primarily covering crime and feature story writing.

She attributes her interest in genealogy to an uncle, Judson Sanders who lived near her family. When she was a child and even as an adult, he visited them almost weekly on Sunday afternoons at her parents' house in the Asbury Community of Cherokee County.

"Uncle Jud loved to tell us what he called 'old times,' stories from the past which he prefaced with 'Back in 1937,' or another appropriate date, and we were set for a couple of hours, listening to his version of anecdotes he so vividly recalled, complete with names, dates and places," she said.

He even named her great-great-grandparents' and their children, identifying most of the spouses.

"I was overwhelmed when I found them in the 1850 census on microfilm. Hearing their names was one thing, but seeing their names in print was an emotional experience, especially since it was info I already had. And that was before the Internet," she explained.

Her first tools in genealogy, in addition to the wealth of knowledge her uncle shared, was a poster board like students used in school and a pencil. She drew her family tree outline on one side and her former husband's on the opposite side.

With all the storage space online, she still has the poster board for handy reference.

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