January 11, 2011 Schaumburg Township District Library Genealogy Program "Handouts"

Hi Everyone,

This document should be considered as the program "handouts" document for our January 11, 2011 Schaumburg Township District Library Genealogy Program.

What does this really mean?

Prior to this "new" process, our program handouts would actually be paper handouts that were based on me often printing up the first page related to a web site that I wanted to mention. Then on the paper for the web site I would handwrite what things of importance are associated with the web site that the researcher should know. Maybe it was a new web site or maybe an important date related to a significant event or maybe a new database was released. Whatever it was I noted it on the paper of the first page of the web site.

I also plan on use the "yellow highlight" tool within Word and highlight certain areas of these notes that I think are important to note. The visual highlighting will take your eyes to areas of importance to note. Please let me know if you think this OK or if it may be a distraction? I thought I would give it a try.

Going forward I plan on creating this document on a monthly basis that will include my notes regarding a web site of interest and a link to the web site itself.

The reader of this "handout" list can themselves then read my overview summary of the site and then link to the site directly themselves to get more details or print out what they want from site.

I will clearly identify my own comments when the handout is a combination of material that came from some other source such as Dick Eastman's blog as well as my own comments. I will indicate my comments in Italics, clearly marked so the reader can distinguish between the original verbiage and my own comments. If a handout item was completely created by me then you will see that noted at the top. In this case, the entirety of the handout was created by me and will not be shown in Italics.

This program "Handout" information will then be uploaded to the Schaumburg Township District Library Genealogy Blog that is titled "Genealogy with Tony". This blog will be accessible from the library's main web site page at www.schaumburglibrary.org. Select "Local History and Genealogy" at the top of the page, then look for the icon on the Local History and Genealogy page that says "Tony's Genealogy Blog". Open the blog link and then look at the right hand sidebar of the blog and you will see the "Handouts" information. The direct web address for the blog I author is http://genealogywithtony.wordpress.com

Here we go with the list of "handouts"!

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Handout #1 – VISIT THE SCHAUMBURG TOWNSHIP DISTRICT LIBRARY GENEALOGY BLOG

I will continue to remind participants of our library's new genealogy blog. You can access it through our library home page at www.SchaumburgLibrary.org by scrolling across the top of the first page and look for the tab that says "Local History and Genealogy". Click on that tab and look on the right side for our library genealogy blog on the right side that says "Tony's Genealogy Blog".

Or you can just go directly to the blog at:

http://genealogywithtony.wordpress.com

You will find postings on upcoming programs, both at our library, and elsewhere in the area. You will also find a myriad of other kinds of postings, especially those that I offer on "Genealogy Tips" to help make your research efforts more productive.

You will also find our Schaumburg Township District Library Genealogy Newsletter and our "Program Handouts" at the blog as PDF files for you to view online, or download and save to your own computer for future referral.

Please remember that the blog will be the place to retrieve the newsletter and the "handouts". I do not plan on making paper handouts of these available for distribution at the program or for mailing to individuals.

Try to visit the blog frequently to see what is going on. Subscribe to the blog via RSS (Really Simple Syndication) and you will receive notices when a new post or comment has been made at the blog.

Our blog is the way of the future and the future is here now!

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Handout #2 – NEXT MEETING OF THE NORTHWEST SUBURBAN COUNCIL OF GENEALOGISTS ON JANUARY 18, 2011

The next meeting of the Northwest Suburban Council of Genealogists will take place on Tuesday evening, January 18, 2011. The program for the evening is titled **"GenSmarts"**. The speaker for the evening will be R. Aaron Underwood.

R. Aaron Underwood, after many years of doing commercial software products for the corporate world, Aaron branched off with his own company. Underwood Innovations was created to provide highly innovative products for everyday people. Genealogy was a good fit - the world's most popular hobby made even better with modern technology. The first product, GenSmarts, is inspired by the "to-do" lists Aaron created for his father's research trips.

Meetings are held at the Forest View Educational Center in Arlington Heights. They begin at 7:00pm with a Round-Table discussion. They encourage people to bring their research problems, achievements or interesting tips to share with each other. The main portion of the meeting begins promptly at 7:30pm. Donations are always welcome!

You may visit the society web page at for any further details on the program as well as on the society:

www.NWSCG.com

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Handout #3 – DUPAGE COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY NEXT PROGRAM ON JANUARY 19, 2011

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the DuPage County Genealogical Society will take place on Wednesday evening, January 19, 2011. The program scheduled for that evening is **"What's New At the Wheaton Public Library"**. The speaker for the program will be Donna Freymark, a librarian at the Wheaton Public Library.

Unfortunately, the DuPage County Genealogical Society did not have any overview summary of what is included in the presentation nor was there any biographical information about the speaker.

Please note that this meeting will take place at the Wheaton Public Library in Wheaton, IL. The address of the library is 225 Cross St. The meeting room opens at 6:30 PM. Refreshments are available at that time. The program starts at 7 PM and will conclude by no later than 9 PM.

You may visit the society's web page for any recent announcements about this program at:

www.dcgs.org

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Handout #4 – COMPUTER ASSISTED GENEALOGY GROUP OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS (CAGG-NI) NEXT PROGRAM ON JANUARY 15, 2011

The next meeting of CAGGNI will take place on Saturday morning, January 15, 2011 at the Schaumburg Township District Library at 10:30 AM. The program scheduled for this day is **"Social Networking for Genealogy: Family Trees, Facebook, blogs and More"**. The speaker for the program will be Caron Primas Brennan.

Social networking is a collaborative process in which information (comments, photos, news, videos, links) are created and shared. There are many ways to use social networking for genealogy research, whether you want to share your family tree, swap pictures, find new places to look for information or get "how to " tips. Ancestry Family Trees, Facebook groups, shared family web sites, and blogs are all part of the new world of social networking. You do not have to be a computer expert to benefit! Come find out who is looking for you!

You may visit the organization web page at:

www.CAGGNI.org

Visit the group's web site noted above for information about this program as well as what CAGG-NI is all about.

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Handout #5 – SCHAUMBURG TOWNSHIP DISTRICT LIBRARY NEXT GENEALOGY PROGRAM ON FEBRUARY 8, 2011

Our program topic for the February 8, 2011 genealogy program is titled "Mining for Census Records". Our guest speaker for the program is Steve Szabados. Steve is an active participant at our own programs. This will be his first time presenting one of his outstanding programs at our library. He has presented many of his programs throughout our area.

Our national census was just completed in 2010. Census data is the first best data that should be researched when doing your family history. The amount of varied data that you can discover on an ancestor over a series of census reports is phenomenal. Steve will show us why it is important not to overlook this wealth of easily available online data.

After some initial successes while researching his family's history, Steve developed a passion for genealogy research and now wants to share his research experiences with others. He has given a number of presentations on his experiences to local genealogy societies and workshops for the Champaign Historical Archives. Steve is also a genealogy volunteer at the Arlington Heights Memorial Library. His roots are Polish and Hungarian plus he has also researched German, Irish, English, Scottish, Slovenian and Bohemian records. He has been able to trace one branch of his Polish family back to the 1730s, his wife's Slovenian and Bohemian ancestors back to the 1750s and his son-in-law's Bohemian ancestors back to about 1650.

We look forward to Steve's first presentation at our library and to many more in the not too distant future.

You may visit the library's web page at:

www.SchaumburgLibrary.org

to view a Calendar of Events section of the library web page for this program and for many more non-genealogical programs offered by our library.

You can also visit the Genealogy Blog of the library that is authored by Tony Kierna. Visit the blog at http://genealogywithtony.wordpress.com for all things related to genealogy and the genealogy programs at the Schaumburg Township District Library.

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Handout #6 – GOOGLE NEW E-BOOK STORE SELLS AND GIVES AWAY GENEALOGY BOOKS

The following was found at Dick Eastman's Blog at www.eogn.com dated December 7, 2010.

Several comments posted at the end of yesterday's article expressed confusion about saving ebooks from Google's new E-Book Store onto your computer. Some claimed it couldn't be done. Actually, it can be done and the process is simple. I thought I would share these step-by-step instructions. This process will work only on ebooks that are out of copyright.

I just stored genealogy ebooks on my Mac. It was easy and only required a few seconds:

I opened a web browser and went to http://goo.gl/85COh

In the search box, I entered "Eastman Genealogy" (although any search term should work) and then I clicked on GO.

The first book shown was "History and Genealogy of the Eastman Family of America." I clicked on "Read on your device."

On the next screen, I clicked on **DOWNLOAD PDF**.

That opened Adobe Reader and the book was displayed on my screen. All 609 pages of the book were available. In Adobe Reader, I clicked on **FILE** and then on **SAVE A COPY**. I was then able to save a copy anywhere I wanted on my computer's hard drive or to a jump drive. The file saved to my computer was 12.6 megabytes.

I then closed Adobe Reader and closed the web browser. I used Finder (a Windows user would use Windows Explorer) to find the file I had just saved on my computer, double-clicked the file, and it opened the book in Adobe Reader.

The entire process only required a minute or two and was very easy and logical to follow. I do NOT have to be online to read the ebooks after they have been stored on my computer. I can read them on a laptop, or copy them to a jump drive and take them with me, or copy them to the iPad and take them with me. I can copy or print a page, a series of pages, or even the entire book, if I wish, by using the commands built into Adobe Reader.

I used a Mac but suspect the process is about the same on Windows or Linux.

Comments by Tony Kierna

Using Google E-Books is a must to access to help with your research.

Try a simple search for a surname you are interested in as dick Eastman mentions above. You may see a long list of books presented by Google that indicates that hits occur within the books. You can select with the amount of books shown that you

only want to see hits within the "free". <mark>*The "free" ones are the ones that you will be able to download as a PDF if you choose.*</mark>

<mark>*However, be aware of this quirk before you download a "free" book as a PDF. You cannot search the PDF you download with Acrobat looking for any words contained within the book!!*</mark> *This is a big disappointment. This is exactly what I was hoping to do. Find a book that is "free" that contains a surname of interest to me. Download the book and then look through it by searching over time. This will not work.*

<mark>*However, there is a very simple workaround I discovered by reading the comments that were posted on this article by Dick Eastman.*</mark> *When you select a book of interest that was presented on the return list by Google as having the search term you provided in the book*<mark>*, YOU CAN USE THE ONLINE BOOK TO ACTUALLY DO YOUR SEARCH AND SEE THE PAGE BY PAGE RESULTS OF YOUR SEARCH ONLINE. YOU CAN THEN NOTE THE PAGE NUMBERS WHERE THE HIT OCCURRED AND THEN USE THESE PAGE NUMBERS IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE PDF YOU DOWNLOAD TO ACTUALLY LOOK AT THE MATERIAL IN THE PDF AND PRINT IT IF YOU CHOOSE.*</mark>

What a great tip on what I thought was a hopeless find!

<mark>*The other great thing from Google about downloading the "free" books from Google is that you do not have to have a Google account to download.*</mark>

As Eastman says, if you have an interest in a book, click on the link in Google that says "Read on Your Device". Look through the list and look for the icon for Adobe Acrobat and the words "Download PDF". You will have to read an image of text and provide in the box the word you see. Once correct, you will gain full access to downloading the book as a PDF without having any account connection to Google. I like that capability. Thanks Google!

There are some potential enormous finds that are awaiting your research via these "free" non-copyright, out-of-copyright books. <mark>*Always remember that you can still search for research material that is in E-book format for which there is a charge.*</mark> *I was looking for "free" material. I am sure that if you want the chargeable material to download you will then need to establish a Google Account.*

The amount of data that exists with Google's E-books is enormous. Don't miss the opportunity to try searching the material for any ancestors of your choice to see what you may find. Even if you have to do two steps of searching online, noting pages on which data is found and then downloading the PDF version and looking more fully at the pages you noted.

Take a look at what exists here within Google. You will be as amazed as I was on doing some searches and seeing the results. Give it a try.

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Handout #7 – HOW DO YOU RESEARCH ONLINE?

The following was found in Dick Eastman's Online Blog at www.eogn.com dated December 15, 2010.

I participated in a conference call today sponsored by FamilySearch. The purpose of the call was to describe several recent changes as well as changes to be made in the near future. However, one statement about search techniques stuck in my mind.

Employees of FamilySearch (and probably all the other major online database providers) spend a lot of time and effort watching how users perform searches on the site and analyzing the results. The purpose is to learn and to make future adjustments to the site to improve search capabilities. Those who monitor and analyze users say they have noticed that genealogy newcomers typically perform searches in a very different manner than do the "old pros." I suspect the experienced users typically end up with more productive results although no statistics are available to prove that assumption.

Genealogy newcomers typically search everything at once. For instance, when looking for records on a particular ancestor, newbies typically enter the person's name into the search field and then search through everything on FamilySearch at once. If the person has a rather unusual name, that might work. However, most of the time, the newcomer receives hundreds or even thousands of "hits," can't filter out the ones of interest, loses interest, and then goes elsewhere.

In contrast, experienced genealogists usually FIRST search for the smallest subset of the many databases as possible. For instance, the more experienced user will generally enter the last name of interest leave the first name blank, (first names are often different in the records from what we expect), and then perhaps specify only one database (such as the census records for one year), only one county, and any other parameters available to narrow the search as much as possible. If the search is unsuccessful and doesn't produce the information needed, the experienced user then expands the search just a little bit and tries again. For instance, he or she might add in the previous census or the following census and then search a second time. If unsuccessful this time, the experienced genealogist might start a third search by adding in the adjacent counties. And so on and so on.

Bit by bit, the experienced genealogist typically expands the search by a small amount each time. All of the search parameters are based upon what the genealogist already knows about the person of interest. Did he likely live in Monroe County? If so, there is no need to search the entire USA at once. Did he serve in the Civil War? If so, there is no need to search for records prior to 1820 and probably not prior to 1830 (on the first search) since he probably wasn't born yet. (Very few Civil War soldiers were 40 years old or older.)

By focusing the first searches on as narrow a geographic area as possible and as narrow a time range as possible, you greatly increase the odds of finding the one person you seek. If unsuccessful in your search, broaden the search area a bit and the years of interest and try again.

I suspect the experienced genealogists have far better results with their online searches than do the newcomers who jump in and search everything, everywhere, at once. Which would you prefer: finding one or two men with your ancestor's name, located in the area where he or she lived, in the years he or she lived there? Or will you find 100 men or women across the country with the same name?

Comments by Tony Kierna

Dick is exactly correct on doing too much early on in your search. Too many hits give you too much frustration. If you know an ancestor was alive for the 1900 US Census in Illinois, then you may want to start your search at that narrower level rather than across all of the Census data and all of the states.

I also often "test" the database I am searching for a fairly common surname just to see what the results look like. I do this because if I entered in the search term an uncommon, complicated Polish name, I may actually see no results of the name I entered because the name is actually contained in the database. Using a common name simply assures me I am doing the right thing in using a basic search in the database.

Sometimes the first search boxes do not allow you to really pare down you target. If that is so and you get many hits then scroll down the first page presented to see if the data base provider gives a "template" search box that now allows you to enter in more known data you have about the individual to enter in, re-search, and then see if you now have fewer meaningful hits to look through.

Perhaps you know the birth year and age of an ancestor. Maybe you can enter this in the template to filter out more meaningless matches to the name you searched. Even here, do not be exact in your search. Many templates allow you to enter an age of a person with a "+ or –" number of years over and below the age you think the person was. This allows for you to possibly find the right person if he may have listed his age "incorrectly" to the person capturing the original data.

Little by little by adding in additional search terms you can reduce an original results list from 850 to maybe 30. The second number is certainly a much more manageable list to really pore over record by record looking for the elusive ancestor.

*Remember, that the more search terms you put in the more of a chance you also have of **NOT** finding your ancestor because if anyone is wrong you may not find the ancestor that is in the database with 5 of the 6 criteria you created. This is why you have to take it one step at a time by adding criteria and looking at the results.*

In addition, be sure you also take advantage of any Soundex searching template capability that is offered for the database. If you use an Exact Surname search that is exactly what it is going to look for, especially on a complex, many letter surname you have. If you are not having success with an exact name search, then try a Soundex search if available and then add in your criteria to reduce the hits. You will be amazed how often you may find a likely ancestor listed in a database under a surname spelling you could not have imagined. The Soundex search can be your greatest friend to find the elusive ancestors you seek when exact name searching does not work.

Try opening yourself up to some better search techniques and reap the rewards!

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Handout #8 – RETURN OF NBC GENEALOGY SHOW "WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?"

The following was found in Dick Eastman's Online Blog at www.eogn.com dated December 16, 2010.

Two days ago, I posted a short article listing the celebrities to be featured on next season's episodes of *Who Do You Think You Are?* Today, further details were announced by NBC and by Ancestry.com, a major sponsor of the show. The following was written by Ancestry.com:

December 16, 2010

NBC Announces the Celebrities Tracing Their Family Trees on Season Two of 'Who Do You Think You Are?' Premiering February 4

Gwyneth Paltrow, Tim McGraw, Rosie O'Donnell, Steve Buscemi, Kim Cattrall, Lionel Richie, Vanessa Williams and Ashley Judd Take a Look Inside Their Family Histories on NBC's Genealogy Alternative Series Produced by Lisa Kudrow

UNIVERSAL CITY, Calif. – December 16, 2010 – Viewers can take an up-close and personal look inside the family history of some of today's most beloved and iconic celebrities when NBC's "Who Do You Think You Are?" returns for its second season on Friday, February 4 (8-9 p.m. ET). The celebrities who star in the series are Gwyneth Paltrow, Tim McGraw, Rosie O'Donnell, Steve Buscemi, Kim Cattrall, Lionel Richie, Vanessa Williams and Ashley Judd.

From executive producers Lisa Kudrow ("Friends," "The Comeback") and Dan Bucatinsky ("Lipstick Jungle," "The Comeback") – through their production company Is or Isn't Entertainment and Shed Media U.S. ("Supernanny," "The Real Housewives of New York City") -- "Who Do You Think You Are?" is an adaptation of the award-winning hit British television documentary series that leads celebrities on a journey of self-discovery as they unearth their family trees that reveal surprising, inspiring and even tragic stories that often are linked to crucial events in American history.

"I've been a fan of the U.K. version of 'Who Do You Think You Are?' for a long time, so it's very rewarding that the U.S. version is back with more compelling stories this season that are illuminating, touching and aspirational," said Kudrow. "This is such a unique show for network television and we're all thrilled that the American audience has embraced it."

From the trenches of the Civil War to the shores of the Caribbean, and from the valleys of Virginia to the island nations of Australia and Ireland, "Who Do You Think You Are?" will reveal the fabric of humanity through everyone's place in history. Each week a different celebrity takes a journey into their family's past, traveling all over the world. While giving viewers an in-depth look into their favorite stars' family tree, each episode will expose surprising facts and life changing encounters that will unlock people's emotions, show just how connected everyone is not only to the past, but to one another.

Ancestry.com is NBC and Shed's official partner on the series and will help provide the research used to tell each story. "We're thrilled with this year's strong lineup and look forward to helping Americans go on their own journey of discovery alongside the stars," said Josh Hanna, Head of Global Marketing for Ancestry.com.

"Who Do You Think You Are?" is produced by Shed Media U.S. in association with Is or Isn't Entertainment. Alex Graham, Lisa Kudrow, Dan Bucatinsky, Jennifer O'Connell and Al Edgington are the executive producers. The unique, award-winning series is based on the popular BBC television documentary series from Wall to Wall Productions, created and executive-produced by Graham.

Shed Media U.S. is noted for its strong characters and memorable casting, and produces several popular television shows including: ABC's "Supernanny," Bravo's "The Real Housewives of New York City" and "Bethenny Getting Married?," Animal Planet's "It's Me or the Dog," VH1's "Basketball Wives" and CMT's "World's Strictest Parents." Is or Isn't Entertainment has been developing and producing television and online content since 2003, producing the critically acclaimed and Emmy nominated series "The Comeback" currently making its own comeback on The Sundance Channel. The company's critically acclaimed web-series "Web Therapy," won the 2010 Webby Award for Best Online Comedy -- and recently had the unprecedented addition of Meryl Streep to its illustrious cast list. Showtime is in talks to license 10 half-hour episodes comprised of actual webisodes, to air in early 2011.

Ancestry.com Inc. (Nasdaq: ACOM) is the world's largest online family history resource, with nearly 1.4 million paying subscribers. More than 6 billion records have been added to the site in the past 14 years. Ancestry users have created more than 20 million family trees containing over 2 billion profiles. Ancestry.com has local Web sites directed at nine countries that help people discover, preserve and share their family history, including its flagship Web site at www.ancestry.com.

For "Who Do You Think You Are?" embeddable clips and full episodes, visit NBC.com's official show site: http://www.nbc.com/who-do-you-think-you-are/

Comments by Tony Kierna

*When I recently posted a blog entry about the start date for the series on January 21, 2011, I was unable to find anything that identified which "stars" were going to have their ancestral lives opened. The new press release more importantly indicates the start date for the series in 2011 will be Friday evening February 4, 2011 and **not** January 21, 2011 as I had previously seen mentioned and indicated in my blog post.*

I am so glad that this press release clearly indicates who will be featured on the new episodes that will start in February 2011. It does not indicate the clear order of what "stars" will appear on what dates through the season but knowing all who will appear is plenty for right now.

This is a popular series as evidenced by its renewal for 2011 with these new episodes. It is "new" here in the United States but the "original" show started in Great Britain about 5 years ago and is still going strong there. This series is based on the one in Great Britain.

Be sure you visit the NBC web site linked above from Eastman's article. If you have not seen any of last year's episodes then you can play catch-up by viewing these online from the NBC site. I think you will be touched by what you see but you will also understand that this is first and foremost TV. True researching is not as easy as they portray. Very little is handed to me as it is portrayed on this series being handed over to the "stars". They really don't do the actual research. I do actually believe they are as touched by getting the ancestral connections as we are ourselves when we discover some new material about an ancestor.

Look to see what research tips you can pick up for your own research. Enjoy the stars and the stories and be as touched for them as you are for yourself with your own discoveries. In that regards we can say that we have a lot in common with some of Hollywood's famous.

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Handout #9 – IRISH AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS ONLINE

Tony Kierna's Comments

==The following thoughts and comments created by me (Tony Kierna) came from reading an article titled "Irish American Newspapers Online" in the December/January 2011, Volume 5, Number 5 issue of Internet Genealogy.==

I thought that an article titled "Irish American Newspapers Online" was a good article in this recent issue.

Our ancestors arrived in America generally with the plan of mixing in with those of the same ancestry that had already arrived into the United States. These pockets of the same ethnic groups served as a buffer group while the immigrant acclimated to life in the new country. They could communicate with others from their group in their native tongue while undergoing the process to learn the new language of the country they chose as home. Newspapers that were created and printed in their native tongue became a mainstay for them to learn and develop through their transition stage in the United States. My own personal Polish connection to Chicago experienced this same connection to the Dziennik Chicagoski, the local Polish newspaper of the time in Chicago between 1891 and 1971.

==The Irish immigrants also mimicked a support system that involved the publication of Irish oriented newspapers in the pocket areas of Irish immigration in the United States. This article also points out how the Irish also took out ads in the local papers in the areas they settled trying to find other family members that had also come to America, especially in the very large cities of New York and Boston.== The paper became their conduit to re-establishing connections with family members that had also arrived into these large cities, hoping these ads would make the re-connection a possibility.

==The article points you to a web site that you can use to look at these ads that were often placed in the **Boston Pilot** from 1831 to 1921. The website can be viewed at http://infowanted.bc.edu.== Another newspaper that was used by Irish immigrants to place these ads seeking reconnection with lost relatives was the **Irish American**. This paper was published weekly from 1849 to 1915. You can visit a web site to look at material on these "Information Wanted" ads at http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nyirish/Index%20of%20American%20Irish%20Newspaper.html.

==The article also provided a nice list of some of the key Irish oriented newspapers that were in publication at the times of many of the Irish immigrants.== Some may have some online presence. Others are just noted for the researcher to pursue other non-online research. Newspapers mentioned were:

- **Boston Irish Reporter** (still in publication) @ www.bostonirish.com
- **Boston Pilot** (1831-1921) @ http://infowanted.bc.edu
- **Irish Echo** (still published in New York) @ http://irishecho.com
- **Irish News** (1856-1861) available at the New York State Library and the New York Public Library.

- ***Irish World/Irish World & American Industrial Liberator*** (1870-1951) published in New York and available at the New York Public Library.
- ***Irish Nation*** (1881-1883) Published in New York and available at the New York Public Library.
- ***The Advocate*** (1893-1988) Published in New York and available from the New York Public Library starting in 1904.
- ***The Gaelic American*** (1903-1951) Available at the New York Public Library.

The article also mentions other online resources of digital newspapers online that would have Irish connections. Sites mentioned for these online newspapers are:

- Ancestry.com @ http://search.ancestry.com/search/category.aspx?cat=149
- Newspaper Archive.com @ www.newspaperarchive.com
- ProQuest Historical Newspapers @ www.proquest.com/en-US/catalogs/databases/detail/pq-hist-news.shtml
- Chronicling America from the Library of Congress @ http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/newspapers
- America's Historical Newspapers @ www.newsbank.com/readex/?content=96

Take a look at the entire article for further insights. The above links and resources can possibly further your research on any Irish ancestors you may have in your family tree.

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Handout #10 – 10 TRICKS FOR GETTING THE MOST OUT OF DATABASES

Tony Kierna's Comments

The following thoughts and comments created by me (Tony Kierna) came from reading an article titled "10 Tricks for Getting the Most Out of Databases" in the December/January 2011, Volume 5, Number 5 issue of Internet Genealogy.

Another good article in this issue is one titled "10 Tricks for Getting the Most Out of Databases". The article provides the reader with 10 important tips and strategies to consider when searching online. Tips mentioned in this article are:

- **Know What You Are Searching** – spend time reading the introductory description of what is actually contained in the database, especially on the time span of data that is included. If an ancestor was born in 1869 and the database data starts at 1880, chances are 100% that you will not find data on your 1869 born ancestor!
- **Focus on the Most Unique Identifier** – this may be the surname, location, birthplace or some other characteristic. If searching in Ohio data for an ancestor with a common name that was born in Florida, then focus your search term using the Florida birth location to reduce the base of the hits you may have. You could then add the name as a secondary term to find your ancestor.
- **Focus on Young Children** – search for a family by focusing on a child using the age as a filter if available because children's ages are more accurately recorded than ages of adults.
- **Use Wildcards, Partial Names and Soundex** – don't always use a search term of the exact surname as you know it. Know how you can search the database using partial names or wildcard searching entering in only parts of a name. You may see a smaller list of hits that allows you to more easily scrutinize the results looking for an ancestor. Use Soundex searches for a surname and then add on other filters if present to allow you to find an ancestor if you know birth year, birth location etc.
- **Examine the Images, Not Just the Indexes and Transcriptions** – an index result may give you only partial fields within the entire record. If you just research by results of the index hits, you may be leaving data contained in the image that does not appear in the index. Maybe the image shows a handwritten entry for their last town of residence before they left for the United States.
- **Use Both Global Searches and Record Specific Searches** – some researchers may access directly only one of many databases within a series to search. More often, the researcher is provided with a global search box for all of the databases to begin the search. The global search may not have any filtering keys to select certain features of

your search e.g. age, birth location. This may give you many more hits than you can handle. You need to do both kind of searches. Don't just do a global search among all databases.

- **Learn Short Forms** – transcriptions of data to databases may take what is spelled and put it into the database exactly as spelled. Be familiar with short forms of first names if you enter that into a search box. Be aware of such short forms such as "Alexr" for Alexander, "Jno" for John, "Thos" for Thomas.
- **Beware of OCR** – Optical Character Recognition (OCR) is the software that is used to scan images of text (newspapers) and create data files. OCR is good but there are many times when print is scanned incorrectly thus creating a searchable word that is not what the image actually shows. If you search a file created by OCR and find nothing, do not assume that what you are looking for is not in the file. It may have been incorrectly identified. Look at the original images if possible to find what you seek. It may actually be there but not properly converted in the OCR conversion.
- **Study the Context** – Context is not always readily seen when you only search through indexes. With a book in hand or a document in hand we are more likely to browse through what is there and become familiar with all that exists. With an electronic index we may lose this perspective. Check records before and after what you seek, read any introductory material to get a better view of what the data contains.
- **Be Critical** – Ask some of the following questions about the data. Who created the data? Were they knowledgeable and trustworthy? What process was used to digitize the data? Could mistakes have been made? How were the records selected for inclusion in the database? Is this a personal site or a commercial site?

I thought that this was a very good article that can help us with our searching the numerous databases we encounter. Read the entire of the article to get the full benefit of the article. We can always make our data base searching more productive by simply understanding and knowing what is in the database and the tools and techniques that exist for the database that we can use during our search process.

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