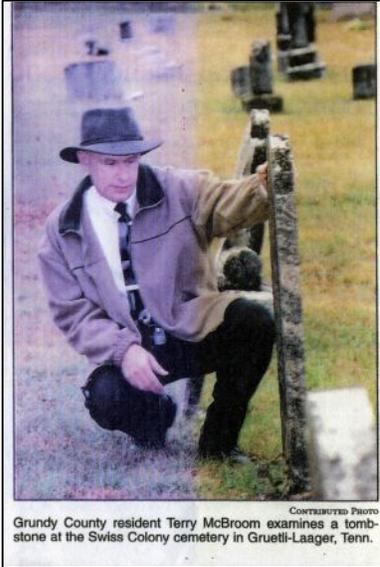


GRUNDY COUNTY MAN RECORDS AREA HISTORY

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By Angie Herrington, Staff Writer



Contributed Photo
Grundy County resident Terry McBroom examines a tombstone at the Swiss Colony cemetery in Gruett-Laager, Tenn.

Terry McBroom said ever since he was 14 years old, he has spent his free time scouring graveyards and libraries in order to piece together the life histories of others.

His hobby has become a full time job, and his goal is to have the largest privately owned genealogical collection in the country.

“I think of it as rescuing these people from being forgotten,” the 47-year-old Grundy County resident said. “I like to think about what they were like and how they lived.”

Mr. McBroom, of Beersheba Springs, Tenn., said he has collected thousands of folders filled with the family histories of people from all over the county obtained

through cemetery, census and obituary records.

He said he also has more than 6 million index cards filed alphabetically that cross reference the information in the folders.

Originally from Cookeville, Tenn., Mr. McBroom said he moved to Grundy County in 1997 to be closer to the manufacturing job he had then in McMinnville. People now pay him to research their ancestors.

Mr. McBroom said his passion for genealogy sparked after he asked his grandfather the name of his own grandfather.

The answer inspired him to research his family tree, which he can now trace back to the 1700's.

Most of his research is done at the state archives in Nashville or at the libraries in Chattanooga and Whitwell.

The strangest thing he's ever come across is an epitaph at the cemetery in Jackson County, Tenn., that memorialized the amputated leg of a Civil War soldier.

Mr. McBroom said people from all over send him obituaries for his collections.

He said he is working on developing a Web site and putting his files on computer.

Euline Harris president of the Marion County Genealogy and Historical Society, said mr. McBroom is a familiar face at the public library in Whitwell.

“He’s one of the only ones that will share (his research),” she said.

Mr. McBroom can be contacted at (931) 692-2724.

http://www.hctgs.org/research_mcbroom.htm

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