



## HANDOUTS TABLE OF CONTENTS

### June 13, 2017

<a href="#"><u>Handout Introduction</u></a> .....	Page 2
<a href="#"><u>Schaumburg Township District Library (STDL) Genealogy Blog</u></a> .....	Page 4
<a href="#"><u>Northwest Suburban Genealogy Society (NWSGS) Program for August 26, 2017</u></a> .....	Page 5
<a href="#"><u>DuPage County Genealogical Society (DCGS) Program for September 20, 2017</u></a> .....	Page 6
<a href="#"><u>Computer Assisted Genealogy Group of Northern Illinois (CAGGNI) Program for July 15, 2017</u></a> .....	Page 7
<a href="#"><u>Schaumburg Township District Library (STDL) July 11, 2017 Genealogy Program</u></a> .....	Page 8
<a href="#"><u>Genealogist Accused of Using Forged Documents in Heir Research</u></a> ...	Page 10
<a href="#"><u>Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps Now Online From Library of Congress</u></a> ...	Page 13
<a href="#"><u>Family Tree Maker 2017 Release Plans From MacKiev</u></a> .....	Page 16
<a href="#"><u>"10 Tips To Bust Through Family History Writer's Block"</u></a> .....	Page 19
<a href="#"><u>"Dave Obee Says DNA Research Is Great, But Don't Forget Your Roots"</u></a> .....	Page 22

## June 13, 2017 Schaumburg Township District Library Genealogy Program "Handouts"

Hi Everyone,

This document should be considered as the program "handouts" document for our June 13, 2017 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 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 “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 WILL BE ON AUGUST 26, 2017**

**THE SOCIETY WILL NOT BE MEETING DURING THE MONTHS OF JUNE AND JULY 2017. THEY WILL RE-GATHER AGAIN ON AUGUST 26, 2017 INSTEAD OF A SEPTEMBER PROGRAM THAT WOULD CONFLICT WITH LABOR DAY.**

The next meeting of the Northwest Suburban Genealogy Society will take place on Saturday morning, August 26, 2017. The program for the morning is titled **"To Be Determined"**. The speaker for the morning will be **To Be Determined**.

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 SEPTEMBER 20, 2017**

**THERE WILL BE NO MEETINGS OF THE DUPAGE COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY DURING THE MONTHS OF JUNE, JULY, AND AUGUST 2017.**

Please note that meetings that will take place for the society will occur between September 2017 through May 2018. **The September 2017 program will occur at the DuPage County Historical Museum located at 102 E. Wesley Street in Wheaton, IL.** The October 2017 through May 2018 programs are once again taking place at the Wheaton Public Library in the Lower Level. The address of the library is 225 N. Cross St. in Wheaton, IL. Please note the times for refreshments and the program. **Refreshments are offered at 6:30 PM. The meeting will start at 7 PM and last till no longer than 8:45 PM.**

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the DuPage County Genealogical Society will take place on Wednesday evening, September 20, 2017 between 7pm to 8:45pm. Refreshments are offered at 6:30pm. The program scheduled for that evening is **"To Be Determined"**. The speaker for the program will be **To Be Determined**.

You may visit the society's web page at:

[www.dcg.org](http://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 JULY 15, 2017 AT THE SCHAUMBURG TOWNSHIP DISTRICT LIBRARY**

The next regular meeting of CAGGNI will take place on Saturday morning, July 15, 2017 at the Schaumburg Township District Library, Schaumburg, IL between 10:30am to 12:30pm. The program scheduled for this day is "Are You Related to Someone Famous?". The speaker will be **Bob Allen**.

A really fun aspect of genealogy is identifying "famous people" who are related to you.

We will talk about initial steps; how to prepare to do your research; helpful websites like gene.com; famouskin and abcgenealogy; ways to explain your discoveries; and how being related to a famous person can lead you to other relatives.

We will learn about the genealogies of Davy Crockett, Harriet Beecher Stowe, John Adams, Tom Hanks, Laura Welch Bush, Ling John "Lackland" of England, Ann Boleyn and others.

Bob Allen received a BA in Political Science and a Masters of Business Administration (M.B.A.) from the University of Kansas.

He then graduated from the University of Texas Law School in Austin, Texas.

Now retired, he held executive positions with Container Corporation of America and Baxter Healthcare.

You may visit the organization web page at:

[www.CAGGNI.org](http://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 JULY 11, 2017**

Our next genealogy program will take place on Tuesday evening, July 11, 2017.

Our guest speaker for the evening will be Ginger Frere. Ginger will present a program titled "Using Timelines to Break Down Brick Walls".

Learn how to use timelines, simple and complex, to solve genealogical problems, analyze evidence, and determine avenues for further research.

Ginger Frere, MLIS, MBA, is a professional researcher who provides a variety of research services to authors, professional historians, film makers and individuals interested in genealogy. Her primary research interests include Chicago history and the creation of online tools for genealogists. She was one of the driving forces behind the development of [ChicagoAncestors.org](http://ChicagoAncestors.org).

In addition to researching, Ginger is a frequent speaker in the Chicago-land area and a regular instructor in Chicago's Newberry Library Adult Education seminar program. She is also a Newberry [Scholar-in-Residence](#).

Ginger has attended the [National Institute on Genealogical Research \(NIGR\)](#) as well as the [Samford Institute of Genealogy and Historical Research \(IGHR\)](#) and the [Genealogical Research Institute of Pittsburgh](#).

She is a member of the [Chicago Genealogical Society](#), the [Illinois State Genealogical Society](#), the [National Genealogical Society](#) and the [Association of Professional Genealogists](#).

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 and other libraries.

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## Handout #6 – GENEALOGIST WHO HELPS HEIRS OBTAIN FORTUNES IN ESTATE CASES ACCUSED OF USING FORGED DOCUMENTS

The following was found at Dick Eastman's Blog at [www.eogn.com](http://www.eogn.com) dated May 15, 2017.

Every year, millions of people die worldwide without making a will (called dying intestate), often leaving substantial cash and property estates which, if not claimed, goes to the state. Worth billions, this provides vast income opportunities for genealogists who trace missing beneficiaries to these valuable estates.



Heir tracing is the business of seeking living descendant relatives who often have lost touch with their distant kin and, in most cases, have no idea of their family link. Many professional genealogists also are heir hunters, also known as probate researchers. Heir hunters are the ones who start with the information of a wealthy deceased person and then find the previously-unknown relatives who stand to inherit the estate.

In return, the heir hunter charges a percentage of the inherited wealth, typically 30%, 40%, or more. For some, heir hunting has turned out to be a lucrative business, paying much, much more than traditional genealogy research. Vadim Tevelev is one such heir hunter.

Vadim Tevelev specializes in searching Eastern Europe for the long-lost relatives of people who died without wills in New York City and in other parts of the United States. Presently, he's working on behalf of a Russian-born New Jersey woman to win her part of an \$8 million fortune left behind by Isaac Kramer, a Crown Heights, Brooklyn, lawyer who died in 2008 at the age of 94. But several estate lawyers and genealogy experts have said that the family trees and genealogical records that Tevelev submits as proof of kinship are not always rooted in reality.

You can read the full story in a story by James Fanelli in the (New York) *Daily News* at: <http://nydn.us/2qj1ri3>.

### **Comments by Tony Kierna**

Maybe someday you will get that proverbial "knock" on the door. Facing you may be someone with legal background asking you if you are Mr. or Mrs. or Ms. "so and so". You say yes and then you are told that you are on the brink to inherit a \$2,000,000 estate that is coming from your 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin three times removed. What??? I don't even know who my 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin three times removed is and I don't even know what in the world is a 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin three times removed!

Welcome to the world of heir research (yes, it is heir and not hair!). Or it could be known as probate researching. In either case, a person dies intestate (without a will) and legal proceedings exist within a state to handle the disposition of property and assets for someone who dies without a will. A probate researcher may get involved at this time to determine who are the descendants of this deceased individual. Yes, there may be no direct descendants. Direct descendants would make the process easier. If there are no direct descendants then it gets a lot more complicated and could involve the discovery that the closest person entitled by state law for intestate situations is someone that does not even know the deceased existed.

Lesson one is that there is such a thing as a "heir" researcher otherwise known as a probate researcher.

Lesson two, where there could be money involved there can also be greed and criminality involved. And I mean large amounts of money from a huge intestate situation that is applied to the 30% to 40% fee charged by a probate researcher. And you thought 6% was outrageous on a real estate transaction selling your home through a realtor!! I had no idea that probate researchers charge that much of a percentage against the estate value. WOW!

Where you see such potential high amounts of money involved it does not surprise me that you may see individuals trying to get their hands on these sums of money using the skills they have as a genealogical researcher.

I strongly urge you to read the full story from the link above.

The bad lesson here is that your research can be done in an illegal way to make the story you want about an ancestor. It does not take too much to see how with digitization of records and help from those helping you falsify records you can make the dots connect the way you want them to so you can walk away with \$500,000 as your fee for finding a long lost distant relative who may not be entitled to any inheritance whatsoever thanks to the illegal forgeries done to prove a record trail.

So be cautious when you hear that knock on the door and someone tells you that you are about to receive an inheritance!

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## Handout #7 – SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAPS NOW ONLINE

*The following was found in Dick Eastman's Online Blog at [www.eogn.com](http://www.eogn.com) dated May 29, 2017.*

Many experienced genealogists can tell you that using the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps is a great way to learn more about the lives of your U.S. ancestors, especially if they owned their own homes or rented homes or their places of business.

The Library of Congress has placed online nearly 25,000 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, which depict the structure and use of buildings in U.S. cities and towns. Maps will be added monthly until 2020, for a total of approximately 500,000.



The online collection now features maps published prior to 1900. The states available include Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, Wisconsin and Wyoming. Alaska is also online, with maps published through the early 1960s. By 2020, all the states will be online, showing maps from the late 1880s through the early 1960s.

The Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps are a valuable resource for genealogists, historians, urban planners, teachers or anyone with a personal connection to a community, street or building. The maps depict more than 12,000 American towns and cities. They show the size, shape and construction materials of dwellings, commercial buildings, factories and other structures. They indicate both the names and width of streets, and show property boundaries and how individual buildings were used. House and block numbers are identified. They also show the location of water mains, fire alarm boxes and fire hydrants.

You can learn more in the Library of Congress web site at: <https://www.loc.gov/item/prn-17-074/?locId=fbloc-new>. The Sanborn Fire Maps that are already online may be found at: <https://www.loc.gov/collections/sanborn-maps/about-this-collection>.

### **Comments by Tony Kierna**

*This is really some great news for the Sanborn maps becoming available through the Library of Congress. Years ago, our library subscribed to a provider of these maps (Illinois only). Now it looks like this material will become available for free through the Library of Congress (LOC).*

The good news is that the data is available for many states. When I just looked, the state of Michigan was included in data availability with the highest number of maps to look at. The bad news is that there is no data currently being shown for Illinois based on what Dick Eastman is noting above. It looks like the LOC has a plan to complete making all the data available by 2020. It is possible Illinois data may not show up until as late as 2020.

The maps start in the 1880s and cover through the 1900s.

When you view the data from LOC, it is default presented to you in the order of states having the most maps in the LOC Sanborn database. These are the states having the most maps currently available to view:

- Michigan (542)
- Iowa (464)
- Wisconsin (405)
- Kentucky (221)
- Nebraska (210)
- Colorado (192)
- South Dakota (181)
- Vermont (141)
- Texas (117)
- Louisiana (107)

I will say that I don't like the default visual presentation of the list of the states having data because it then also incorporates the list of the counties having the highest number of maps but not identified by state! When you open up the state link you will then see a sub-list of those counties within the state in order of county having the highest number of maps. I just don't think that should be the default view. You can change it to alphabetical. When you do that view, it gives a view of the towns in alphabetical order. I would think you would want to see alphabetical order by state and then by county within state and then by town. Overall, it does seem confusing to target into the area you really want to look at. You may find the right county in the state of interest for you but you may discover that there might only be maps for one town in that county. So be prepared to discover that even though a state is present and a county is present for your interests that the town area of interest is not available at all or is not yet in the LOC data.

It is also very important to read through all of the guide information provided by LOC on how to use and interpret the maps you are looking at. The maps are color coded to describe certain things included in the maps. LOC provides a very nice "about this collection" description of the Sanborn material. YOU MUST LOOK AT THIS SECTION IN ORDER TO KNOW HOW TO INTERPRET THE MAPS. This section is a great learning tool to better understand the Sanborn maps even if you don't look at the maps. Once you read it and see what the process described, you may then want to take a look at a map just to see if you can locate an ancestor's property and how that property was described for insurance purposes.

This data is worth clicking on the link to gather some basic information on Sanborn maps. I just wish the presentation of the data was more intuitive and not so cluttered. You should be able to select a state, a county or a town. It just seems like a challenge to find or at least determine that there is either map information or no map information for a particular town of interest.

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## Handout #8 – FAMILY TREE MAKER 2017 RELEASE PLANS FROM MACKIEV

*The following was found in Dick Eastman's Online Blog at [www.eogn.com](http://www.eogn.com) dated May 24, 2017.*

MacKiev has been working feverishly on the new release of Family Tree Maker 2017. There have also been hints in the MacKiev status reports that the folks at Ancestry.com also have been burning the midnight oil on their end as well.

The details have not been released but apparently one big show stopper has been getting the Family Tree Maker 2017 software in both the Windows and Macintosh computers to synchronize properly with Ancestry.com's servers. Apparently, the problems are believed to be close to resolved. Beta test users reportedly have been performing updates for several days now.

If you are curious when the release will be finalized, keep an eye on the MacKiev.com status reports at <https://support.mackiev.com/498640-RELEASE-OF-FTM-2017>. Those status reports seem to be updated about every week or so.

### Comments by Tony Kierna

*For those of you that are planning to purchase Family Tree Maker (FTM) 2017 it is important that you connect with MacKiev, the developer of the product to see the status of developments for FTM. Apparently, there has not been recent communication from MacKiev and they apologize for that. Users of FTM were thinking that lack of communication was a sign of brewing trouble when in fact it is not as stated by MacKiev.*

*It is surprising and transparent on the level of detail information provided by MacKiev. I am not a user of Family Tree Maker, either currently or in the past. One of the comments mentioned in the June 4, 2017 update from MacKiev caught my eye. There is still a problem with processing 2% of those trees having 15,000 or more individuals. If your tree is under that amount, it is likely you should not experience any problems of bringing in and converting your existing FTM tree into the upcoming FTM 2017.*

*MacKiev also reported that during testing it was noted that syncing trees with Ancestry initially was taking very long times (over 1 hour). Progress has been made in testing that now shows that syncing time with Ancestry trees has been reduced to minutes in many cases.*

*The MacKiev update also noted they are working with 2,000 FTM beta testers. That is impressive to be able to get such varied family tree data that is spread out among these 2,000 testers.*

*You can obtain the following help from MacKiev to answer any questions you might have about all that is going on with FTM 2017 at the following:*

**QUESTIONS?**

Here're some places to go to get answers:

**LEARN MORE ABOUT FTM 2017**

- 1. Go to [support.familytreemaker.com](http://support.familytreemaker.com)
- 2. Enter "2017 FAQ" in the search field

**SEE WHAT'S NEW IN FTM 2017**

- 1. Go to [support.familytreemaker.com](http://support.familytreemaker.com)
- 2. Enter "2017 feature" in the search field

**READ ABOUT TEST DRIVE 2.0**

- 1. Go to [support.familytreemaker.com](http://support.familytreemaker.com)
- 2. Enter "Drive 2.0" in the search field

**START A LIVE CHAT**

- 1. Go to [support.familytreemaker.com](http://support.familytreemaker.com)
- 2. Enter "live chat" in the search field

**SIGN UP FOR THE MAILING LIST**

- 1. Go to [www.familytreemaker.com](http://www.familytreemaker.com)
- 2. Click the "Mailing List" link

**PRE-ORDER FTM 2017**

- 1. Sign up for the FTM Mailing List (see above)
- 2. Follow the link in the "welcome" email

There is no perfect world of lineage programs for data, especially of your lineage program is connected to the largest provider of genealogy data with Ancestry.com. This was a major change for Ancestry.com to cut loose Family Tree Maker from within its own product line. Luckily, they were able to get a buyer who has committed to supporting the product and creating new updated products. Unfortunately, it is a rocky road during the transition. The future looks brighter as these issues are corrected. The future may deliver an FTM 2017 product that connects with Ancestry.com and will make it seem as if such a major transition never occurred. You just wish you did not have to travel through such a challenging conversion to get to that end point.

Hang in there all of you Family Tree Maker users connected to Ancestry.com! There is light at the end of the tunnel.

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## Handout #9 – “10 TIPS TO BUST THROUGH FAMILY HISTORY’S WRITERS BLOCK”

The following review and comments were created by me, Tony Kierna, based on my having read an article that was seen in the May/June 2017, Volume 3, Number 2 issue of *Your Genealogy Today*.

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I thought that a good article in this issue is one titled “Ten Tips to Bust through Family History Writer’s Block”. The author of the article is Lisa A. Alzo.

The author provides a nice list of ten tips for the researcher that is actually writing the family history to consider when the words just are not flowing. The author has provided some suggested ways on how to break through writer’s block and get you going again.

Suggested methods to get past writer’s block:

- **Begin.** Don’t just sit staring at a blank page. Start something, anything. Try writing some notes, or an outline or a sentence. It does not have to be perfect.
- **Mind Map.** A mind map is a diagram used to represent words, ideas, tasks or other items linked to and arranged around a central key word or idea. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind\\_map](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind_map). “Mind maps are used to generate, visualize, structure, and classify ideas, and as genealogists, we can use them to solve our brick wall research problems or sketch out a family history.
- **Implement a writing schedule and stick to it.** Schedule some writing for yourself just like we schedule so many aspects of our lives. Take account of your own upbeat periods to schedule the time to coincide when you notice yourself being most creative e.g. early morning, late at night. Set a timer. Try to write for at least 15 minutes. Don’t edit. Just write. Consider the Pomodoro Technique at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pomodoro\\_Technique](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pomodoro_Technique). This technique uses a timer to break things down into intervals, traditionally at 25 minutes in length separated by short breaks.
- **Use writing prompts or exercises.** If you like to blog, there are many blogging prompts to use. Amy Johnson Crow’s *52 Ancestors in 52 Weeks* at [www.nostorytoosmall.com/52-ancestors-in-52-weeks](http://www.nostorytoosmall.com/52-ancestors-in-52-weeks) or the author’s own techniques *Fearless Females* series at [www.theaccidentalgenealogist.com/2016/02/fearless-females-blogging-prompts.html](http://www.theaccidentalgenealogist.com/2016/02/fearless-females-blogging-prompts.html). In other words follow some set defined topic of the day to do you writing. In blogging, you will often find a given day for “military writing” or another day for “census writing” during which you can write about your ancestor connected to the topic of the day.
- **Set deadlines.** A deadline might be able to get you going, especially if there is one that comes from outside of your own calendar. Maybe

you told your cousin you were going to provide them with a short biographical background of a shared ancestor. **Stick to the schedule and the words will flow.** Blog parties, such as those hosted at the *Little Bytes of Life Blog* at [www.littlebytesoflife.com](http://www.littlebytesoflife.com), can be great for this. Try signing up for the National Novel Writing Month at <http://nanowrimo.org>. **Or, set up a private blog yourself and schedule yourself to write a post every day or a certain minimum number per week.**

- **Pretend you're telling the story to a favorite aunt.** Put fun into the writing by thinking you are just telling a story to a favorite person. You will start with the most interesting and end by reinforcing the point you want to make. You can use technology to help you speak your story such as the *Livescribe* pen at [www.livescribe.com/en-us](http://www.livescribe.com/en-us) or voice recording the feature in *Evernote* at <http://evernote.com>. You can just use your smart phone and the built-in recording function.
- **Remember why you are writing.** Write what you know, but also write what you are passionate about. **Think about your original inspirations regarding the topic.** Is it about a heroic ancestor? Is it about a "black sheep" ancestor? Just jot down key words. Don't focus on the mechanics of writing.
- **Read.** Have some catch-up inspirational reading material to tap into. Picture that article as having come from your own writing abilities. **Re-read some of your own previously written material.** That may help you with your own current writer's block.
- **Utilize technology.** Think of apps for "brainstorming". Consider *JRNL* at <http://jrnl.com>. Consider *DayOne App* at <http://dayoneapp.com>. Consider a larger and powerful app such as *Scrivener* at [www.literatureandlatte.com/scrivener.php](http://www.literatureandlatte.com/scrivener.php). This app will cost you \$40 for PC and \$45 for Mac.
- **Take a hike.** Maybe your idea just needs time to develop. **Distract your mind by doing something else.** Maybe the distraction and the time will trigger a new idea for you to write about.

**The author provided some additional links to other tools.** She placed them under a category of "Practice Distraction-Free Writing". Those mentioned were:

- *BlindWrite* (free edit-lock tool) @ <http://blindwrite.herokuapp.com>
- *Earnest* (free edit-lock tool) @ [www.moreorless.co.uk/earnest](http://www.moreorless.co.uk/earnest)
- *FirstDraft* (works with Google Docs) @ <http://first-draft.en.softonic.com>
- *Ilys* (free web-based edit-lock tool with word count) @ <http://ilys.com>
- *Toma Timer* (for Google Chrome) @ <http://chrome.google.com/webstore>

Do you find yourself stuck with getting all of your researched written up in some fashion. Try some of the above techniques to see if you can break through your writer's block log jam to get the words flowing again.

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## Handout #10 – “DAVE OBEЕ SAYS DNA RESEARCH IS GREAT, BUT DON’T FORGET YOUR ROOTS”

*The following review and comments were created by me, Tony Kierna, based on my having read an article that was seen in the May/June 2017, Volume 3, Number 2 issue of Your Genealogy Today.*

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I thought that another good article in this issue is one titled “Dave Obee Says DNA Research is Great, But Don’t Forget Your Roots!”. The author of the article is Dave Obee. He writes a one-page article that is called “The Back Page” that appears in this journal. It is short and sweet and always informative.

Dave described how the genealogical community is turning more and more to DNA testing. But DNA testing should not become the way to research your entire family history. However, there are still overlaps between the two that can be very productive.

One of these research points is to consider having siblings and cousins tested for DNA and even parents if you are lucky to still have them alive. Just like in regular non-DNA research, it is always recommended to research the siblings when you are having a particular problem making discoveries on the sibling in the family that is your direct line ancestor. By researching the siblings, it could very well open the door to discoveries on your own direct line ancestor when all of your research has failed to do so. Your ancestor’s siblings may lead to documents and locations for you to research that you perhaps did not.

The author suggests the same process works for DNA. Intuitively, it might seem that DNA tests on siblings and cousins could not show more than what it does for you and your relationship to them. However, their genes are different than your own even though you share the same parents. DNA can and does combine differently on children born from the same parents. Otherwise, we would all be clones.

The author has had his siblings and cousins tested for DNA. His sister’s results actually provided 10% more matches in AncestryDNA than that of the author. Another sister who was DNA tested showed 40% more matches in the results from AncestryDNA. That means that their matches are different opening up the opportunity for connecting to even more cousins out there than if you were just using your own matches.

Another observation by the author notes that a parent’s DNA test will generally have even more matches than those from just you as the son or daughter.

Dave provided another example using mtDNA test he submitted that is intended for tracing his mother’s DNA. He did a close match to someone near him. What made the story more interesting was that the match he received was to someone that knew they were adopted but had no idea of their birth ancestry. The DNA results for this person did not help her identify anyone that was connected to her through DNA. However, Dave saw the opportunity to work the non-DNA research side of her research. With clues provided by his mtDNA match he was able to search online

databases and obtain some clues. One hour later he was able to discover within Facebook a woman in her 80s who was in fact her birth mother!

The lesson here is that DNA is a tool for researchers to use. He submitted an mtDNA test that matched him to someone close genetically. Yet that person, being adopted, did not know anything about her own birth information. One match to this person via mtDNA allowed him to do some old-fashioned research within databases using clues supplied by the matched person and in a short time he was able to make a dramatic find of this person's mother. I am sure all stories do not end in such a positive way. However using a DNA tool led to connections that led to basic non-DNA research that led to the discovery of a mother!

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