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## November 12, 2013 Schaumburg Township District Library Genealogy Program "Handouts"

Hi Everyone,

This document should be considered as the program "handouts" document for our November 12, 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](http://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](http://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 JANUARY 4, 2014**

**THE SOCIETY WILL BE MEETING ON THE 1<sup>ST</sup> 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 60 MINUTE ROUND-TABLE HELP SESSION THAT STARTS AT 9:00 AM PRIOR TO THE ACTUAL PROGRAM.**

The next meeting of the Northwest Suburban Council of Genealogists will take place on Saturday morning, January 4, 2014. The program for the morning is titled **"Space-Time for Family Historians: Timewarps and Curved Space Aren't Just for Physicists"**. The speaker for the morning will be **Dr. Daniel Hubbard**.

Dr. Daniel Hubbard has been seriously researching his family history since he was 11 years old. He is a former particle physicist who lived in France and Sweden for 20 years before returning to Libertyville with his family. He is now a full-time professional genealogist, book designer and writer. He is the owner of Personal Past ([www.thePersonalPast.com](http://www.thePersonalPast.com)) with research concentrating on American, Canadian and Swedish records. He is President of the Lake County Genealogical Society and a member of the Nordic Family Genealogy Advisory Board at the Swedish-American Museum in Chicago.

Dan will present an entertaining look at how the times and places we read about and research are not always what they seem. Decoding dates, comprehending calendars and understanding the time on your ancestor's pocket watch are not as easy as they seem. What time they meant depends on where they were.

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 9:00 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:

[www.NWSCG.com](http://www.NWSCG.com)

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**Handout #3 – DUPAGE COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY NEXT  
REGULAR SOCIETY PROGRAM ON NOVEMBER 20, 2013**

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the DuPage County Genealogical Society will take place on Wednesday evening, November 20, 2013. The program scheduled for that evening is **“Researching the Forbidden”**. The speaker for the program will be **Teri O’Connell**.

We all have family secrets; stories that are whispered to a select few, and hidden from the rest. Some secrets go with our ancestors to the grave while others are eventually exposed. Why do we feel the need to hold these family secrets? What can we learn about our past that will help us in the present and the generations to come in the future? **What records are available and what can you learn to sort out these family secrets?** In this lecture learn what the records can tell you, even if you were not looking for it.

This meeting will take place at the Wheaton Public Library, Lower Level. The address of the library is at 225 N. Cross St. in Wheaton, IL. The meeting room opens at 6:30 PM. Refreshments are available at that time. The society conducts business at 7 PM, the speaker will start by 7:30 PM and the program will conclude by 8:30 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](http://www.dcgcs.org)

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**Handout #4 – COMPUTER ASSISTED GENEALOGY GROUP OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS (CAGG-NI) NEXT PROGRAM ON NOVEMBER 16, 2013 AT THE HYATT PLACE IN SCHAUMBURG AT 10:00 AM**

The next meeting of CAGGNI will take place on Saturday morning, November 16, 2013 at the Hyatt Place located at 1851 McConnor Parkway in Schaumburg, IL starting at 10:00 AM. The program scheduled for this day is **"Famous First Ladies"**. The speaker will be Jenny Riddle. The Society will also be conducting its annual Business Meeting. In addition, the society will also be having a Family Favorites Potluck Social.

**PLEASE NOTE THE LOCATION OF THIS PROGRAM/MEETING/SOCIAL AND THE EARLIER TIME FOR THE START OF THE EVENT. IT WILL NOT TAKE PLACE AT THE SCHAUMBURG TOWNSHIP DISTRICT LIBRARY.**

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](http://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 DECEMBER 10, 2013

We will have another “break-out” session for our gathering on December 10, 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 on December 10, 2013.

You may visit the library's web page at:

[www.SchaumburgLibrary.org](http://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 – 80 MILLION PROFESSIONAL AND AMATEUR GENEALOGISTS AROUND THE WORLD

**The following was found at Dick Eastman's Blog at [www.eogn.com](http://www.eogn.com) dated September 26, 2013.**

An article in the Voice of America web site says that market research firm Global Industry Analysts says there are more than 80 million professional and amateur genealogists around the world. No wonder there is so much interest these days!

Reporter Mike Richman goes on to describe the recent agreement between FamilySearch.org and Ancestry.com to put about 1 billion historical records online. He also interviewed two people with a lot of experience in the growth of genealogy: Paul Nauta of FamilySearch and some guy named Dick Eastman who writes a genealogy e-newsletter at <http://www.eogn.com>.

You can read the full article at <http://goo.gl/voaBFY>.

On a personal note, I think the reporter, Mike Richman, now has caught the genealogy bug. When he called the first time, he said he only knew his ancestry back to his grandparents. I gave him a few suggestions and pointed him to a few web sites. He later emailed back and asked follow-up questions so I dug a bit deeper and have him a whole bunch of other places to look. Yes, now we have 80 million and one genealogists!

### **Comments by Tony Kierna**

*Consider yourself to be in great company! The suggested number of genealogists is rather staggering when you think about it worldwide. Without knowing the process I do wonder how they arrived at a number of 80 million worldwide genealogists. The link above to the article alludes to the Global Industry Analysts firm estimating the numbers but it does not provide how that was done.*

*Maybe another contributing factor to the large number of genealogists is the aging of our own "baby-boomer" generation. It has always been seen by me that the vast majority of genealogical researchers are often a little up in age. I do not get too many inquiries by 30 or 40 year olds!*

*I also believe that the technology of our times makes it that much easier to become a "genealogist". Records are now at the digital tips of our fingers. Even as recently as 15 years ago, most genealogical research was done using microfilms, letter-writing by hand and postal mailing (you do still remember that process, don't you?), archive and library visiting. If I can go online to FamilySearch today, do a quick search based on some starting key facts I may know by just entering in a surname, and look at a returned image of an original document, would that not make me be a happy camper! I can now call myself a genealogist! So the easier it is to do the search and get results the more likely someone may give genealogy a try in our techno-digital world.*

Just remember that the above simple search we take for granted today, might have actually taken weeks or months if the search had to be done via microfilms, archive visits and writing letters. Today's average person's span of attention is measured in seconds, not weeks or months.

The fact that genealogists are also able to view TV shows geared to their interests breeds new genealogists who might think discovering that "old" ancestral information is cool. TV ratings are good which spawns new genealogy programs and new genealogists etc. And the beat goes on! We have "Who Do You Think You Are?", "Finding Your Roots" and now the "Genealogy Roadshow". These shows do not get produced unless the producers feel there will be a return on their investment. So if there is an 80 million base out there worldwide, you can rest assured you are going to be courted.

And did I also mention the thousands of blogs, YouTube videos, podcasts, genealogy societies, etc. that are also out there to stimulate interest in genealogy. You do not have to be connected to a newspaper as we once were to get all of our news.

But let's be honest. It does feel good to be part of an expanding group rather than a declining group. Enjoy while it appears to be lasting into the near-term future at least. If you read the article above you will get a sense that monies on genealogical spending will **DOUBLE** by 2018 to **\$4.3 BILLION** in comparison to this year. As they say, you can't turn a battleship on a dime. If the momentum is there it looks like genealogy will still be growing out into 2018.

So pat yourself on the back and take a good look around you. There is probably one of the 80 million genealogists right next to you.

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## Handout #7 – DO YOU WANT TO APPEAR ON PBS' "GENEALOGY ROADSHOW" NEXT SEASON?

*The following was found in Dick Eastman's Online Blog at [www.eogn.com](http://www.eogn.com) dated October 8, 2013.*

I don't know if this means the show has been renewed for a second season or not, but it looks like it has. *The company that finds guests for Genealogy Roadshow is looking for potential guests for next year's programs.* Quoting from the announcement:

Genealogy Roadshow is an exciting PBS groundbreaking documentary series that aims to reunite people from all walks of life with their past, present and future.

*We have just finished taping our first season but would like to hear from you if you are interested in being part of the next season of Genealogy Roadshow.*

- Expert genealogists will uncover rich and surprising history about the people and places that make up our incredibly diverse and fascinating country.
- Your story can be part of history!
- Is there a family legend you would like to explore?
- Is there a missing piece or person in your family tree you've always wondered about?
- Do you believe you might be connected to our nation's rich history and folklore?
- Have you discovered an ancestral link to a founding father or an American icon?
- Is there a family story passed down for generations you would like investigated and finally answered?

If so, we'd love to hear from you!

Details may be found at <http://www.grcasting.com/>.

### **Comments by Tony Kierna**

*By all measure there is another genealogy TV hit show that we have all probably seen. *The initial 4 episode "Genealogy Roadshow" has now come to an end for this season.* But it appears that the 4 shows produced by PBS definitely struck a "successful" cord. And while not yet officially announced, the above article from Dick Eastman certainly points to the strong possibility we will see Season 2 of the "Genealogy Roadshow", and probably even more than just the initial 4 episodes we saw in 2013.*

*Obviously, we do not yet know it is renewed for sure. *In addition, if it is renewed, we do not yet know what cities the roadshow would plan on visiting.* So there could be logistical complications and expense incurred by you if you would be selected. Maybe PBS offsets any expenses you would incur. We also do not know the inside evaluation of the show from PBS and what possible tweaks it could receive should it appear on the air next year. All of the shows often get tweaked from one year to*

another, taking into account unfavorable comments about certain parts plus the general desire to create a great product.

*Please remember, PBS is looking for someone that has some idea of a more famous connection to the past. This is not intended for Joe Average to have someone tell him who his great-grandfather is unless maybe that great-grandfather has a connection to a founding father or some connection of some historical context.*

*You may have that connection that many of us know we do not (or maybe have not yet uncovered!). You may be a prime candidate to be on the show! You and your ancestor may become famous!!*

*The link above will get you to the PBS Genealogy Roadshow Casting questionnaire. There is basic contact information required e.g. name, address, e-mail, phone/cell phone. There are also some open-ended questions for to fill-out and provide to the show casting group such as:*

- *How did you hear about PBS's Genealogy Roadshow?*
- *Please describe yourself and your current household.*
- *What is your story and why is it important to you to find out now?*
- *Summarize the specific questions that you would like answered by the show. (List them in order of importance)*
- *Have you or any member of your family or outside group (i.e. ancestry websites, genealogists) looked into any branches of your family's history? If so, please describe who and explain what roadblocks or limitations they encountered.*
- *What would uncovering this information about your family mean to you and your family?*
- *Do you have a GEDCOM (GEnealogical Data COMmunication) File?*
- *Do you have DNA to be considered or processed?*
- *Is your story an adoption case?*
- *Do you have an item that traces back to an ancestor or could help uncover additional information? If so what is it and how did it come into your possession?*
- *Please list any family members who would love to come to the taping of the show with you if your story is chosen.*
- *Have you ever been on television before?*

*You would also be asked two further questions for which you will need to provide some further information:*

- *Attach recent friendly photo of yourself (File Types, Jpg, jpeg, bmp, gif, png):*
- *Attach and label any family photos you have of people who relate to your story*

*So there you go. If your research has some incredible historical connection or some famous ancestral connection, consider submitting it for evaluation. Perhaps, you and your ancestors, will be next season's new stars. Plus, we could then say we knew that person. He/she came to our library's genealogy program!*

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## Handout #8 – 75,000 “HOW TO” ARTICLES IN FAMILYSEARCH WIKI

*The following was found in Dick Eastman's Online Blog at [www.eogn.com](http://www.eogn.com) dated October 3, 2013.*

According to Nathan W. Murphy's article in the *FamilySearch Blog*, FamilySearch has reached a significant milestone. Last week, the 75,000th article was published in the *Research Wiki*.



The Wiki is like having a worldwide encyclopedia of genealogy knowledge at your fingertips. If you have not already seen it, I suggest you carve out an hour or two to investigate one of the better online resources available to genealogists.

The *FamilySearch Research Wiki* is a free online guide explaining how to find ancestors in different time periods and places all around the world. Originally based on the Family History Library's Research Outlines, the *FamilySearch Research Wiki* has expanded over the past five years to help you learn how to use records in such places as:

- Liverpool, England
- New York City
- London
- Denmark
- Australia
- Philadelphia
- Norway
- Czech Republic
- Barbados
- Boston, Massachusetts
- Japan
- Augusta County, Virginia
- Italy
- India
- and much more!

You can read more in Murphy's article at:

<https://familysearch.org/blog/en/familysearch-wiki-reaches-important-milestone-2>.

### **Comments by Tony Kierna**

*I am a big believer in tapping into resources that can make your own genealogical research that much more productive and effective. One of the ways to become a better researcher is to look at sites far beyond the search box template you may find at the beginning of a web page that is a window to genealogical databases. There may be so much more educational material at these sites that we are leaving on the table if all we only do is "search surnames".*

One of these great sites is FamilySearch.org. The wiki at this site is an encyclopedic resource that all genealogists not only need to know exists, but also need to tap into when you are stuck with a research problem. Having 75,000 "How To" articles in this online genealogical encyclopedia is nothing short of spectacular.

When you arrive at the main FamilySearch website at [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org), just look at the top of the home page for "Help". Open up the pull-down menu here at look for "Wiki" which is the last of many help items. Here is a direct link to the FamilySearch wiki:

<https://familysearch.org/ask/researchWiki>

You will notice some "pre-arranged" topics of interest to tap into such as "Beginning Resources", "Localities" and "Research Tools". Look at these because they will steer you to some good resources without even have to search.

There is a search box in which you can enter your topic you would like to find out more about. It does not have to be one word. You can enter in "Chicago church records" and get 25 hits. You can enter in Gdansk (a town in Poland related to my own personal research) and get 15 hits. You can enter in "Family history library" and get 25 hits. See what they have that can help you become a better researcher.

One of the best things you can use the wiki for is to obtain a better understanding of a particular location your research has turned to, be it a country level, a state level or a county level. Our ancestors' records were connected to the geography they lived in at the time of an event. Understanding that locale and the kinds of records, the time of the records and the location of the records is important to know. I find it much easier to become knowledgeable of these key facts for a locale before I start calling someone in that locale for assistance.

If you are very knowledgeable about a certain topic and discover the topic is not covered in the wiki, you can register yourself with them and become a contributor. Your detailed knowledge can find its way to the wiki and be included to help others who could use help about a topic you are very familiar with. Once included in the wiki your information can be updated as new discoveries are made. It can also be added to by others that may also have knowledge about the subject.

Try searching using "Cook County Illinois" and discover copious amounts of information you can learn about Cook county to help in your research. Type in any combination of a county and state you are researching to see what you can discover. Browse through the material. You may even discover links to full-text online books about the topic embedded in the articles for even more resource information! The links within these wiki articles are worth their weight in gold themselves.

A wiki is a good thing. A FamilySarch wiki is an even better tool. Check it out!

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## Handout #9 – “GOING LOCAL: 4 OFTEN OVERLOOKED LOCAL HISTORY RESOURCES”

*The following review and comments were created by me, Tony Kierna, based on my having read an article that was seen in the October/November 2013, Volume 8, Number 4 issue of Internet Genealogy.*

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I thought that a good article in this issue is one titled “Going Local”. The author is Carol Richey. The author describes 4 often overlooked local history resources that can help you in your genealogical research.

Here are the four resources to consider searching when trying to uncover more about your ancestor or just the time and the location that your ancestor lived in:

- **Celebrations** – just as individuals have celebrations so too do local communities. Within the context of these community celebrations you may discover information about your particular ancestor or just see a better understanding of the community your ancestor resided in. If you know your ancestor’s community, church or school reached a certain milestone event search for any material about the celebration. Consider special publications of the commemorative event. Look for newspaper articles. Look for local history material in the local public library that serves that community. Other things to consider for celebrations:
  - Local commemorative publications may be very limited so your search may be a challenge.
  - Contact the local church to see if they have had any historical celebrations for which they may have a printed memorial.
  - Do the same for local schools.
  - Search Google and WorldCat ([www.worldcat.org](http://www.worldcat.org)) for any printed material of the event.
  - Work through a local Historical Society if one exists.
- **Town and County Histories** – County histories were extremely popular in 1876 as the country celebrated its one hundred year anniversary. Counties also wanted to celebrate and produce histories of them during this auspicious year. Look for these for your county of interest in your local public library or even online or within local historical societies. You can often get historical insights into the origins of the county and the early families that settled there. However, the family histories you may discover often got into the books only because the family paid a fee to have it included in the book. So if families had the money they could showcase their ancestry. If you did not have the money, you did not appear by name in the book. Because the families supplied the material of their ancestry be cautious because a good amount of it may be more

**"embellishment" than fact!** Here are also some other resources to consider:

- Take a look a look at a book source titled *A Bibliography of American County Histories* (Genealogical Publishing, 1985)
- Check out Kory Meyerink's chapter on county and local histories in *Printed Sources: A Guide to Published Genealogical Records* (Ancestry, 1998)
- **Atlases and More** – County atlases, plat books and other maps often provide landowner information. You can also discover the locations of churches, schools, cemeteries, biographies, directory of farmers or patrons. Consider using fire insurance maps, especially the Sanborn Map collections from ProQuest. There are 660,000 large-scale maps covering more than 12,000 cities. You can easily discover property descriptions for land and buildings of your ancestors. Also check out the following:
  - Historic Map Works @ [www.historicmapworks.com](http://www.historicmapworks.com)
  - Wisconsin Historical Society maps of Midwest locations @ [www.wisconsinhistory.org/libraryarchives/maps](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/libraryarchives/maps)
  - Canadian County Atlas Digital Project @ <http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/CountyAtlas/default.htm>
- **Other Local History Books** – do not forget to actually talk to a librarian from an area associated with your ancestors' location. That library may have material in its collection of historical nature that may simply not be in the catalog that you might search online. Other resources to consider:
  - Conduct a "place name" search at FamilySearch in their extensive online catalog that you can find at [www.familysearch.org/catalog-search](http://www.familysearch.org/catalog-search).
  - Check out the Genealogy Center @ [www.genealogycenter.org/Home.aspx](http://www.genealogycenter.org/Home.aspx)
  - Check out the Mid-Continent Public Library Midwest Genealogy Center @ [www.mymcpl.org/genealogy](http://www.mymcpl.org/genealogy)

Of the above often overlooked resources, I would say from personal experience that you can potentially find some fascinating information from discovering "celebratory" information within online digitized newspapers for the area your ancestors lived. Look for "celebratory" information for the community as well as for your family connections! You can discover many names and relationships from the articles about marriages, wedding anniversaries, birth announcements, graduations etc. Our ancestors from over 100 years really used the newspapers to share these celebrations. Often it was not just a 140 character limit as we see with Twitter today. These can be fairly large articles.

Visits of siblings or parents were often news indicating where they currently lived and were visiting from. These visits may have occurred at the time of the community celebration. Don't miss these connections. These celebratory writings often present family connection information similar to obituaries.

I have had some good insights into families and the areas they lived in via the County History books. You may be lucky enough to discover that an ancestor was rather famous and an early settler. These families were often highlighted in these books that were popular in the 1876 timeframe. They were often composed as a celebration for the 100 year anniversary of the founding of the country. Families often had to pay money to have their family histories and stories included. So be careful about the facts presented because families may have "stretched the truth" since they paid for the inclusion and did not want to present the "warts" that all families have.

See what you can discover in these four often overlooked resources to help you uncover your family history.

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## Handout #10 – “FIVE REASONS THE RECORDS AREN'T IN THE COURTHOUSE”

The following review and comments were created by me, Tony Kierna, based on my having read an article that was seen in the September/October 2013, Volume 18, Number 1 issue of Family Chronicle.

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I thought that a good article in this issue is one titled “Five Reasons the Records Aren’t in the Courthouse”. The author of the article is George G. Morgan.

Courthouses are a great repository for many different kinds of records helpful to genealogists. You may find information on land transactions, marriage records, divorce cases, tax records, wills and probates. All of these can often contribute far more to your research than just a name. These are records that are often “verbose” with text that can shed many surprises to the genealogical researcher. Do not overlook courthouse records in your research.

The author provides insights into what are some of the reasons that you may not find something at a courthouse that you felt was a sure thing. Here are the things to consider when you come up empty-handed:

- **Are You in the Right Place?** – sad but true especially when you come to realize the dramatic changes that may have occurred over time to the county you know about now but was maybe not the county at the time of the records of your ancestors. Always ask yourself the following:
  - What were the birth and death dates of my ancestor?
  - Where did he or she physically live in every period of life?
  - What type of record am I seeking?
  - What government entity had jurisdiction of the geographical area at the time the record was created?
  - Where is the courthouse for that particular county?
  - Consider the David Ramsey map collection as a tool to help find the right places over time. You can access it at [www.davidramsey.com](http://www.davidramsey.com).
  - Know when the specific record type you seek began being collected. Use *The Family Tree Sourcebook: Your Essential Directory of American County and Town Records*
- **Are There Multiple Courthouses or Offices?**
  - Maybe you are in the wrong actual office location under the correct county. Perhaps the county has subdivided its records among multiple locations.

- Visit the website of the county of interest to determine record dissemination to various locations.

- **Where Are the Older Documents?**

- Sometimes older documents less frequently accessed are held in another sub-facility location. You are in the right county, right location that may require the facility to retrieve what you seek rather than having it available immediately.
- Determine if these less accessed documents might be available in the facility you are in but in microfilm format.
- Determine if the very old documents you seek may in fact have been digitized and are now available online via the courthouse or the county.
- Call in advance to determine any of the nuances in storage for the county. You do not want to discover these nuances when you visit and waste your visit.

- **Does Every Courthouse Have All of Its Historical Documents Available?**

- The state for the county may require that certain materials be forwarded to the state archive, especially for original material. Perhaps those documents sent to the state are now in microfilm format at the county.
- Counties may determine that certain material is no longer needed by them. Rather than destroy the material or move it to another governmental facility, it is possible the data has been disseminated to a private or other public location like a college or university.
- Call in advance at the county to determine any unique transfers of records to outside of governmental organizations.

- **Original documents May Have Been Lost or Intentionally Destroyed**

- Unfortunately, it is true some of the time but not all of the time, that courthouses have been consumed by fire! Records are thus unintentionally destroyed, especially if the fires occurred before microfilming was around.
- If it wasn't a fire, perhaps it was a flood in the basement!
- Yes, there are officials that may have taken material out but lax procedures did not make sure the material was returned in its original condition or not returned at all.
- Yes, people actually steal the material. Sometimes, it is stolen for value as an old document and may appear on eBay or some other spot for sale.
- As with businesses, sometimes courthouses may face tough decisions when storage has reached a limit. Materials deemed as unnecessary today may find their way for destruction. This may have happened more in the past than today because there

seems to be so much more openness in reaching out for someone else to take the material before it is destroyed.

The key presented by the author is to do your research first on the county and the courthouse before you actually embark on your "real" research. Know what the courthouse has and does not have. Know if there are multiple facilities for different kinds of records. Peruse the county courthouse website for what they have published about uniqueness of their material.

Don't get caught by surprise! Do your advance work and make your actual research time productive.

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