



## Hidden in Plain Sight

Sue Lisk says don't pass over information you think is unimportant!

**F**OR THE SAKE OF GOODNESS!" HE EXCLAIMED, AFTER I'D SAID something that he considered preposterous. I don't think his unusual formulation of the phrase was intentional, but it made me think about its underlying meaning.



Sometimes the particular moment at which you come across family history-related information determines how you'll process it. This huge free-standing "treehouse" hidden in the forest at the Summit Bechtel Reserve in WV would be even less visible in other seasons, Carol M. Highsmith. (Library of Congress)

We frequently ignore the true sense of common sayings and expressions. Under normal circumstances, it takes too much effort and processing power. We'd rather devote our attention to the core meaning of what we hear. But occasionally, a sequence of words strikes us unexpectedly. And when we concentrate on the phrase, we may discover something new.

As genealogists, we like to pride ourselves on being especially good at noticing the details others miss. However, we don't always do this and may pass over things that seem unimportant.

In a number of instances in my research, I learned the value of focusing on small items I'd previously overlooked.

### Gleanings

I grew up in a nuclear family with no first cousins in my generation, one distant uncle, and three grandparents. I'd met only a few other relatives. As a result, I paid little attention to family history, beyond listening to the

occasional stories my parents and grandparents would recount.

Years later, after tasting the first fruits from the tree of genealogy, I felt "ancestral nudges" encouraging me to explore my family's origins and tales. I wondered what bread crumbs they might have left behind for me to find and follow. I started my search at home.

I knew that my paternal grandfather, Sidney, had suffered from rheumatic fever as a child. The illness had left him with a weakened heart, a condition he either always knew he had or realized he had by the time he reached adulthood. I'd always understood that he died rather suddenly at the age of thirty-three, when my father was three years old. But in asking my parents questions, I learned what proved to be an important piece of information: the downhill process was a gradual one.



You may discover important genealogical information where you least expect it. This colorful dragon mural is an unexpected find in a small picnic area located outside Tucson, AZ, a city replete with murals, Carol M. Highsmith. (Library of Congress)