

KINDRED VOICES

LISTENING FOR OUR ANCESTORS

**PLUS 21 WAYS TO GET STARTED ON YOUR
FAMILY HISTORY TODAY!**

Geoffrey D. Rasmussen

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Middleton, Idaho

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To my ancestors. Especially Grandma Rasmussen, Annette Stinson, Marvin and Melvin Brown, Johannes Gekeler and George Fjeldsted. And to my wife's ancestor, Edwin Hague. Thanks for ~~interfering~~ intervening with my life and my genealogy searches. And thanks for the genes you've passed down (except for the short gene)!

Contents

Preface	7
Chapter 1: “STOP!”	13
Chapter 2: The Letter	27
Chapter 3: The Miracle in Maine	35
Chapter 4: Reunited Infant Children	51
Chapter 5: “Now What About Me?”	63
Chapter 6: The Rest of the Story	79
Chapter 7: 21 Ways to Start Family History Today	85
Appendix	97

Preface

I hear dead people.

[...pause for dramatic effect...]

Their voices speak to me. They speak to my heart and to my mind. I feel them more than I hear them. They are soft, yet speak with a power which engraves the feeling into my soul – a feeling not misunderstood, mistaken, or forgotten with time.

The voices usually come in the quiet moments of my pondering – while lying in bed, reading a good book, or when standing in holy places. I hear them at libraries, in cemeteries, and even in the car. I never anticipate nor expect them, yet they come when I begin to actively seek them.

The voices are not of this world, yet this world was once their home. They are the voices of the kindred dead. They are my literal family – genetically and spiritually. They are the voices of my kin – kindred voices.

The last verse in the Old Testament is a scripture often associated with our kin:

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. – Malachi 4:6

As our hearts turn to our fathers, we desire to learn more of them – to discover who they are. But the first part of this scripture rarely gets the attention it deserves:

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children...

Why would the scripture focus first on our fathers turning their hearts towards us? When we learn *first* about how our fathers turn their hearts towards us, our desire to turn our hearts towards them becomes the natural consequence. Its result is that we, on our own accord, desire to find them and bond with them.

This book explores what so many genealogy-how-to books omit – the evidences of our fathers turning their hearts towards us. Its intent is to ignite the flame of desire for those who have not yet caught the genealogy bug, and to inspire those who have, to continue their quest with greater purpose.

OK. Enough of the serious stuff for a minute. Let's get to why you opened this book. Some of you opened this book out of duty; some may have been told to do your genealogy. Notice I did not include the word *genealogy* until now? Maybe I should have left it until the first chapter, to ensure you will at least get through this preface. For some of you just hearing this word instigates a yawn and a glance at your watch. I get it.

This book will completely change that. By the book's end, those in this 'genealogy-is-for-Grandma' group will *want* to find their ancestors – and not because someone said you should. You have been told to do your genealogy. You may have even been taught it is your duty to find your ancestors. While I believe it *is* our duty to find them and learn of them, I am going to persuade you that there is joy in doing your genealogy but I will do this using a completely different method. I am going to speak first to your heart – without the charts and all the boring how-tos. I want you to want to find your ancestors.

Members of this first group, who believe that genealogy is mostly 'confusing the dead and irritating the living,' have likely been taught the 'charts-before-the-hearts' method of finding your ancestors.¹ Many beginning genealogy classes have focused first on the *mechanics* of filling out a pedigree chart and family group record (two more drool-creating terms), and the importance of

¹ (Special credit to Elder Allan Packer for coining the "hearts before charts" phrase at a recent genealogy conference.)

documenting your sources. While these things are important, they rarely ignite the interest of someone who would rather be anywhere but in the library or at the computer seeking for dead people.

Your conversion to the joy of genealogy comes when *first* your *heart* is touched. Only *then* will you desire to learn the mechanics of genealogy. This desire is a natural consequence *after* you begin to *feel* the spirit of your ancestors. Your heart instinctively begins to turn towards theirs.

If genealogy is not for you, *and* you have read this far, it is all over for you now. It is now too late. First because you paid good money to read this book (thanks!) and second because what you will read in this book will touch your heart in a way you have not previously experienced.

This leads us to the second type of person who opened this book. You already know what the hunt is like. You know what I'm talking about when I mention the Genealogy Happy Dance. You have rushed to the mailbox or refreshed your inbox in anticipation of the response from the record office. You have felt the presence of your ancestors. Visiting cemeteries and scrolling through microfilm, digital images, and court houses is exciting to you! And you actually enjoy hearing about others' genealogical journeys.

This book will not only further energize you, but will give new meaning to the experiences you have had. The ideas, feelings, and impressions you receive about how to find your ancestors are not random. They are heaven-sent. They are often the quiet and impressionable voices of our ancestors who, I believe, have been given permission to communicate with us. They desire to be found. They assist us in our quest to find them. *The voices of our ancestors are the evidence of their hearts having turned towards ours.*

This is not fiction. Not even historical fiction (my favorite genre of reading). Some of these stories are so good that if I had not experienced them first-hand I may question their authenticity. Every word of these encounters with my ancestors' voices is completely true. I cannot make these things up.

This book will light the flame of desire for those who seek their dead out of duty, and will give hope to those whose ancestors seem to intentionally hide from them. Find them we will, because we must. Our dead need us as much as we need them. Their voices are the proof.