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March 13, 2012 Schaumburg Township District Library Genealogy Program "Handouts"

Hi Everyone,

This document should be considered as the program "handouts" document for our March 13, 2012 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.

The source for the vast majority of what is in the Handouts is the monthly Schaumburg Township District Library Genealogy Newsletter. From within this larger document I extract information on upcoming genealogy programs local to our area, important items from Dick Eastman's Online Genealogy Blog, as well as I summarize some key periodical articles of interest that I think are important to be aware of. The Handouts simply provide me with the opportunity to focus in on what I consider are important genealogical bits of information important to the researcher as well as to share my own personal thoughts on why it is of note.

You will also see a small redesign of the PDF Handout package. You will now see a Table of Contents on Page 1 listing what the following "handouts" are by topic. Within the Table of contents you can quickly access the handouts by using the hyperlinks and bookmarks that will get you quickly to your handout of interest. You will no longer have to scroll through the entire package of handouts to get to the one you want.

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. Or, just click on the WordPress icon in the lower right part of your screen that simply states “Follow”. By clicking on the “Follow” link you will subscribe to the blog and will receive follow-up e-mail notices when I publish a new post.

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 APRIL 7, 2012

PLEASE NOTE THIS IMPORTANT CHANGE FOR THIS SOCIETY. THEY ARE CHANGING THE MEETING DAY, MEETING TIME AND MEETING LOCATION FOR PROGRAMS FOR THIS SOCIETY EFFECTIVE WITH THE AUGUST 2011 PROGRAM. THIS SOCIETY WILL NO LONGER BE MEETING ON THE 3RD TUESDAY EVENING OF MONTH FOR SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER AND JANUARY-MAY AT THE FOREST VIEW EDUCATIONAL CENTER IN ARLINGTON HEIGHTS. INSTEAD, THE SOCIETY WILL BE MEETING ON THE 1ST SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH STARTING AT 10:00 AM AT THE ARLINGTON HEIGHTS SENIOR CENTER LOCATED AT 1801 WEST CENTRAL ROAD IN ARLINGTON HEIGHTS. THERE IS A 30 MINUTE ROUND-TABLE HELP SESSION THAT STARTS AT 9:30 AM PRIOR TO THE ACTUAL PROGRAM.

The next meeting of the Northwest Suburban Council of Genealogists will take place on Saturday morning, April 7, 2012. The program for the morning is titled **"Searching for Great Grandpa; Find Your Union Soldier"**. The speaker for the evening will be Jerry Allen.

Meetings are held at the Arlington Heights Senior Center at 1801 West Central Road in Arlington Heights. They begin at 10:00 AM with a Round-Table discussion/mingling time starting at 9:30 AM. They encourage people to bring their research problems, achievements or interesting tips to share with each other during the time prior to the program start. **The main portion of the meeting begins promptly at 10:00 AM.** Donations are always welcome! Coffee is available to attendees for a charge.

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 SOCIETY PROGRAM ON MARCH 21, 2012; ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO TAKE PLACE ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2012 IN ST. CHARLES, IL

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the DuPage County Genealogical Society will take place on Wednesday evening, March 21, 2012. The program scheduled for that evening is **“Breaking Down A Brick Wall: A Case Study in Unlocking My Irish Ancestry; How I Found the Marriage Record of My Irish Great-Great Grandparents”**. The speaker for the program will be Nancy Thomas.

Learn how listening to family stories can lead you from known facts to the unknown. Newspapers, census records, church records, online indexes, and maps resulted in the breaking down of a major brick wall. This presentation will show the step-by-step process and analysis used to tackle Irish research successfully.

Nancy Thomas is currently President of the DuPage County (IL) Genealogical Society. A retired Professor/Reference Librarian at the College of DuPage, Nancy has been searching for her ancestors and her husband's for over 30 years. She published The Roeser Family: Ancestors and Descendants for a family reunion using Family Tree Maker software. Nancy has enjoyed travelling to her ancestral homes in Ireland, England, and Germany, as well as other parts of the world. She is especially interested in pre-fire Chicago history.

This meeting will take place at the Wheaton Public Library, Lower Level Meeting Room. The address of the Library is 225 N. Cross St. in Wheaton, IL. 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 web page to find out further information about this program and other future programs the society has on their schedule at:

www.dcgs.org

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Handout #4 – COMPUTER ASSISTED GENEALOGY GROUP OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS (CAGG-NI) NEXT PROGRAM ON MARCH 17, 2012

The next meeting of CAGGNI will take place on Saturday morning, March 17, 2012 from 10:30 AM until 12:30 PM at the Schaumburg Township District Library located at 130 S. Roselle Road in Schaumburg, IL. The program scheduled for this day is **"What's New in Technology"**. The speaker for the program will be Ed Rosenthal.

2012 promises to be a great year in technology! Come join us for our ever-popular and *only* regular yearly offering.

You may visit the organization web page to find out further information about this program and other future programs the society has on their schedule 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 APRIL 10, 2012

Our program speaker for our upcoming April 10, 2012 Genealogy Program will be Paul Milner. Paul will present a program titled **“Making Sense of the English Census”**.

The topic of the American Census for 1940 being released is one that has everyone excited. But if your research takes you back to England and English records, **don't forget about the English Census records you should use**. What better way to become aware of English Census records then to hear a wonderful presentation by Paul Milner.

Paul is a native of northern England, a professional genealogist and lecturer. He is the co-author of *A Genealogist's Guide to Discovering Your Scottish Ancestors: How to find and record your unique heritage* (2002), and *A Genealogist's Guide to Discovering Your English Ancestors: How to find and record your unique heritage* (2000) both published by Betterway Books. Paul has specialized in British Isles genealogical research for 30 years. He was raised in England and settled in the United States in 1975. He holds an advanced degree in Theology and is particularly knowledgeable about the church and its role in record keeping. He speaks on a wide variety of topics relating to research in the British Isles and research methodology. Paul is currently the book review editor for the FGS FORUM and the BIGWILL newsletter, a board member of the Association of Professional Genealogists. He is the past-president of the British Interest Group of Wisconsin and Illinois (BIGWILL), and a past board member of the Federation of Genealogical Societies and the Genealogical Speakers Guild.

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 – FAMILYSEARCH TO RAISE MICROFILM RENTAL COSTS BY 50%

The following was found at Dick Eastman's Blog at www.eogn.com dated February 11, 2012.

This shouldn't surprise anyone: FamilySearch will raise the price of film loans in family history centers as of 15 February 2012. Short-term film loans used to cost \$5 U.S but will now cost \$7.50. Prices for short-term film loan extensions, extended film loans, and microfiche loans will also increase.

The price of raw microfilm stock has skyrocketed in recent months and now raw microfilms are almost impossible to find as the microfilm manufacturers are shutting down their production lines. FamilySearch is finding it difficult to purchase even enough raw microfilm stock to make duplicates of existing films. Of course, creating new microfilms is essentially impossible so FamilySearch has already converted to all-digital production for all new products and is converting older products to digital images as rapidly as possible.

You can find the full announcement of the price increase at

<https://www.familysearch.org/films/>.

While not mentioned in the announcement, I am guessing that FamilySearch will be forced to stop producing microfilms completely within a very few years, perhaps within a year or two. Other organizations that traditionally have created microfilms, such as libraries, archives, and genealogy societies, will soon be forced to do the same. When the microfilm manufacturers have all shut down their production lines, where will anyone purchase new film?

Comments by Tony Kierna

Wow! That is a hefty increase. Such increases in charges are often caused by things out of control of the organization being forced to increase their prices. This seems to be much of the case in this situation.

*Companies that produce microfilm material are planning on exiting this form of media simply because this storage media has seen its day. Digitization and hard drives and server farms have and are replacing microfilm as a storage media. Just think of Eastman Kodak and all those rolls of film you **USED** to buy 20 years ago! Do you remember your famous 45 Records and 33 1/3 Vinyl Albums? How long did that work for you when business stopped manufacturing the media the music was stored on?*

These things happen all the time, it is just now the turn of genealogists to go through this major transitioning as data becomes stored on "server farms" and not on microfilm.

These short-term painful additional costs can all go back to the famous phrase "supply and demand". It won't be too long before there will not be a supply worry as everything changes over to digital storage.

So in the short-term you will experience financial pain as you continue to research using microfilm data. But in the long-term you will continue to gain access to more and more digital data online as you are currently seeing from FamilySearch.org. Each month, more and more data is present for free in digital format, some of it completely indexed with images, some of it just digital images in un-indexed fashion.

There is nothing you can do about this. There is nothing FamilySearch can do about this. If microfilms will no longer be manufactured, you have to transition to new storage formats. Thankfully, we have all seen FamilySearch leading the way years ago to digital conversion. They realized then what the handwriting was on the wall for microfilm storage in the future. My hats off to them for their long-term outlook of converting to digital images and storage.

That is obviously a great idea but they will still have to deal with the 2.5 million reels they have in their collection. How they will do that when manufacturers stop producing film will be the \$64,000 question. But I bet they will be able to successfully resolve it over the next few years.

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Handout #7 – U.S. GOVERNMENT STILL PAYING OUT ON 2 CIVIL WAR PENSIONS

The following was found in Dick Eastman's Online Blog at www.eogn.com dated February 14, 2012.

Question: When was the last time the U.S. government paid a Civil War pension payment?

Answer: Would you believe the government is still making payments? Not bad for a war that ended nearly 147 years ago!

According to an article by Lauren Fox published in U.S. News & World Report, records from the Department of Veterans' Affairs show that *two children of Civil War veterans, as of September, are receiving pensions from their fathers' service.* At that date, both were alive, but in poor health. These payments probably won't last much longer.

Trevor Plante, a reference chief at the National Archives says it's also possible that the beneficiaries were young when their fathers died and had no living mothers to care for them, which would also qualify them for their fathers' pensions.

You can read more at <http://goo.gl/PJmFr>.

My thanks to Steve White for telling me about this story.

You might also enjoy some of the mysteries of the Civil War published at <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/civilwar/>.

Comments by Tony Kierna

Can you believe that there are descendants of Civil War veterans alive today that still qualify to receive the pensions of their ancestors! This is 147 years after the fact.

*I do remember reading an article in a genealogy journal that made mention of this fascinating fact. *I think these pension payouts occurred when very elderly Civil War survivors married young women and actually then fathered a child within this relationship. If a male Civil War survivor may have been 80 years old in 1925 then any children born around that time could conceivably still be alive in our time.**

Rumors have it that these "marriages" occurred in "nefarious" manners as the woman in her twenties marrying a Civil War survivor who may have been 80 was seen as being more interested in that person's pension than in the person.

Regardless of the reason for the marriage age differences we still now have survivors today in 2012 that have a connection to their parent having participated in the Civil War in 1865. Who would have thought such a survivor story would exist today tying us back to such an incredible event as the Civil War.

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Handout #8 – 1940 CENSUS WEBSITE ANNOUNCEMENT

The following was found in Dick Eastman's Online Blog at www.eogn.com dated February 21, 2012.

The following announcement was written by Archives.com:

Today Archives.com and the National Archives are revealing the website that will host the 1940 Census beginning April 2, 2012: 1940census.archives.gov. We encourage you to bookmark the website, and watch the informational video providing behind-the-scenes look at the preparations made to publish the 1940 Census.

There are only 40 days until April 2nd, a day eagerly anticipated by genealogists, historians, and academics alike. Archives.com and the National Archives are working diligently to bring you a website that makes it easy to explore the 1940 Census images. This will be the only website hosting the 1940 Census images on April 2nd.

To learn more about the 1940 Census and how you can prepare, visit Archives.com/1940census. Find Archives.com on Facebook or Twitter, and follow the conversation at #1940census.

Posted by [Dick Eastman](#) on February 21, 2012 in [Online Sites](#) | [Permalink](#)

Comments by Tony Kierna

We are getting closer and closer to the official release date of the 1940 Census data.

The website that researchers can go to and begin their 1940 Census research has been announced and is indicated in the text above. Bookmark that site.

*Please remember, the most important to note about this 1940 Census data on the actual release date is that **IT WILL NOT BE INDEXED!!!** You will not be able to enter into the data a surname and begin your searching. In order to make the most use of the data upon the release date is to prepare in advance.*

If you already have in mind a specific address where an ancestor may have been in 1940 then you will want to discover what the Enumeration District is for that address. You can discover this by using the Steve Morse website at www.stevemorse.org. Steve has put together some great tools for researchers to use in advance of the census release to calculate these enumeration districts where are ancestors might have been in 1940. When you get to Steve's site, just scroll down the main page and look for his guides under the category of "US Census, 1790-1940". Once you know the enumeration district you will not at least be able to browse through the 1940 census data images and find your ancestors if in fact they are where you think they are. The enumeration district knowledge is essential for researching ancestors in large urban areas.

By preparing in advance to discover enumeration district information you will be ready to use the above website with the data to browse through the census images.

Remember, this is how research was done for census data when there were no all-name indexes!!

There are many volunteer transcribing projects already in the works once the images are released. Take a look at the following one for information on volunteering and transcribing. You can find it at:

<http://the1940census.com/?CID=adwords&gclid=CNYbopS1w64CFQzGKgodxnn4WQ>

Within the above project, you can even select the state you would be interested in helping with indexing.

Transcribers will be extracting surnames to create a master surname index of the data. Most of the other fields of data from the census will be captured and incorporated into the indexed data. You will be able to use these indexed fields in conjunction with the surname or as a search by itself to drill down into finding data you want.

The index will be available at an unknown future time but my guess is it will be available within about 6 months.

When you click your way through the links above from Dick Eastman's blog entry, you will also discover a nice 1940 Census website from the National Archives that is full of insights, guides, help aids and much more to help you better understand all of the 1940 Census and what will be happening with the data. I encourage you to take a good look at this site and bookmark the site for your reference. You can visit this site at:

<http://www.archives.gov/research/census/1940/>

There are even 4 nice videos at the above site for you to review. There are some wonderful PDF files of instructions given to census enumerators on how to go about capturing and recording the data in 1940 when the census was done.

Be prepared to take advantage of researching the images when no index is available. It is easy to prepare using the Steve Morse website. Get your interested enumeration districts lined up based on your best knowledge of where your ancestors may have been at the time the 1940 census was done. They may have surprised you and not be there but then isn't that what we so often discover about our ancestors!

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Handout #9 – TABLETS AND YOUR FAMILY HISTORY

The following review and comments were created by me, Tony Kierna, based on my having read an article that was seen in the February/March 2012, Volume 6, Number 6 issue of Internet Genealogy.

I thought that a very good and timely article in this issue is one titled "Tablets & Your Family History". The author of this article is Tony Bandy. Tablets are now becoming the rage and the hot technological "toy" to add to our collection of our electronic toys. They are becoming more and more powerful and many have the ability to incorporate "apps" that are geared for your genealogy.

The author does a great job in providing the reader with much information on the tablets that exist today. He groups background information into the following categories to make it easier for us to understand all that is behind what makes a tablet a tablet:

- Hardware
- Screen Types
- Operating System
- Communications
- User Interaction
- Applications

Tablets are often also known as "slate" computers because they are literally one piece of hardware with no other devices attaching to it as with the traditional desktop that has a mouse and keyboard attached. Sizes vary from about 7 inches to about 10 inches measured diagonally across for screen size. Some tablets are known as convertibles and are part of a combined keyboard and screen, the screen being the detachable tablet. Tablets can even have add-ons incorporated such as a keyboard and mouse with special hardware connectors.

The screens of these tablets are also variable. Some are the traditional LCD. Some are what is known as the "E-ink" a screen that provides very long battery life. Most are touch screen. Some even allow you to use a stylus. Generally speaking the larger the screen size the more expensive will the tablet be. Also larger screen size can be associated with more and quicker battery drain, although developers of these devices have remarkably been able to increase battery life time and time again with larger and larger screens.

New operating systems exist for these tablets that are not your standard Windows or Mac OS systems. You will hear tablet OS systems that go by the name of iOS (from Apple) and Android (from Google). Windows Phone OS is also present but is not really a big player. iOS and Android dominate. So often times a Tablet purchase decision may not match to which iOS system you want to go with. Tablets do not run both, so you will have to make a choice often of an Operating System first and then the Tablet that includes that OS.

Many of us operate in a completely wireless environment. We connect at home via our wireless routers. Hard wire connections are more and more a connection

process of the past. Even in public, we connect to WiFi which is a public version of our home wireless router. However, if you want universal connectivity even when there is no available WiFi, then you will need to consider a Tablet purchase that will allow you to have internet access via a monthly data plan subscription for which you will pay a monthly recurring charge for this universal connectivity with your Tablet.

Our user interaction with a tablet is by using our fingers and the touchscreen that is a tablet. Most tablets don't just use a one-finger touch approach but rather incorporate intelligence in the process that recognizes multi-touch approaches, swiping of one finger, swiping of multiple fingers etc. In other words, the use of your fingers in a variety of ways is picked up by the touchscreen to create a unique command to the tablet. There is a learning curve for this if your whole computer life has previously been tethered with a keyboard and mouse.

The applications are the heart and soul of your tablet, as was the case with your desktop. Your computer, now tablet, can only do what you want it to do if it has the right software, today known as "apps". Once again, just like in the world of desktop Operating Systems, there are apps for iOS and apps for Android. They are not always the same although developers may build apps separately that will work on either tablet operating system. These are exclusively downloaded from the Internet and are not in physical format that you can purchase and hold in your hand. They are often less expensive than was software for desktops. These "apps" can be free, a few dollars. Some may be as high as \$20 but the vast majority are between \$1 to \$10.

The author provides us with a nice list of what are the major Tablet devices we have to choose from for purchase. Some are familiar to most of us, some are ones that I have never heard of. The author provides the reader with a summary of the device, the producer, the cost, the web site of the producer and a small summary. I am not going to include a recap of the summary because they are longer than I can incorporate into this article summary. Here is a summary:

- Asus Transformer Prime by Asustek. Cost is \$500-\$600. Website information can be found at <http://eee.asus.com/en/eeepad/transformer-prime/features>
- iPad by Apple. Cost is \$499-\$800. Website information can be found at www.apple.com/ipad
- Kindle Fire by Amazon. Cost is \$199. Website information can be found at www.amazon.com/kindlefire
- Kindle, KindleTouch, Kindle Keyboard by Amazon. Cost \$79-\$189. Website information can be found at www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0051QVESA/ref=sv_kinh_0
- Lenovo ThinkPad Tablet by Lenovo. Cost \$499-\$699. Website information can be found at www.lenovo.com/products/us/tablet/thinkpad
- Lifebook T731 by Fujitsu. Cost \$1,200-\$1,800. Website information can be found at <http://store.shopfujitsu.com/fpc/Ecommerce/buildseriesbean.do?series=T731>
- Nook Tablet/Nook color by Barnes & Noble. Cost \$199-\$249. Website information can be found at www.barnesandnoble.com/NOOK

- Nook Simple Touch by Barnes & Noble. Cost \$99. Website information can be found at www.barnesandnoble.com/p/nook-simple-touch-barnesandnoble/1102344735
- Samsung Galaxy Tab by Samsung. Cost \$399. Website information can be found at www.samsung.com/galaxytab

There is much more in this timely article from Tony Bandy than I am summarizing here. Take a look at the entirety of this article especially if you are thinking of getting a tablet. You can find plenty of information from within this article to give you a better overall view of the tablets that are taking over our computer technology. Tony Bandy provides further insights in the full article about each tablet that I was unable to include simply because there was too much there for me to paraphrase.

Become familiar with the tablets that exist because it will not be too long down the road when this may be our version of our laptops utilizing touch screen technology. Consider getting one now as a complement to your desktop or laptop while you can still transition. It is possible that far less software will be created in the future for desktops and laptops and the majority of software development will be "apps" for tablets and mobile devices.

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Handout #10 – ONLINE CENSUS INDEXES

The following review and comments were created by me, Tony Kierna, based on my having read an article that was seen in the January-March 2012, Volume 38, Number 1 issue of the NGS Magazine.

I thought that a good article in this issue is one titled "Online Census Indexes" by Kathy Petlewski, MSLS. Census data is a hot commodity at this time as we all await the release of the 1940 Census data in April 2012.

The author makes us aware of where census data was found for researchers years and years ago. All of us had to endure the old process of "microfilms". Remember those? That is right. We had access to census data via microfilms that was time-consuming, laborious and painful! Is your hand sore today from hand-cranking the images online today? I don't think so. In the 1960s a process was developed that actually created indexes of census data that was then put into book format. It was still not online but it sure made it easier to look through a book index to see if the name you were interested was there. Turn to the page of interest and there was your ancestor.

The author notes that researchers should consider the following resources for online access to census data:

- Ancestry.com, either the personally subscribable offering at www.ancestry.com or Ancestry Library Edition that is commonly found within public libraries. Obviously, a personal subscription allows you to access ancestry.com from home. The library version is not allowed to be accessed from home but is available to anyone within the library.
- FamilySearch.org is available to anyone for free from home or anywhere via the web address at www.familysearch.org.
- Heritage Quest, also commonly found in libraries. This product is generally accessible from home by via entering in your library identification number. Heritage Quest is not a personally subscribable product. It is available only through libraries.

Each is unique in its own right. One source may have more census data than another. One source may be more fully indexed than another. One source may have better images than another. The point is to be aware of all three sources and to consider using all three in your research, especially if you do not find what you are looking for in one of them. Switch to the others and you may find who you seek just by switching resources.

Ancestry.com incorporated into its databases the original "paper" indexing of the early census records from 1790 to 1860 that was created in the early 1960s and is known as the Accelerated Indexing Systems (AIS). These are still good to use. Just because they were done in the 1960s does not mean they are not useful. Like any other indexing projects, errors can and do occur during the transcribing process.

Just be creative with your surnames when you do not find material on the census data covering the above years in Ancestry. These indexes are all-name indexes, not just head of household indexes.

Family Search has been creating online census data via the volunteer process. Volunteers receive images via their computer of the census data. They follow guidelines and input what they see from the image to an Excel-like template. Once completed, they are re-submitted back to FamilySearch where that same batch is given to someone else to transcribe. The two transcriptions are then compared for differences. Where differences occur, the data is given to an arbitrator to make the final decision as to what transcribed data is "correct". This methodology gives more assurance of accuracy. These indexes are all-name indexes, not just head of household.

Heritage Quest index is a head of household index. It is not an all-name index. This means you cannot enter in your search the name of a person that would have been a 10 year old child. They would not have been a head of household. You would have to look among all the families for which results are provided to then look for that 10 year within the families presented. It takes a little more work, but you can certainly do it this way. You can find data covering the 1790 to 1920 census. The 1930 census is only available in fragmentary quantities. The project of completing the 1930 census back at the time of the release of the 1930 census was scrapped. Data for 1930 exists for only five states: Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Texas and Virginia. Heritage Quest is also known for the quality of the data contained in the online census data. These indexes are much more accurate than those created in the 1960s by the AIS project.

The author then spends a good amount of time relaying to the reader some comparisons of actual searches among all three of the products. Some results appeared quicker in some products over others. Some images were "cleaner" in one product over another. Some products require more "filtering" of your results which takes a little more time. Some accurate results appeared higher in some lists among one product than in another.

The author stated that her search test produced the same correct response among all three of the products.

Census research is a core part for anyone doing family history. The three providers of this data can help with your research. FamilySearch is completely free for you to access via computer. Ancestry is "free" if you visit a library that subscribes to the product. Or Ancestry can be personally subscribed to. Heritage Quest is "free" if you have a library card that can be used to input into your library's online database resource. You can access this from home or in the library but you cannot personally subscribe to it.

The 1940 census when it is released will initially not be indexed. The indexing will become available after thousands of volunteers work on the image data to create the indexes from the names on the census. There is no target timeframe when this will be available but I might guess it could be available in about 6 months. While awaiting the 1940 data, hone your online research skills by accessing the online products described above.

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