Genealogy Rocks!

Using the BLM GLO Records Website

If you believe that you have an ancestor who patented a homestead claim, the Bureau of Land Management General Records Patent search website is a great

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place to learn more about your ancestor's claim. A free website at http://www.glorecords.gov/, it is easily searched by entering a state and the name of a possible claimant. Once a claimant is found, the website indicates patent details including the location of the claim.

These patent details supply information necessary to order the actual land entry documents from the National Archives (www.archives.gov). These documents give information about improvements made to the claim by an ancestor, possible other family members and even copies of naturalization records if the claimant was not native born.

Even more information can be gleaned from the website; images of many homestead patents can be found by clicking the "Patent Image" tab. The "Related Documents" tab is also interesting because it shows the holders of claims surrounding the one being viewed – a nifty way to find out your ancestor's neighbors.

Another, recent feature on the website is the "Maps" box found on the "Patent Details" page. By clicking on this box, the claim is shown on a modern map which shows surrounding streets and roads; this allows the researcher to virtually find the claim on a map search on Google Maps, for example, or to actually drive the perimeter of a claim.

If your ancestors lived in any of the Federal Land States, it's definitely worthwhile to search the BLM website, even if you're not positive that your ancestor patented a homestead.

❖ *Carol Stetser is a speaker, instructor, and researcher for the Larimer County Genealogical Society. Please visit the society's website at www. lcgsco.org or our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/lcgsco for our events and genealogy resources.*