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June 12, 2018 Schaumburg Township District Library Genealogy Program "Handouts"

Hi Everyone,

This document should be considered as the program "handouts" document for our June 12, 2018 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 looking for the tab called “Services”, pull down for “genealogy”. This will take you to my genealogy page at the library. Scroll down a little and look for the bi-colored blue and black box. In the black part of the box is a hot link titled “Tony’s Genealogy Blog”. Click on the link for the blog title and you will get to my 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 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 11, 2018 (?)

THE SOCIETY WILL NOT BE MEETING DURING THE MONTHS OF JUNE AND JULY 2018. THEY WILL RE-GATHER AGAIN ON A STILL UNDETERMINED DAY POSSIBLY IN AUGUST 2018 (POSSIBLY AUGUST 11, 2018?) 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 11, 2018 (?). 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 19, 2018**

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.

THERE ARE NO PROGRAMS SCHEDULED DURING THE MONTHS OF JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST 2018

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the DuPage County Genealogical Society will take place on Wednesday evening, September 19, 2018 between 7:00pm to 8:30pm. 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.dcgs.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 21, 2018 AT THE SCHAUMBURG TOWNSHIP DISTRICT LIBRARY

The next regular meeting of CAGGNI will take place on Saturday morning, July 21, 2018 at the Schaumburg Township District Library between 10:30am to 12:30pm. The program scheduled for this day is "**Using Social History to Build An Ancestor's Story**". The speaker will be **Susan Mayer**.

What happened between the who, what and when of census data and birth, marriage and death certificates? Researching social history, the study of time and place of everyday people, lets you develop intriguing narratives that will transport readers back to the world your ancestor inhabited. Websites, archives and libraries for discovering a variety of social history themes will be discussed.

Susan Mayer holds a Master's Degree in Library and Information Science with a certificate in Special Collections from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. She is a full-time researcher, DAR member and presents classes on genealogy around the Midwest.

The CAGGNI group will be holding a special all-day conference on June 23, 2018 at the NIU Conference Center in Hoffman Estates at 5555 Trillium Drive from 8am to 4pm. All details of the all-day GeneaQuest Conference can be found at the society's website just below.

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 JULY 10, 2018

Our next genealogy program will take place on Tuesday evening, July 10, 2018.

The title of this program is "Why Am I Stuck?: 10 Solutions to Common Genealogical Brick Walls". The guest speaker for this program is Marsha Peterson-Maass.

Come early to review genealogical materials. At 7:45 p.m. guest presenter Marsha Peterson-Maass shares 10 solutions to common genealogical brick walls that most genealogists encounter, including search strategies, helpful record types, networking tips and more.

Marsha got her start in genealogy in high school when she entered a family history project in the State of Illinois History competition and tied for state champion. Her first formal training in genealogy was at The Newberry Library, Chicago, in a beginner's class that she now teaches. She is the author of the Fundamentals of Genealogy® textbook series, and today, along with teaching and lecturing on a wide range of topics, Marsha has a thriving forensic genealogy practice, called "Commercial DNA Analysis Services," where she analyzes people's commercial DNA test results.

Fundamentals of Genealogy®: The Most Helpful Tools You've Never Used and *Fundamentals of Genealogy®: Basics for Everyone* will be available for purchase for \$20 each (a 20% discount).

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 and other libraries.

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Handout #6 – GENEALOGY DNA CRACKED THE “GOLDEN STATE KILLER” CASE IN CALIFORNIA

The following was found at Dick Eastman’s Blog at www.eogn.com dated April 26, 2018.

[Dick Eastman](#) · [April 26, 2018](#) · [DNA](#) · [26 Comments](#)

According to officials, DNA from ancestry websites led to the arrest of the suspected “Golden State Killer,” Joseph James DeAngelo. Following the news, Ancestry websites 23andMe and Ancestry.com quickly released statements on the findings, saying mainly that they do not know if their services aided in the arrest of DeAngelo or not.

Investigators knew the killer only through a string of DNA recorded at several of the dozen murder scenes. A spokesman for the Sacramento County Sheriff’s Department said officials had struggled for years to figure out whom that DNA belonged to. Recently, they tapped genealogical databases that the public uses to search for relatives and ancestors.

You can read more and watch a video from KGO-TV about this news at: <http://abc7ne.ws/2HtOr2B> and a somewhat different view of the same story, including a different video, on the WSLs News web site at <http://bit.ly/2JuzVEI>.

Comments by Tony Kierna

OK. *You have heard me say over and over that it is important for you to understand the risks inherent in submitting your DNA for genealogical testing. My first thought related to that concern is that you may very well discover results that are not in line with your beliefs of who you think you are. But it can get more troublesome. You may uncover that results you see lead you to the belief that perhaps you do not show the same relationships between siblings if they have submitted DNA for testing. Yes, perhaps your DNA match to one sibling is not in the same manner as it to another sibling. This could lead you to the belief that perhaps another person, other than who you thought was a biological ancestor turns out not to be. In other words, maybe your father who you have known as your father is not your biological father and the same for your mother.*

News stories are ripe with these unsettling discoveries. Check out the story of Bill Griffeths, famous CNBC TV personality, who discovered his father is not his biological father. He has written an entire book about this discovery titled “The Stranger in My Genes”. Fascinating book. I read it in about 2 days.

Now, genealogical DNA offers another twist in discovering relationships. An unknown killer in California was recently discovered in California through police research of genealogical DNA present from the databases we all use when we submit our own DNA. Yes, it looks like the police submitted DNA evidence from this killer captured as evidence from crime scenes into the public DNA genealogy databases. To be honest, it does not sound clear to me through which DNA testing company the evidence was submitted. Both Ancestry DNA and 23andMe provided comments.

It does appear that matches were received within the databases (I do think the police submitted the results of their official test into GEDMatch to expand the potential matches overall). The matches they received empowered the police to contact the matches and try to see how the person was related to the DNA killer and then be able to identify who the potential killer was.

So, if you thought you were fearful of possibly discovering a different biological mother or father or half-sibling, add criminal concerns into the mix of what your DNA can be used for broader than just discovering new cousins with whom you share common ancestors. Maybe your DNA is connected to a long-lost 2nd or 3rd cousin that can allow the police to create a family tree and possibly select a suspect from the building of the family tree.

Welcome to the 21st century!

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Handout #7 – INTRODUCING THE HEALTH FAMILY TREE

The following was found in Dick Eastman's Online Blog at www.eogn.com dated May 8, 2018.

[Dick Eastman](#) · [May 8, 2018](#) · [DNA](#), [Online Sites](#) · [One Comment](#)

I am surprised that not all the genealogy and DNA web sites and genealogy programs do this. It certainly should be a major concern for every family. The following is an excerpt from a new entry in the MyHeritage Blog:

We are happy to release a new layer to your family history experience on MyHeritage: the Health Family Tree. This is a free feature, currently in beta mode and initially available to all MyHeritage users who have taken a MyHeritage DNA test or uploaded DNA data to MyHeritage, and who manage a family tree with at least 7 people in it. It will be made available later to many more users.



Overview

The Health Family Tree is a private and secure area on your MyHeritage family site, intended to help you document the health conditions of your close family members, both living and deceased, in one convenient place. You can then share this information (if you wish) as a printout. The motivation is simple: you'll be able to communicate to healthcare professionals more efficiently information about health conditions that run in your family.

The Health Family Tree is not intended to replace your genealogy family tree and it doesn't include functions for adding, editing or removing people. Instead, it is automatically created as a subset of your genealogical tree, and you can use it to conveniently annotate health conditions of your family members. The Health Family Tree is available only to family site managers. If you use it, nobody but you can see it, not even your own family members on your family site. In the future, we may provide options for you to share and collaborate on the Health Family Tree with other close family members that you select. If we do so, it will be opt-in so you will always be in full control of who can see the information. For now, the information remains for your eyes only. All information is stored securely.

You can read a lot more about this new offering, including instructions on how to access your Health Family Tree, in the *MyHeritage Blog* at:

<https://blog.myheritage.com/2018/05/introducing-the-health-family-tree>.

Comments by Tony Kierna

For years we have been aware that our genealogical research and the discovery of vital records related to the death of an individual can lead us to see if there is a pattern of similar deaths occurring for individuals over many generations. We may very well see a pattern of deaths from colon cancer or breast cancer (assuming cause of death is detailed documented). We as researchers then see this pattern that perhaps was not visible or understood during the times of the deaths of our ancestors.

We know that science has in fact identified genes that exist that are often used as warnings of future deaths due to the same disease. We may have those genes if in fact our father, grandfather, great-grandfather may have been identified as having passed away from a certain disease that is passed on from generation to generation.

We may even have been keeping track of this within our own family trees and have perhaps taken steps to be genetically tested to see if perhaps we have inherited such genes that often lead to specific illnesses.

Now MyHeritage has taken the next step to make available a new beta test of the Health Family Tree for those that have their data on MyHeritage as well as have done a DNA test through MyHeritage. It appears the Health Family Tree is available only to those site managers on MyHeritage. Currently, only site managers can see the data although MyHeritage is reviewing how that could change in the future opening up such results to more than just the site manager.

MyHeritage notes that this is an opt-in feature.

The link above to the blog post describing the development of this new offering is quite good and very detailed. Whether you have no data on MyHeritage or have not done a DNA test through them, I think it is well worth while reading the blog post to get an idea of what is developing. In the world of companies offering similar products to be competitive with each other, I am sure you can expect Ancestry DNA, Family Tree DNA and 23andMe to also develop such product enhancements, especially Ancestry DNA since it is so connected to the basic Ancestry genealogy product. Perhaps, Family Tree DNA and 23andMe would develop something similar coordinated with family tree data you would upload there.

This could potentially be a life-saving product development for a researcher to be able to more clearly see how deaths of ancestors may highlight conditions that run through the generations. Perhaps actions can be taken to test for confirmation of such potential illnesses before they actually occur via genetic assessments. The future may show even more genetic conditions for even more things that we die from. We know we can identify those today that may be more at risk for breast cancer or colon cancer through genetic testing. Many more illnesses leading to death could very well be identified in the future as more genetic discoveries are made to illnesses.

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Handout #8 – SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS ISSUED BY WOOLWORTHS IN THE PAST

The following was found in Dick Eastman's Online Blog at www.eogn.com dated May 16, 2018.

The most misused Social Security Number of all time was 078-05-1120. In 1938, wallet manufacturer the E. H. Ferree company in Lockport, New York decided to promote its product by showing how a Social Security card would fit into its wallets. A sample card, used for display purposes, was inserted in each wallet. Company Vice President and Treasurer Douglas Patterson thought it would be a clever idea to use the actual SSN of his secretary, Mrs. Hilda Schrader Whitcher.

The wallet was sold by Woolworth stores and other department stores all over the country. Even though the card was only half the size of a real card, was printed all in red, and had the word "specimen" written across the face, many purchasers of the wallet adopted the SSN as their own. In the peak year of 1943, 5,755 people were using Hilda's number. SSA acted to eliminate the problem by voiding the number and publicizing that it was incorrect to use it. (Mrs. Whitcher was given a new number.) However, the number continued to be used for many years. In all, over 40,000 people reported this as their SSN. As late as 1977, 12 people were found to still be using the SSN "issued by Woolworth."

The New York wallet manufacturer was not the only one to cause confusion about Social Security numbers. More than a dozen similar cases have occurred over the years. You can read more in the Social Security Administration's web site at: <https://www.ssa.gov/history/ssn/misused.html>.

Comments by Tony Kierna

Don't you just wonder how those in marketing back in 1938 came up with the idea to use an actual Social Security number to market a company's wallet? Probably through the belief in the basic innocence and honesty of the general population. Or as the story notes, let's just use Hilda's actual Social Security number!! Also, probably because a Social Security card/number in 1938 did not have the meaning/relationship it does today as identifying who we are. We have come a long way since 1938 in what a Social Security number means today versus in 1938 and all the damage that can be caused today when the number can be so misused with devastating consequences.

Imagine today, release a Social Security number and it will be gobbled up in our high-tech, social media age by not just 5,000 people but probably by 5 million people! It is funny, sad and troubling about this event all wrapped up into one.

The link to the article above does not add that much detail to the story over and above what is included in the Dick Eastman post. But even the FBI was checking things out with Hilda!

I think we are all living today with the fear that our Social Security number exists somewhere in the "dark" web just waiting to be sold to someone ready and willing to

misuse it and start our life down a path of hell of identity theft. And just think, all that has to happen today to cause chaos today is just hitting that famous "return" key on our keyboard!

If you have never heard of this story you are probably just scratching your head. But the damage that can be done today is immense compared even to the troubles that Hilda experienced over the years until her issued Social Security number was removed and a new one was assigned to her. Even Medicare has finally seen the light to protect us better by embarking on finally removing our Social Security card number from our Medicare account card. New cards will be issued to Medicare recipients between April 2018 and March 2019. The new cards will now give us some form of a cryptic account number with Medicare.

Woolworths, thank you for the story we are still hearing in 2018 about the fact that a real Social Security number was actually being included in the wallets that were being sold by Woolworth. Do you wonder what some genius marketing person may be thinking about today that can jeopardize your ID today through the misuse of some other identifier we use routinely. At least it won't be Hilda's Social Security Number again, or could it?

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Handout #9 – “STAIRWAYS TO HEAVEN: SEARCHING FOR THAT OLD TIME RELIGION”

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 2018, Volume 4, Number 2 issue of Your Genealogy Today.

I thought that a good article in this issue is one titled “Stairways to Heaven: Searching for That Old Time Religion”. The author of the article is Sue Lisk.

I know that for me using Roman Catholic Church records has enabled me to uncover an incredible amount of family history information on my ancestors. That was possible for me because in a current setting our family is Roman Catholic as was the previous generation and the previous and for me going back still seeing that my Polish ancestors were Roman Catholic back then.

What if you do not know the religious affiliation of an ancestral line you are researching? Well, you can always search for ancestors among Civil Records. And you may find them and now add on both a religious and civil amount of information to their lives. You may discover that for that particular locality Civil Records did not start being captured until 1910 and you know of your ancestors in that locality for a hundred years before. Civil records will not help you for that case because they in essence did not exist yet. Knowing a religious affiliation can lead you to the records of your ancestors because church records have been captured for hundreds of years. As an example for Roman Catholic Church Records, it was required that information on births, marriages and deaths be captured as early as 1530. Does not mean you will find any because the church itself was slow to come around to the requirement. It could have been 100 years or more before the practice of capturing this data started.

The author puts together a 5-step process to put into play that can help you discover a religious affiliation of an ancestor to gain more information.

The 5 items are:

- **View Vital Records**

- o Look for the death certificate and see if it mentions the location for burial that connects to a religious group e.g. Catholic, Jewish, Lutheran etc.
- o Even if a death certificate connects you a cemetery that is not obviously of a religious orientation, check out the gravesite itself. The headstone of the deceased may even have some religious iconography that can lead you to their religious affiliation.
- o The National Cemetery Administration under the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs approves specific emblems of belief on Government headstones and markers. You can see

some of these symbols that are currently available at www.cem.va.gov/hmm/emblems.asp.

- **Study Censuses**

- Census takers may have made mistakes. In communities where most people belonged to a particular faith, the enumerator may have marked down this affiliation for the first of many and then dittoed the rest in order. Was not always true but it could give an idea of a religious affiliation to check further.
- As areas were developed in the U.S., perhaps an ancestor's religious affiliation was unable to be met by clerics of that faith. However, their religious needs might have been fulfilled by clerics of other faiths e.g. Lutheran needs may have been fulfilled by a Methodist circuit rider of the times.
- Check local histories of census areas for how they evolved over generations as to religious beliefs. Schaumburg, IL started out with a large majority of Germans. One of the earliest churches of Schaumburg was St. Peter's Lutheran Church. Maybe an ancestor of yours was a German Lutheran??
- Trace the religion of a spouse prior to marriage. It was not that uncommon that once a marriage took place, the spouse may have converted to the religion of the other spouse.

- **Peruse the Press**

- Check out the newspapers for your ancestors
 - Find obituaries that often indicated where a church service prior to burial was to occur. Perhaps the church name is not indicative of a specified religion. Check the local history for the area that may note who the church served.
 - An obituary may also mention a minister's name. Perhaps it is not clear of the religious affiliation of that minister. Use the newspapers to search for his name in other articles that may contain their religious affiliation.
 - Find an article that describes a wedding of an ancestor. A church may be mentioned where the wedding took place as well as a religious figure that presided over the wedding. The religion may represent that of the spouse and not that of your ancestor.
 - Maybe a newspaper article describes a church picnic in which an ancestor is mentioned. Perhaps that is the religion of your ancestor.

- **Rummage Through Religious Objects**

- Your family may have accumulated many religious articles over many years that can lead you to draw an inference to a religious affiliation.
 - Prayer cards are common for Christian associations.

- Crucifix connects to Roman Catholic
- Rosaries are connected to Roman Catholics
- Mass cards indicate Roman Catholic connections
- Yarmulkes are associated with the Jewish faith
- Copy of the Torah is associated with the Jewish religion
- A bible could connect you with either Protestant or Catholic

• **Pore Over Personal Documents and Photos**

- A letter might include congratulations on a Confirmation (could be Catholic or Protestant)
- A letter might describe a Bar Mitzvah which is Jewish
- Wedding photos might have pictures of churches that are described on the back of the photo helping you determine a religious affiliation
- Perhaps you will discover actual baptism, confirmation or marriage certificates associated with the religious affiliation

Discovering a religious, affiliation can open up so many more types of records to hunt for within the records of that affiliation. If you do not know the affiliation, follow the above tips creatively to see if you can determine it. Good luck on your quest.

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Handout #10 – “DNA: LIFE AFTER DEATH”

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 2018, Volume 4, Number 2 issue of Your Genealogy Today.

I thought that another interesting article in this issue is one titled “DNA: Life After Death”. The author of this article is Judy G. Russell who is known as the “Legal Genealogist” through the blog that she writes on legal matters as they relate to genealogy. For many of us today we have submitted our DNA to a variety of companies for DNA testing. We may have also been able to encourage many of our family and those even older than us to submit their DNA. The older of a family member you have that can submit DNA can give you connections to even deeper family DNA connections.

Many of you may have older family members that have been very helpful with your genealogical research. Perhaps they went along with your request for them to have their DNA tested. Consider yourself lucky. That does not always happen.

This article brings up an interesting twist to getting your even older family members tested with their DNA. Unfortunately, it comes after they have passed away. Yes, it is not too late to have your more elderly connections tested for DNA.

The author of the article states that even after death there is still an opportunity to capture DNA for testing from an elderly deceased relation. If you have “legal” authority or permission from the family member who has legal authority you can actually make it a reality for a DNA test from a recently deceased individual. The author notes that one DNA testing company, Family Tree DNA will accept post-mortem DNA swab samples. The key here is that you cannot capture “spit” but the procedure must be a swab from the deceased individual’s cheek area just as if it would come from a living person.

So if you think you have the possibility of testing someone elderly that is near death and for whom you have legal authority or have it obtained permission from someone who does, then the author suggests you prepare in the following manner:

- **Buy a Test**

- Even if you do not have time to get a test kit from Family Tree DNA, contact the company and get the test kit ordered.

- **Get the Supplies You Will Need To Get the DNA Sample**

- If time allows, get the test kit shipped overnight.
- If there is no time to wait for material from Family Tree DNA, see if a local pharmacy sells a test kit that uses swabs (not a kit that uses tubes for saliva).
- Ask the funeral home if it provides sample collection as a service. (A friend recently told me that the family was asked by the funeral home director if they wanted materials collected

from the deceased for a DNA test. It would have been very expensive and it did not appear to be for a cheek swab but rather for a blood test for DNA.)

- o If all else fails purchase a pair of cotton swabs (Q-tips?) and find a small paper bag. It is necessary that the swabs that would be used must be stored in a paper bag, not a plastic bag.

• **Collect the Sample**

- o All that is needed is rubbing one swab firmly on the inside of each cheek for at least 60 seconds.
- o If you are uncomfortable doing this, ask the funeral director.
- o If the funeral director balks for legal reasons, make sure you have signed permission from the next of kin or perhaps you are the legal representative of the person.

• **Send the Sample to the Lab**

- o If you collected from the test kit provided by Family Tree DNA, follow the directions for putting the swabs into the containment vessels.
- o If you used a cotton swab not supplied from the testing company, let the swab air dry and place in a paper bag to send to the testing company.
- o Make sure you tell the company the sample is a post-mortem sample because the lab handles these differently than from a live donor.

The author encourages us all to get these important samples while our loved one is alive. As I mentioned earlier, not always possible. So this article truly describes "Plan B" when you are the legal representative or have permission from the legal representative.

There is a very nice article online from the author in her "Legal Genealogist" blog that addresses this very issue. Here is a link to this article:

<http://www.legalgenealogist.com/2013/06/30/dna-life-after-death/>

I think this may be a routine process in the future through funeral homes as long as science deems that swabs produce accurate DNA results after death. I had my own DNA tested through Family Tree DNA and was unaware they had kits for those already deceased. You learn something new every day, which is why I wanted to share with you this article.

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