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February 10, 2015 Schaumburg Township District Library Genealogy Program "Handouts"

Hi Everyone,

This document should be considered as the program "handouts" document for our February 10, 2015 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 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 "Research 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". You may have to scroll down slightly on the page to see the information for the 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 the 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 GENEALOGY SOCIETY (NEW NAME – FORMERLY KNOWN AS NORTHWEST SUBURBAN COUNCIL OF GENEALOGISTS) ON MARCH 7, 2015

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 60 MINUTE ROUND-TABLE HELP SESSION THAT STARTS AT 9:00 AM PRIOR TO THE ACTUAL PROGRAM.

The next meeting of the Northwest Suburban Genealogy Society (New Name) will take place on Saturday morning, March 7, 2015. The program for the morning is titled **"Irish Emigrants to North America: Before, During and After the Famine"**. The speaker for the morning will be **Paul Milner**.

Learn about the routes taken and the reasons for the emigration from Ireland to the U.S. and Canada before, during and after the famine. Learn how this mass movement of people can affect your research, plus what tools and records are available to trace your Irish ancestor.

Paul Milner a native of northern England is a professional genealogist and international lecturer. He is the author of Discover English Parish Records (UnlockThePast, 2014), Genealogy at a Glance: England Research (Genealogical Publishing Co, 2011), plus co-author with Linda Jonas of A Genealogists Guide to Discovering Your English Ancestors: How to find and record your unique heritage (Betterway Books, 2000), and A Genealogists Guide to Discovering Your Scottish Ancestors: How to find and record your unique heritage (Betterway Books, 2002). Paul has specialized in British Isles genealogical research for over 30 years. He was raised in England and settled in the United States in 1975. He has been designing workshops and lecturing to a wide variety of audiences for over 35 years. He holds an advanced degree in Theology and is particularly knowledgeable about the church and its role in record keeping. As a genealogist he speaks on a variety of topics relating to research in the British Isles, migration to North America and research methodology. Paul is currently the book review editor for the FGS FORUM and the BIGWILL newsletter. He is the past-president of the British Interest Group of Wisconsin and Illinois (BIGWILL), and a past board member of the Association to Professional Genealogists, the Federation of Genealogical Societies and the Genealogical Speakers Guild. Paul focusses on British Isles resources and methodology on his blog at www.milnergenealogy.com

This meeting will take place at the Arlington Heights Senior Center, 1801 W. Central Rd., Arlington Heights, IL 60005 at 10:00 AM. There is a round table discussion that takes place at 9:00 AM prior to the main meeting/program that starts at 10:00 AM. Participants are invited to attend this round table and bring their research questions for discussion.

You may visit the society web page at:

<http://www.nwsgenealogy.org>

Please note that it has happened once in a while that the society may change a program schedule without actively sharing that fact. Checking their web site may also not give you notice of such a change if they do not change the web site. That is still the first place to check. You may also want to contact someone at the society if a phone number is available to verify that a program is still scheduled as they had advertised. That is always not available either.

We do our best here to try to be sure that information we convey about programs is accurate. However, sometimes we are unable to convey changes unless we are made aware of those changes.

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**Handout #3 – DUPAGE COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY NEXT
REGULAR SOCIETY PROGRAM ON FEBRUARY 18, 2015**

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the DuPage County Genealogical Society will take place on Wednesday evening, February 18, 2015. The program scheduled for that evening is **“Holy Cow! Where Are My Chicago Catholics Now?”**. The speaker for the program will be **Teresa Steinkamp-McMillin, CG**.

The first Chicago Catholic church opened in 1833 and by 1900 there were about 140 Catholic churches in the city. Finding your Catholic ancestor's church records (baptism, confirmation, marriage and funeral) can be a daunting task without a few key pieces of information. This lecture will explain how to find the data necessary to tap into these valuable resources. Once potential churches are identified, the process of finding the records for that church and timeframe will be explained.

You may visit the society's web page at:

www.dcg.org

The society also has a blog that you can visit to find out about “this and that” related to the society as well as find genealogical tips. You can visit the DuPage County Genealogical Society blog at:

<http://dupagecountygenealogicalsociety.wordpress.com/>

Please note that it has happened once in a while that the society may change a program schedule without actively sharing that fact. Checking their web site may also not give you notice of such a change if they do not change the web site. That is still the first place to check. You may also want to contact someone at the society if a phone number is available to verify that a program is still scheduled as they had advertised. That is always not available either.

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Handout #4 – COMPUTER ASSISTED GENEALOGY GROUP OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS (CAGGNI) NEXT PROGRAM ON FEBRUARY 21, 2015 AT THE SCHAUMBURG TOWNSHIP DISTRICT LIBRARY

The next regular meeting of CAGGNI will take place on Saturday morning, February 21, 2015 at the Arlington Heights Senior Center, 1801 W. Central Rd., Arlington Heights IL starting at 10:30 AM. The program scheduled for this day is **"The Wisconsin Historical Society Library and Archives: What Is In It? Everything!"**. The speaker will be **George Findlen**.

The holdings of interest to genealogists in the Wisconsin Historical Society Library and Archives (two repositories in one building), and the services they provide to make your contact with them a pleasant one will be presented. The two repositories, together, hold one of the five largest genealogy collections in the U.S. George demonstrates how to locate family histories, compiled genealogies, newspapers, pre-1907 Wisconsin vital records, civil war records, and more through the on-line digital catalogs for the library, the archives, and digital records made available at the Wisconsin History web site. The talk concludes with a description of the microfilm equipment visitors can use, and other services provided by the Library and Archives to support users both on-site and from afar.

George Findlen is a retired academic administrator and faculty member. His genealogical articles have appeared in the *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* and journals in New England, Louisiana, New Brunswick, and Quebec.

Don't miss this informative session.

You may visit the organization web page at:

www.CAGGNI.org

Please note that it has happened once in a while that the society may change a program schedule without actively sharing that fact. Checking their web site may also not give you notice of such a change if they do not change the web site. That is still the first place to check. You may also want to contact someone at the society if a phone number is available to verify that a program is still scheduled as they had advertised. That is always not available either.

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Handout #5 – SCHAUMBURG TOWNSHIP DISTRICT LIBRARY NEXT GENEALOGY PROGRAM ON MARCH 10, 2015

Our next genealogy program will take place on Tuesday evening, March 10, 2015.

We will have another “break-out” session for our gathering on March 10, 2015. 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 March 10, 2015.

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 – RANDOM ACTS OF GENEALOGICAL KINDNESS BACK ONLINE

The following was found at Dick Eastman's Blog at www.eogn.com dated January 4, 2015.



Great news! **Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness** appears to be back online.

The original Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness (RAOGK) website was created by Bridgett and Doc Schneider. More than 4,000 volunteers in every U.S. state and many international locations used the site to help other genealogists. The volunteers agreed to do at least one free genealogy research task per month in their local area as an Act of Kindness. The RAOGK volunteers agreed not to charge for their research time; however, researchers were required to reimburse the volunteer for expenses incurred in fulfilling the research request (e.g., copies, printing fees, postage, film or video tape, parking fees, gasoline, etc.).

The original Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness (RAOGK) website was in operation for more than a decade, benefitting thousands of genealogists. In mid-October, 2011, Bridgett Schneider sent an email message to all registered users stating that major problems had developed with the site's hard drive plus the overall health of the administrator was not favorable. The site went offline.

Sadly, Bridgett Schneider passed away Nov. 12, 2011. The site never came back online, until now.

The <http://www.raogk.org> web site now states, "RAOGK is a global volunteer organization. At one time we had over 4000 volunteers in every U.S. state and many international locations, and helped thousands of researchers. We are trying to rebuild the RAOGK site. It will take a little more time to get it back to its former glory. Our volunteers take time to do everything from looking up courthouse records to taking pictures of tombstones. All they ask in return is reimbursement for their expenses (never their time) and a thank you."

It's great to see <http://raogk.org> back online. I strongly urge all genealogists to check it out and also to volunteer your efforts to help others. In the long term, you will benefit also.

My thanks to newsletter reader Russell Houlton for telling me of RAOGK's return.

Comments by Tony Kierna

Have you ever been helped by someone in your genealogical research who you really felt went out of their way to help? Perhaps they went to a facility where they made a

copy of a document for you. Maybe they visited a cemetery to snap a picture of a headstone for someone that was not listed in FindAGrave or BillionGraves. Now you feel so good about the act that perhaps you could pay it back to someone else?

Well, Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness is back online.

This organization was active online offering services to those that sought help as well as taking individuals into the group that could offer help to fellow researchers. The group had been online and active prior to 2011. Unfortunately, the founder of the group passed away in 2011 and the organization has struggled since then trying to re-invent itself without the aid of the original founder.

That re-invention seems to have been successfully completed as the Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness is back online helping requesters with acts of genealogical kindness. The number of volunteers does not seem to be at former levels but it hopes to grow itself back up to that level as stability is shown over time and word of mouth spreads that the group is back and functioning online.

Check out the site via the above noted links. You do need to register yourself for the site if you want to submit requests or to contact volunteers to help you with your request. Please note, that while the service is "free" you are required to pay the costs of the volunteer assisting you with your request. You do not pay them for their time but you are required to pay them for their expenses such as copy cost, mailing costs, parking costs etc.

The site does provide lots of information if you choose to become a "requester" for help or if you choose to become a "volunteer" to assist others.

If you become a "requester" for help, you can look at the site and see a listing on a state by state basis that lists who the active volunteers are within the state of interest. There are even some international volunteers in a limited number of countries. Illinois, by the way, shows 13 volunteers identified by name and specialty services they can offer. This can help you get a better idea to see what they offer to match to your needs. In the original "kindness" program, volunteers participated with the knowledge that their goal would be to help at least 1 requester per month.

If your research takes you to state far away you might want to consider tapping in to this group to see if they could help you obtain a document from a local archive for them. Or they could maybe do a photo of a headstone from a local cemetery for them that ties into your research.

If you have never heard of this organization be thankful that it has risen from the ashes like the proverbial Phoenix. This group could really help your research. Definitely take a look at the site and all the supporting guidelines they provide to "requester" as well as to potential "volunteers". Lots of good information at the site.

A big "welcome back" to Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness!

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Handout #7 – HOW TO PRESERVE OLD PHOTOS WITHOUT LOSING YOUR MIND

The following was found in Dick Eastman's Online Blog at www.eogn.com dated January 11, 2015.



Chris Cummins is a professional photographer who writes a personal blog about photo preservation and a number of other topics as well. He recently published *How To Preserve Old Photos Without Losing Your Mind* that focuses on simplifying the overwhelming process of turning old family photos into an organized, safe and searchable digital archive with tips for how to preserve the film and paper originals.

The article covers a lot of topics, including:

- The Biggest Enemy of Preserving Photos: Procrastination
- Set a Very Reachable Goal
- Identify which photographs are most important to you and your family
- The Four Question Test for Photo Preservation
- Time To Digitize Those Old Pictures
- Warning: Be Careful Placing Too Much Faith In Technology
- How To Create Digital Copies Of Your Family Photos
- Your Scanning Options
- Flatbed Scanners
- Smartphones
- Hiring Someone Else To Scan Your Family Photos
- What Software Should You Use?
- Where To Store Your Digital Copies
- Cloud Storage Services: A Comparison
- Use Metadata: Don't Make A Digital Mess Of Your Real World Photo Mess
- Preserve Old Photos: How to Keep The Originals Safe
- Often The Actual Prints Themselves Are A Thing Of Beauty Too And Are Worth Preserving
- So How Do We Keep The Original Prints And Negatives Safe?
- The Storage Environment: Keep It Cool, Keep It Dry
- Good Storage Enclosures:
- Proper Handling: Make It Easy
- What To Store The Prints and Negatives In?

You can read *How To Preserve Old Photos Without Losing Your Mind* at

<http://www.glowimagery.com/how-to-preserve-old-photos/>

Comments by Tony Kierna

I really liked the information you can find at the above site mentioned in Eastman's article.

There truly is a great deal of meaningful and useful information among all of the categories that the site owner Chris Cummins shares.

Without a doubt, the biggest enemy to preserving your old photos is truly procrastination. The pictures we have accumulated over decades and longer are generally on paper stock that is deteriorating over time. If not the paper, then the actual ink itself will be fading. If certain kinds of color pictures existed they may become grossly disfigured as the color ink turns a horrible color.

The article above does take you through a nice list of analysis, assessment and solutions to get your photographs preserved through digitization and archiving. I especially liked the one part of the blog that was titled "Digital Scanning: The Perfect Method vs. the Necessary Method". The author does a nice side-by-side comparison of what he calls the "perfect" method vs. what he calls the "Our 90% As Good Method (but a lot easier method)". This comparison is a very good item to review if you do not look at anything else at the site.

The site is a blog. The article is one posting to the blog. All of the points mentioned by the author are important. Don't forget to look at the comments posted to this article by other readers. The author appears to be very active in his responses to comments left at the site.

Don't lose your pictures in your possession that may easily go back 100 years already. They may still look good. But good can turn to "gone". While you are the keeper of the pictures, now is the time to be a good steward for future generations. Get the pictures digitized. You can do this and especially so after reading what the author shares with all of us. Get the pictures uploaded to resources in the "cloud". Do multiple clouds. Let your relatives know they exist digitally and where they can be found. Get the original paper pictures into safe archival storage materials.

Do not tempt fate! Your pictures could disappear through natural disasters like fire, flood, insects and the like. How many times have you heard stories from reporters about the natural disasters that caused families to lose all their personal possessions. I am sure in the category of "possessions" for them were their pictures that they thought they would have forever.

I thought the article was so good above that I have added the link to my "Favorite Links" part of my blog under "Photo Preservation". If you don't get to check it out now, at least it will now be in my "Favorite Links" for future access.

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Handout #8 – 2014 GENEALOGY SOFTWARE REVIEWS

The following was found in Dick Eastman's Online Blog at www.eogn.com dated January 2, 2015.

The following announcement was written by Louis Kessler of GenSoftReviews:

January 2, 2015



The 6th annual Users Choice Awards have been announced at the GenSoftReviews website.

26 programs were eligible having a minimum of 10 reviews and at least one review in 2014. Of those, 16 programs achieved a user-assigned average score of at least 4.00 out of 5, and were awarded a 2014 GenSoftReviews Top Rated Genealogy Software award.

- The Winners include:
 - 9 Windows programs: Ahnenblatt, Clooz, Family Historian, Ancestral Quest, Brother's Keeper, Family Tree Builder, Behold, RootsMagic and Genbox Family History,
 - 1 Mac program: Reunion
 - 5 Online programs: The Next Generation, Famberry, My Great Big Family, MyHeritage and Family Echo
 - 1 Handheld program: Heredis for iOS

The top program for 2014 was Ahnenblatt, a free full featured Windows program by Dirk Böttcher. Ahnenblatt ended the year with a user rating of 4.90 out of 5 based on 152 reviews. Ancestral Quest dropped from first in 2013 to seventh in 2014 but still retained an excellent score of 4.54 out of 5. The Next Generation, a program that manages and displays your family tree on your website, moved up from fourth in 2013 to second in 2014 with a score of 4.78 out of 5.

New to the list of winners for 2014 were My Heritage for their online Family Tree system, and Behold, a genealogy data viewer.

Programs that dropped off the list from 2013 include iFamily for Leopard and Heredis for Mac, both of which did not receive at least one rating in 2014, as well as Gramps that fell from a rating of 4.15 in 2013 to 3.41 in 2014.

A new rule added in 2014 is that unsupported programs no longer qualify for Users Choice Awards, but they are still listed at GenSoftReviews so they can be rated and reviewed. As a result, Personal Ancestral File was not awarded a Users Choice Award despite still being well liked with a score of 4.51 out of 5.

GenSoftReviews uses a time-weighted average score. The weight of every user rating goes down 50% every year, so newer opinions will be better reflected in the average score.

Congratulations go to all the 2014 winners. They are producing a product that their users like. GenSoftReviews hopes all genealogy software developers will use the feedback these reviews provide to improve their programs for their users.

For more information and a complete listing of current and past winners, see the [Users Choice Awards page](#).

Comments by Tony Kierna

One of the more frequent questions I receive is exactly about the above topic. What software can you recommend to use for accumulating genealogy research material? I often offer my own opinions from my familiarity with products I know about and have used. However, I am so grateful that GenSoftReviews exists and does what they do to come up with what they think are some of the better lineage products out there.

As you can see from the above, ratings are based upon submitted reviews to the various products. It is fascinating to go to the site and take a look at the explained process for how ratings are determined. Submitted reviews that are more current have more weight. Multiple reviews are to credibility of rating. The reviewer is required to submit their name as the person reviewing so no anonymous reviews are accepted which can also lead to credibility of the rankings. Any submitted review is reviewed by the author of GenSoftReviews and if found not to be within the guidelines of the site will not be posted.

To obtain a complete overall view of how the ratings process works I strongly urge you to visit the site and take a good look at the FAQ part of the site.

The site also provides a nice set of links to other reviewing sites and other genealogy software oriented sites.

The author also provides a lot of good information and links to many other topics related to genealogy software such as:

- *Newsgroups and Mail Lists*
- *Independent Comparisons of Genealogy Programs*
- *Articles About Specific Types of Genealogy Software*
- *Software Repositories*
- *Other Lists of Genealogical Programs on the Web*

The site is more than just a ratings site of genealogical software. You can really uncover much more by looking around the site to see all that exists related to genealogy software information.

The site also has a nice "search" capability you can use to see if a known genealogy software product is within the site for you to read about. You can search for the following categories of materials:

License

- Free
- Purchased
- Subscribable
- Unsupported

Platforms

- Windows
- Mac
- Unix
- Handheld
- Online

Types

- Full featured
- Utility
- Builds websites
- Auxiliary

Once you may find software of interest to you using the above selection criteria, you can then sort your hits using the following selections:

By Latest Review

- By most reviews
- Alphabetically
- By overall rating
- By overall rating greater than 10
- By 2015 rating
- By 2014 rating
- By earlier rating

The site notes it has done 2,804 reviews since the site started in 2008. You may be familiar with the major lineage program developers such as Family Tree Maker, Master Genealogist, RootsMagic, Legacy Family Tree. There are hundreds more that you can look at via this site if you are really into genealogy software.

It is definitely visiting the site at [Users Choice Awards page](#) to see all that is there for you to learn about genealogy software. I have added the above site to my "Favorite Links" category as part of the blog I author for the library on genealogy.

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Handout #9 – “FAMILY HISTORY WRITING MADE EASIER”

The following review and comments were created by me, Tony Kierna, based on my having read an article that was seen in the October-December 2014, Volume 40, Number 4 issue of NGS Magazine.

I thought that a good article in this issue is one titled “Family History Writing Made Easier”. The author of the article is Lisa A. Alzo.

The author notes that being able to tell your family history story is so much easier today because of the multitude and variety of the electronic apps and tools that can help us put words and thoughts to paper.

The author notes the following guides she uses to select the best app/tool available for her use:

- It must perform a variety of tasks.
- It must offer flexibility such as being able to be used across multiple platforms like Windows and Mac OS.
- Should have a cloud-based functionality allowing for access from anywhere.
- Should provide the ability to make multiple backups and sync between computers, tablets and smartphones.
- Is it easy to install and register?
- What is the learning curve?
- Is there a “free” version (but consider paying for a premium if it is worth it.)

The author then identifies a variety of these tools she has tried and that are her favorites:

Note Taking and Research

- **Evernote** @ www.evernote.com. There are tips for the Evernote product you can find at the Evernote blog at <http://blog.evernote.com/blog/2012/11/19/how-to-use-evernote-for-genealogical-research>. You can also find some tips/insights about the product at Tonia’s Roots Blog at www.toniasroots.net/2010/06/24/using-evernote-for-genealogy.
- **OneNote by Microsoft** @ www.microsoft.com
For some other insights into using OneNote by Microsoft check out an online link from the Paperless Genealogist @ <http://paperlessgenealogy.blogspot.com/2011/11/well-ive-started-using-microsofts.html>. YourFamilyStory has a link with

some info on OneNote @ www.4yourfamilystory.com/how-do-i-use-microsoft-onenote-to-make-a-research-plan.html.

Outlining, Ideas and Storyboarding

- **Scrapple** @ www.literatureandlatte.com/scrapple.php.
- **Workflowy** @ <https://workflowy.com>. A link to get some other background on Workflowy can be accessed at <http://blog.workflowy.com/2013/12/18/an-offline-desktop-app-for-workflowy>.

Organizational (to-do lists) and Project Planning

- **Any.do** @ www.any.do.
- **Trello** @ <https://trello.com>

Writing Tools

- **Scrivener** @ www.literatureandlatte.com/scrivener.php. There is even a video tutorial for this product at www.literatureandlatte.com/video.php.
- **WriteApp** @ <https://writeapp.me>.

Document Storage

- **Box** @ www.box.com
- **CloudOn** @ <http://site.cloudon.com>
- **DropBox** @ www.dropbox.com
- **Google Drive** @ <https://drive.google.com>
- **iCloud** @ www.apple.com
- **One Drive** @ www.microsoft.com
- **SugarSync** @ www.sugarsync.com

The author even notes that less is more. Most writers are quite comfortable using a basic word processor. So utilize to the max what you are already familiar with because the end result is to get some family history writing done. You could establish a steep learning curve by just adding on app after app to your tools but at the expense of getting your writing done. So judge for yourself what works best for you.

If you tend to be on the learning side and just like to know what is all out there as a writing tool, then by all means experiment with all or any of the tools that are mentioned earlier. But remember that the tool can facilitate your writing but the words won't come from the tools without you inputting them.

The author also explained what the above mentioned apps pros and cons are. It may be worth taking a look at the full article for seeing more of the details written about each app and how the author incorporated the features of the products into her own writing.

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Handout #10 – “BLACK SHEEP, LOOSE NUTS, AND FAMILY SECRETS”

The following review and comments were created by me, Tony Kierna, based on my having read an article that was seen in the January/February 2015, Volume 19, Number 3 issue of Family Chronicle.

I thought that an interesting article in this issue is one titled “Black Sheep, Loose Nuts, and Family Secrets”. The author of the article is Bill Leslie.

It is not uncommon in our family history research efforts that we make discoveries of events in the lives of our ancestors that do not portray them in a very positive manner. These are often the life events that our family members that may know of such events but simply “don’t want to talk about it”. Your research may not have yet uncovered unflattering stories yet, but if you do your research long enough they will come up on your radar screen.

And the big question then is what do you do with such information? You yourself may be personally offended to the level that you will not even include the material in your research and will not even share it with other family members or collaborators. Each researcher is different in how they may view offensive discoveries or embarrassing life moments or even criminal behavior.

If you have documented a family tree that is widespread and deep, you run the risk of offending someone down the family tree while not offending someone close by in the family tree. Yet many others in your family tree enjoy making such discoveries or hearing about them because they show the “humanness” of our ancestors in not so good a light.

Don’t be surprised if when you share such not so good information about an ancestor that you may be met with anger, tears and even denial. You may find yourself in a dilemma working with other family members on your research. Some may find the material so offensive when informed that they may basically stop doing research and even stop helping you to further more research.

You could just leave the discovered information in your documentation and not let anyone else know about until your research is inherited. You could share it with others. You could include it in a publication or book. Or, you could simply destroy it as if it were never discovered.

The author provides good examples of what some of the discoveries are you could make that does not portray an ancestor in a positive manner:

- Your great-grandfather’s second marriage was without the benefit of a divorce from his first wife.
- Your grandmother described herself as a widow, but her divorced husband lived a few blocks away.

- Great-Grandpa had a little problem with the bottle, and spent more than few nights in jail.
- Your own mother might be uncomfortable discussing that she was arrested for possession of a controlled substance in 1968.
- Your father was born apparently just four months after his parents were married.
- An ancestor served time in prison for murder.
- Your great-aunt was married seven times, acquiring significant wealth with the death of each husband.
- Your mother had an abortion.
- Your grandparents were never married.
- An ancestor belonged to a radical organization.

So what do you do with such discoveries? The author suggested the following:

- Don't speculate. There is no point in offending someone with an issue based on inaccurate or incomplete information. Be sure of your facts.
- Start out a conversation with a general question, rather than with specifics about your discoveries. "Do you know where Grandma and Grandpa were living when they were divorced?"
- Before you approach a relative with possibly sensitive information, confidentially ask another relative that you trust how they think the information will be received.
- You are not a tabloid reporter and your grandfather probably is not a Hollywood star. Your obligation to respect the living is greater than your need to share sensitive information. Some information may just reside with you until the passing of someone that would be offended. Consider preserving the information but leave it for the next generation.
- You are under no obligation to share information that will offend someone. The fact that a relative was treated for mental illness may be interesting to you, but unless they choose to share this information, you should not, at least while they are alive.
- It's not your information. It's part of history. While it may not be appropriate for you to share everything that you know, it would be wrong for you to destroy the only evidence of an important fact in someone else's life.

Obviously, there are different degrees of bad and embarrassing information that you can discover on your ancestors. You may find one cited for a misdemeanor crime just like you can find someone convicted for murder. The author provides some great guidelines noted above on how to assess the situation. People react differently to different kinds of information. For you your discovery of something that is not too good on an ancestor may not impact you at all. For someone else related to that person, the discovery of such bad information may be devastating. Be sensitive before sharing any of the information. Check with other trusted collaborators in your research to get their opinion. But in the long run, facts are facts.

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