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May 14, 2013 Schaumburg Township District Library Genealogy Program "Handouts"

Hi Everyone,

This document should be considered as the program "handouts" document for our May 14, 2013 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 SEPTEMBER ?, 2013

THE SOCIETY WILL NOT BE MEETING DURING THE MONTHS OF JUNE, JULY, AUGUST 2013. THEY WILL RE-GATHER AGAIN IN SEPTEMBER 2013. I WILL PROVIDE UPDATES ABOUT THE PROGRAM IN SEPTEMBER AS THEY BECOME AVAILABLE

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, September ?, 2013. The program for the morning is titled **"To Be Determined"**. The speaker for the morning will be To Be Determined.

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
REGULAR SOCIETY PROGRAM ON MAY 15, 2013**

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the DuPage County Genealogical Society will take place on Wednesday evening, May 15, 2013. The program scheduled for that evening is **“What Is the Cloud and Why Do I Care?”**. The speaker for the program will be Jane Haldeman.

You’ve heard people mention the “cloud”; learn what it is and how you can make us of it on your mobile device and computer. Collaborate, share, backup and see your data and images anywhere.

Jane Haldeman is co-owner of It’s Relative, www.itsrelative.net, a genealogical service business providing lectures, workshops, research and consultations. She is President, Illinois State Genealogical Society, past President, Fox Valley Genealogical Society and Registrar for the Fort Payne Chapter NSDAR. Jane lives in the suburbs of Chicago and has been researching family history for over 20 years. Her lectures focus on technology as applied to genealogical research.

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.dcgcs.org

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Handout #4 – COMPUTER ASSISTED GENEALOGY GROUP OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS (CAGG-NI) NEXT PROGRAM ON MAY 18, 2013 AT THE SWEDISH AMERICAN MUSEUM IN CHICAGO

The next meeting of CAGGNI will take place on Saturday morning, May 18, 2013 at the Swedish American Museum in Chicago, IL at 5211 N. Clark St. starting at 10:30 AM. Phone number of the museum is 773-728-8111. The program scheduled for this day is **"Will the Real Sven Larsson Please Stand Up?"**. The speaker for the program will be Dr. Dan Hubbard.

Scandinavian last names can be fluid and confusing and Sweden is no exception. Swedish geography trips up the uninitiated- where are those records for Småland? Where did Sweden end and other Nordic countries begin?

You've got your swimsuit, so what else is needed to cross the Atlantic with your research and what records are there once you crawl up onto the shore?

Dr. Dan Hubbard is First Vice President of Lake County Genealogical Society.

This event is co-sponsored with the [Swedish American Museum](#), 5211 North Clark Street in Chicago. The museum will be open for touring following the meeting. Join us there!

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 JUNE 11, 2013

We will have another “break-out” session for our gathering on June 11, 2013. Our previous attempts proved to be quite a good success. I would like us to build on those successes and afford those participants the opportunity to meet with those again or sample other groups.

After an initial introduction of new participants at the start of our normally scheduled meeting, we will establish our “breakout” groups at approximately 7:45 PM. We would have these breakout discussions from about 8:00 PM until about 9:30 PM. These groups would consist of about 7 to 8 participants. They would discuss some common topic of genealogy that interests them or from which they could learn even more to assist their research from sharing with others in the group and learning from others within the group.

The groups we previously tried seemed to work out quite well. I want to go with those same groups and am open to suggestions to attempt to add others or delete those that may not have a following.

I want to reconvene the following groups:

- Polish Researchers
- German Researchers
- Czech Researchers
- Irish Researchers
- Italian Researchers
- British Researchers
- Scandinavian Researchers
- Colonial Americans Researchers
- Sharing Your Printed Family Histories/How To

I also will have a Beginner’s Group that I will lead.

We will also have the computer in the room for anyone to access the internet.

I would also encourage participants to bring their personal laptop or netbook to these sessions and tap into the internet via our WiFi network. I saw many researchers doing this at our last breakout session and they found it very productive to access internet information while being in one of the groups if they wanted to show something to someone else at the table.

Please remember that the group’s composition is based on the numbers that will participate. If only one person is present to participate in the Polish group, then we cannot have a Polish group that evening. I cannot guarantee there will be enough participants to form a group. In that case I would always recommend participating in another ethnic group of interest if that is also in your research interests or join me at the Beginner’s Group.

The key to this effort is to be flexible in selecting a group to work with.

I look forward to our next "break-out" session in June 2013.

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 – NEW ENHANCEMENTS AT FAMILYSEARCH

The following was found at Dick Eastman's Blog at www.eogn.com dated April 16, 2013.

FamilySearch has now released a video and a written description of changes announced recently at RootsTech. You can watch the video below and also you might want to read the text that follows.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=NK-h4nM3YDE

The following announcement was written by FamilySearch:

New Online Tools Help Preserve and Share Precious Family Photos and Memories

April 16, 2013

Features create connections and bring family stories to life

SALT LAKE CITY — FamilySearch International, a nonprofit, volunteer-driven genealogy organization, announced the release of significant new enhancements to its web services that allow visitors to collaboratively build their family tree online, preserve and share precious family photos and stories, and receive personal research assistance—all for free. Find out more at FamilySearch.org.

"Every person who has ever lived has a right to be remembered and is a story waiting to be told," said Dennis C. Brimhall, CEO for FamilySearch. "Every family is a story in progress." Brimhall explained that the new FamilySearch.org features help move family history beyond research to appeal to a larger audience of people who are very interested in their family's stories, but who don't consider themselves genealogists or researchers. "We all treasure memorable family photos and ancestral stories that inspire, amuse, or connect us. Families can now share and preserve for posterity those social heirlooms that help vitalize their family history," Brimhall added.

The enhancements include Family Tree, an online application where users begin by adding information about themselves and then start to add information about their ancestors to collaboratively build, manage, and share their family history. The tree is already populated with over 900 million records contributed by patrons. And there are billions of historic records that can be searched for free to help further expand your family tree.

The Photos and Stories feature lets you preserve favorite family photos of ancestors and share them through social media. You can tag people in a photo to identify who they are and connect them to respective ancestor profiles in the Family Tree. The photos can then be easily shared with the online community. You can also upload your favorite stories about an ancestor to preserve them for future generations.

Julie Lowe from Missouri is the proverbial photo archivist of her family. She has albums of ancestral photos. Between her and her siblings, they are also walking libraries of countless stories and memories of their parents, grandparents, aunts,

uncles, some great-grandparents, and other ancestors. They will be using the Photos and Stories feature to begin preserving their favorite photos and stories for future generations. Each person can save and share up to 5,000 ancestral photos in Family Tree.

"When a parent or grandparent takes the time to tell you a story, there's a bonding that occurs there," Brimhall said. "Likewise, a family photo and story preserved and shared in the context of one's family tree, in an instant, can personally touch us and teach us time-honored principles by those who have gone on before us, like the value of hard work, dealing with life's ups and downs, and the impact of choices."

Other features added include the interactive Fan Chart, a tool used by millions to create a colorful fan chart of their ancestry; the Family Tree Wizard, a tool that asks questions to help you begin to build your personal family tree and get you started; and Live Help, a global online community that provides free product help and personal research assistance by phone and web chat 24 hours a day/7 days a week. The help website and services are available in 10 languages.

About FamilySearch International

FamilySearch is the largest genealogy organization in the world. FamilySearch is a nonprofit, volunteer-driven organization sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Millions of people use FamilySearch records, resources, and services to learn more about their family history. To help in this great pursuit, FamilySearch and its predecessors have been actively gathering, preserving, and sharing genealogical records worldwide for over 100 years. Patrons may access FamilySearch services and resources for free at FamilySearch.org or through more than 4,600 family history centers in 132 countries, including the main Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Comments by Tony Kierna

As you can see from reading the above, there has been a great deal of activity by FamilySearch developing new capabilities within the FamilySearch website that we all so often visit to search material that is on the site.

It would also seem that FamilySearch seems to have been "behind the curve" considering that uploading family trees has existed for some time at many other sites, namely Ancestry.com. But as we know, Ancestry.com is a subscribable site and FamilySearch is available for free.

In order to take advantage of so much that exists on FamilySearch you will need to register yourself with the site. Once registered, you can then begin exploring all of the new features. Perhaps you were already registered previously with the site since that was necessary in order to be able to order microfilms. Now you can take advantage of the added functionality that now exists on the site.

The video link in the above article is OK but I do not think that for the 3 minutes 25 seconds that it runs, I do not think it really shows that much about the new features. At least it will pique your curiosity to peruse the new features and begin to take advantage of the new capabilities.

I was actually searching the FamilySearch YouTube channel and I found a few more "training" videos about the new Family Tree function at FamilySearch. You can find these more detailed training videos at the following link:

<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLF6C9D7BA99D93CE9>

I think you will get a better flavor for the new functionality from within these YouTube videos.

Now may be the time to take a good hard look at FamilySearch and consider using all of the new features. Upload your family trees, upload your photos, include your family history stories. FamilySearch may be late coming to the party, but FamilySearch is a genealogy entity to be recognized.

For many of us we may want to pick one organization through which we will participate with our family history research. You do not have to view it that way. If you have been uploading your research to Ancestry.com, you can now upload your same data to FamilySearch for even greater exposure. More exposure out in the Internet can translate to more opportunities to be discovered. More discoveries equals more connections.

Get yourself registered at FamilySearch. Learn about all the new functionalities. Make the move to upload some of your material. Explore the newly re-designed site at www.familysearch.org.

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Handout #7 – MAGIC WAND PORTABLE SCANNER WITH WIFI FEATURE

The following was found in Dick Eastman's Online Blog at www.eogn.com dated April 8, 2013.



I have written several times about the handheld Magic Wand scanner made by VuPoint. (Past articles may be found by starting at <http://goo.gl/GB9Co>.) The articles I have written have described the original scanner that stores data on a microSD memory card. After making the scans, you can copy the images to your computer by either connecting a USB cable from the scanner to the computer or by removing the memory card and inserting it into your Windows, Macintosh, Linux, or Chromebook computer (a microSD adapter may be required if your computer does not already have a microSD socket). You can save the images on your computer or print them or upload them to the cloud. In fact, you can do all three.

A new version of the Magic Wand scanner is now available that includes built-in wi-fi wireless networking.

You can now view, copy, print, or upload your files without removing the microSD memory card from the scanner and without any wires or adapters. You can also view or save the images on any iPad, iPhone, or Android device within seconds after making the scan. This last capability is great for verifying the quality of the scanned image immediately after it is made. If the scan you just made doesn't look good, scan it again!

You can see the new VuPoint Solutions Magic Wand™ Wi-Fi® portable scanner (model: PDSWF-ST44-VP series) in action in a YouTube video at

<http://youtu.be/wdD0MeXz28I>

or click on the viewer below. The video shows how to transfer your newly-captured scanned images to a computer both by the previous methods as well as the new method of using a wi-fi wireless connection. For even more information, look at the VuPoint web site at

http://www.vupointsolutions.com/magic_wand_portable_scanner_wifi.

The Magic Wand™ PDSWF-ST44-VP series portable scanner has a retail price of \$99.99 but most retailers sell it for much less, typically in the \$50 to \$75 range. It is available in a variety of colors from Amazon at <http://goo.gl/xlwbC> and from many other retailers as well.

Comments by Tony Kierna

I think this is a very nice innovation that you almost knew was going to happen with these nice handy portable scanning devices.

Granted, you could have previously connected the device to your laptop or other computing device via USB. Or you could have taken the memory chip from the device and also used that to insert into your other computing device. But as you can see, there was a great deal of handling and connecting from scanner to your other computing device. This handling time all adds up to process your scans.

The tiny screens on these portable wand scanners are too small to really make a good judgment on the quality of the scan that you did. To determine the quality, you really needed to connect the scanner device to your computing device with a bigger screen to make the determination that the scan was a good quality scan.

Now with wireless capability, your computing device will be able to pick up the scanner wirelessly and you will be able to make a much faster judgment on the quality of your scan without having to connect via USB or insert memory chips.

The scanner video noted above is a very good 6 minute video that shows exactly step by step how the scanner device works by wirelessly interacting with your home computer, an iPad, an Android device etc. The video is a very good video that definitely shows the ease of use of this new device.

It also appears that the price is a very good price for this added feature. The price does not appear to be significantly higher than you might expect. You can probably pick up the device for anywhere between \$50 to \$75 to as high as about \$99.

If you have been aware of these devices but have not considered getting one, perhaps now with this new feature is the opportune time to jump in with both feet. Think of the ease of using this device when visiting cousins who have photos of interest to you. You will no longer have to ask to take the photo home to make a copy. Instead, you can scan it while visiting and use your wireless function to determine the scan quality is good before leaving. Your cousins may often be reluctant to let you leave with a picture. The portable wand scanner now allows you to get your copy and make your cousin feel comfortable knowing the photo is still in their possession.

Also look at the website for VuPoint website for even more details on the device and the company.

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Handout #8 – GOOGLE AFTER DEATH

The following was found in Dick Eastman's Online Blog at www.eogn.com dated April 12, 2013.

Google will now allow users to decide what happens to their data after they die or become inactive online. The feature applies to Google's Gmail service, social network Google Plus, Blogger, YouTube, photo-sharing service Picasa, and other services provided by Google.

Google said users can opt to have their data deleted after three, six, nine or 12 months of inactivity. Alternatively, certain contacts can be sent data from some or all of their services.

"We hope that this new feature will enable you to plan your digital afterlife - in a way that protects your privacy and security - and make life easier for your loved ones after you're gone," Google said in a blogpost.



You can read more in an article by Andreas Tuerk, Product Manager, in the Google Public Policy Blog at <http://googlepublicpolicy.blogspot.com/>.

My thanks to newsletter reader David Samuelson for telling me about this new policy.

Comments by Tony Kierna

My view of life, and death, used to be that death was in fact final. However, there appears to be more and more opportunities for you to still be in the picture of life from the grave (or the urn).

I did take a quick look at the Google link mentioned above for more information on this service. I did notice that you will have to scroll down the list of items at the site and look for the one that is identified as "Plan your digital afterlife with Inactive Account Manager".

One thing that strikes me right away is the use of the term "inactive". Although we may speak about what happens to your Google material after death, it is important to note that Google can make accommodations of what happens if a certain period of inactivity is detected. Remember, inactivity can certainly be caused by your death, but also note that inactivity could be caused by your just not interacting with Google with your material. For most of us, we are generally active enough to the point that Google would not consider us "dead". But it is interesting they use the term "inactive". Be careful of this part because your data could disappear, not because

you have passed away, but simply because you have been "inactive" but are still breathing! You will determine what that "inactive" time period may be before your Google data goes "poof" (3, 6, 9 or 12 months).

Yes, your data can be deleted. However, you do have the option to designate a recipient of all of your "stuff". Google will apparently try a final time to contact you via cell phone or email if they are about to either delete or transfer your data to the "data designee" you determine.

I think this is a nice feature being offered by Google. Think genealogy. Think your photos. Think your Google mail. Wouldn't it be nice to know that you can make arrangements in advance to plan for your "final exit" knowing that your online digital data within Google will not just go "poof" but will rather go to a "data designee" that may very well be a fellow genealogy researcher.

Your data and your research will not just disappear but will live on past your own life.

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Handout #9 – “ON THE OTHER HAND ...”

The following review and comments were created by me, Tony Kierna, based on my having read an article that was seen in the March/April 2013, Volume 17, Number 4 issue of Family Chronicle.

I thought that an interesting article in this issue is one titled “On the Other Hand ...”. The author of the article is Beverly Smith Vorpahl.

Beverly has put together an article that indicates how she is weighing the pros and cons in today’s genealogy research world versus the days of research that was in her view real research. Her views are based on the researcher’s own experience investigating, both past and present. Her experience today is that it is wonderful to be able to take back a family research effort back four generations in the time span of an online research afternoon. Her concern is that the “thrill of the chase is gone” when deciphering of handwriting is gone or perusing through page after page of census documentation to find the ancestor of choice is even more rare today.

For many of us, our early attempts at research were still done by what the author may refer to as the “old way”. This method of research was time-consuming, difficult, challenging and relied on lots of manual efforts by the researcher. The reward of discovery was experienced at a high level of intensity. She relates her own efforts at researching the 1850 Census for Nebraska and making major discoveries on her great-grandmother and other families without the aid of an online census index that would have taken her right to the image of the family on that page as we see today.

The author relates her paper processing method of old. Send out tons of letters to archives, libraries and repositories and then wait for that another wonderful piece of mail to arrive at her doorstep in her mailbox. Mail went to potential cousins with the high expectation of making a familial connection, awaiting another paper response in the mail at home. If you put out enough requests, each day upon arrival at home your expectations were heightened with the hope that you received some great piece of information back in the mail.

The author notes that she is familiar also with today’s processing of genealogical research information. Ancestry.com has methods to inform the subscribed researcher that there may be something for them to look at also, just like receiving mail in your mailbox of days past. A “trembling leaf” informs the researcher that perhaps they need to look into something that may give them more information from another researcher.

And so the author is becoming more and more of a believer that the “trembling leaf” in Ancestry.com can generate the same feelings once experienced by that piece of mail arriving in your mail box from days past. The “trembling leaf” led the author back another few generations with information that had been discovered by another researcher. Good quality information. Images and documents. All under the guise

of a "trembling leaf" at Ancestry.com connected to information that she had uploaded.

The chase today may not be what it was 20 years ago. Today, your chances of spending 30 hours over 4 weeks scrolling through microfilms of census records are certainly minimized because all of that data is accessible under a completely different process than 20 years ago. The "happy dances" of yesteryear's discoveries are still "happy dances" today less all of the work you used to do. Success is still success even when it comes from someone else making discoveries, information of which still connects to your own ancestors.

The author feels that the "trembling leafs" in Ancestry.com are not such a bad thing. Her feelings of accomplishment are as good as poring over census records on a microfilm. Research procedures of years back were what they are. You celebrated your successes. You do the same under today's new methods of research.

This was a very nice personal story that shows that today's research methods can provide the same feelings of satisfaction as those felt in years past using different methods of research available at the time. The author now realizes that "trembling leafs" are a good thing today that should be enjoyed as much today as when "trembling leafs" came in the form of genealogical mail dropped off at our homes 20 years ago.

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Handout #10 – “ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT RESEARCH LOGS”

The following review and comments were created by me, Tony Kierna, based on my having read an article that was seen in the March/April 2013, Volume 17, Number 4 issue of Family Chronicle.

I thought that another interesting article in this issue is one titled “All You Need to Know about Research Logs”. The author of the article is Arnon Hershkovitz.

The article starts out describing a situation that has probably been encountered by many of us in our genealogical research. It goes something like this. You are reviewing your research and you come across something that looks like a connection to a family. You track down some contacts to this family because you are excited about making a connection. You make that call that you feel certain will give you that elusive piece of information. At last, you hear a voice on the other end. You can just feel the information you needed about to be deposited in your left ear. You identify who you are. You ask who you are speaking to. You make your pitch. And then you hear the voice on the other end in a not too happy manner tell you that you called 3 years ago and the voice on the other end gave you all he knew about the ancestor you are hunting down! Yikes! That hurts!

You sheepishly apologize and profusely thank the other person for all of the information he previously provided (when in fact you don't even remember what you received from him).

And how did you arrive at this embarrassing situation? Probably because you do not use research logs or write down understandable notes on actions you took and actions received. In other words, you probably do not keep research logs.

What exactly is a research log? It is merely a list of all actions taken during the research and the results of those actions. Included in these lists should also be results of “unsuccessful” actions. Knowing you did search a microfilm and did not find a positive result is critical to know so that you do not simply repeat the same process ala making a call to a relative, asking for some information, only to be told you called 3 years ago!

Early on in your research you will feel confident that you can store everything in your brain. Maybe so early on, when you are dealing with 10 ancestors and making discoveries very easily. However, as the number of ancestors researched grows from 10 to a 100 and then 1,000, you will soon come to the conclusion that all of that information on those ancestors does not reside in your brain ready to be accessed at a moment's notice.

What kind of information should be contained in a research log? Minimally, you need to keep dates, contacts and references to the information related to your search effort for an individual ancestor. Over time your research log will become rich with much information on your efforts. However, don't fall into a second trap and start using your research log as your total research. You will still want to create pedigree

information and family group sheets where the details of your research get entered into the more formal structure of those data entry points.

The author notes that there are many options for where your research logs are kept. You have the obvious method of keeping the information on paper. Hopefully, you are more familiar with some software and computer options to use. Consider using Microsoft Word or Excel and create research templates in columnar format using three columns. The three columns will again be "Date", "Action Description" and "Contacts". You can also find plenty of "template" research logs on the Internet that you can download and make more copies as needed. You can certainly make changes to your "electronic" version of research logs using Word or Excel more easily than those that are only on paper.

Lineage programs in which you enter all of your found data on your computer will almost universally contain built-in research log options for you to use in your main software. You don't need to re-invent the wheel, but rather take advantage of software options that already contains research logs.

More and more of us are taking advantage of internet-stored areas. Your research logs do not have to just reside on your laptop or desktop. Consider the "cloud" on the internet for your storage. You will have access to this material as long as you get onto the Internet. It beats waiting to look at it on your home system. Don't just think of a "nebulous" cloud for storage. Consider creating a blog where your research log exists. Or even a FaceBook or Twitter or a WiKi account can serve the same purpose. Sharing is incredibly easy using established methods of social media. Using these shareable tools means you do need to be aware more about privacy and security, especially if material in your research logs identifies living individuals.

Research logs are a great tool for all of your review work, especially for information you do not have. Knowing the failures of previous efforts allows you to narrow down what the future opportunities will be to focus on. I can't tell you how many times reviewing a log of previous failures often opens you up to putting more pieces together related to the ancestor for future success and discovery.

You can find an online "Research Log" in PDF format you can download at:

<http://www.familytreemagazine.com/upload/images/PDF/researchjournal.pdf>

So next time you call up cousin "Joe", you will be certain that you previously called him 3 years ago and know what information he provided and know what he did not provide. You can thank cousin "Joe" again for what he previously provided. You can now asked "Joe" another question based on your own analysis of the information he previously provided. You will look informed to cousin "Joe" and you will impress him to the point that more information may flow in your direction. This new information comes to because you have been keeping research logs!

I would definitely recommend taking a look at the entire article. Research logs are critically important to prevent you from doing the same research effort more than once.

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