



"The palest ink is better than the best memory."
--- Chinese Proverb

"To look backward for a while is to refresh the eye, to restore it,
and to render it the more fit for its prime function of looking
forward."
--- Margaret Fairless Barber

Volume 24, Issue 3

Oct., 2004

Want to see your name in
print? Submissions welcomed
and will be used eventually.
The Editor

FAMILY HISTORY COMPASS:

"VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE--AND FAMILY HISTORY,"

by Juliana Smith

Last week I bought a small container of fresh blueberries at the store on a whim. My daughter loved them and ate the whole thing. I had an urge to go buy out the whole selection of blueberries from the grocery store. Like in many families, it can be a battle to get my daughter to eat healthy foods. But I also realize that she can't subsist solely on blueberries.

We need variety--in our diets and in our family history. Our family story can't rely entirely on one record. Fortunately a growing number of choices are becoming readily available, and in today's "Family History Compass" I'd like to share a couple examples that can help you spice up your family's story.

BODIES ON THE MOVE

Last month I visited the Family History Library (FHL). While I was there I used a lot of familiar records, and I also made some time to look at some previously unexplored collections that related to areas where my ancestors lived.

One example of this was Manhattan bodies in transit, 1859-1894" (FHL #1671686)--a list of bodies that passed through the city en route to burial. There is a good description of these records on page 41 of "Hidden Sources: Family History in Unlikely Places." One of the examples from this collection is Abraham Lincoln as his funeral train passed through New York City on 24 April 1865.

I was looking for Kellys since we had found several interments in a family plot in Calvary Cemetery that all carried the same date. Exploring the possibility that these

bodies had been moved to Calvary from some other cemetery on that date, these records might help us locate more information.

The body-transit records, in this case, included the name of the deceased, the date of the record, their residence (which for this period was in some cases listed as a Civil War Regiment), the place the body was to be interred, who was in charge of the body, and the date of death. This set of records is arranged by date, although records for other areas may vary.

Check the Family History Library Catalog or with local archives and repositories to see if such transit records are available for your area of interest. I did a quick title search in the FHL Catalog for the word "transit" and got 18 hits, most of which were for burial-

transit or body-transit records. A Google search for "burial transit" also turned up a number of hits, including one for the website of Washington State's Secretary of State, which includes a database of "McNeil Island Burial Transit Permits, 1944-1961" (http://www.secstate.wa.gov/history/search_intro.aspx?r=113).

STATE CENSUSES

With easy access to U.S. Federal Censuses through the Census Collection at Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com/rd/census.htm>), researchers may forget about state censuses. State censuses can fill in the gaps left for those in-

between years and, in some cases, can provide information not found on federal enumerations.

I looked at the 1855 New York state census for Kings County and found that the census lists each family member by name, age, gender, relationship to head of household, place of birth, how many years in this city, and naturalization status.

Even if we have found our family in the 1850 and 1860 censuses and know where they were in between, the 1855 New York state census include several items we have been missing. Relationship to the head of household is not available in federal censuses until

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Annual Dues: \$10 Singles; \$12 Family. Membership period is March 1st to April 30th. Those with **UNPAID DUES (after April 30th.)** will not receive the Newsletter. **Send a SASE to receive a current membership card if you do not attend regular meetings.**

Contributions of neatly typed or written stories, requests for/ or giving information, queries, or other information of importance to the membership are welcomed.

The Society disclaims responsibility for statement of fact or opinion made by contributors and will not accept material with obvious errors.

MAKE A COPY OF ENTIRE CEMETERY LISTINGS WHEN POSSIBLE

If you've found your ancestors in a cemetery listing and the cemetery isn't too large, make a copy of the entire listing. As your research progresses you'll be amazed at how many of those other surnames turn out to be linked to your family. It's well worth the extra time, especially if you found that precious data on a visit to a library far from home.

Even if you found it online, save it or print it--you never know when you're going to encounter the dreaded "page not found."

Leslie Nelson
 Toronto, Ontario

The Mesa County Genealogical Society was established in 1980 as a non-profit organization to promote an interest in genealogy. A Newsletter is published in March, June, September, and December. **Note: All Society meetings are held at the Museum of Western Colorado 7:00 p. m., on the second Thursday of each month.** Visitors are welcome. The Museum is located at 4th and Ute. The

November 2004

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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28	29	30				

December 2004

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January 2005

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meetings are held in the conference room located in the

Ways to Celebrate Family History Month!

—George G. Morgan

We're moving into autumn again, a fabulous time of year. The oppressive heat and humidity of summer has begun to ease up. The days are shortening, the evenings are getting cooler, and, in many places in North America, the fall foliage colors can be glimpsed. Autumn also brings genealogists in the United States the opportunity to celebrate October as Family History Month.

Even if you live outside the United States, why not join the celebration. "What can I do to celebrate Family History Month?" Well, in this week's "Along Those Lines...", let me offer you a few ways you can enjoy and celebrate your family history and share it with other members of your family.

Prepare an Old Family Recipe

You probably have a favorite family recipe that you loved when you were growing up. Even if you don't have your mother's or grandmother's handwritten recipe book or card file, you probably remember many of the ingredients you watched being lovingly added to the concoction. Why not visit your library or local bookstore, to browse the cookbooks to find a comparable recipe with all (or most) of the ingredients you remember?

You also can search the thousands of recipe websites on the Internet to locate a terrific recipe. If the recipes you find are missing the "secret ingredient," try a search for the recipe title and the name of that ingredient. Maybe someone else was in on the secret!

Once you have the recipe, why not prepare the recipe for your family and friends. Give them a wonderful memory of a delicious family recipe. Oh, and by the way, why not create recipe cards--as decorative as you like with a drawing, a piece of clipart, or a photograph--and share your recipe with your family for future generations.

Review, Label, and Share Photos

You've put it off far too long, you know. Family History Month is a great time to sit down with other family members to share stories. Photographs evoke memories of time, place, and experience. Why not get a group together, pass the pictures, share the stories, and, while you're at it, label these treasures at long last?

Make sure you're using acid-free storage albums or boxes and labeling the paper photos

with archival-safe pencils or markers. Don't forget the digital photos you have. Devise a labeling system or index with file name and description. Burn the pictures (and an index) to a CD or purchase one of several photo-album software programs. Don't you wish your parents and other family members had labeled all those photos?

Start Journaling

What enduring legacy do you want to leave to your descendants? What do you want them to know of your life and your thoughts? Bound journals with blank or lined pages are available at bookstores, office supply stores, and from retailers on the Internet. Why not buy one and make a commitment to fill at least one page with your thoughts. Your journal will be a prompt to you in years to come to "remember" what you've done, experienced, and felt today, and it will be a beacon of insight to your descendants and their families.

Prepare for Your Winter Research

I've been watching the squirrels outside my office window the last few weeks. They are scampering about and they seem to be getting ready for winter. I recently shopped at my nearby office supply and discount stores and found that they still have some of their back-to-school merchandise I can use with my genealogy. Overstocks in binders and file folders, plastic coated paper clips, and some other items were marked down in price.

Don't overlook a new desk, chair, file cabinet, or new lighting fixtures for your work area. Watch the newspaper ads for office supply and home improvement stores. Don't overlook thrift shops for items you can repaint or refinish! Your goal is to prepare for those deep winter days when you can become immersed in your family research.

Host a Family Cookout

While it seems I must have food on the brain today, I will share with you the joy I had as a kid of a family barbecue on a crisp autumn day. Ham-

burgers, hot dogs, steaks, chicken, shrimp, sausage, roasted ears of corn, potatoes, and other vegetables are all tasty treats that can be prepared on the barbecue grill. Why not toast marshmallows over the hot coals as well? I have a special memory of roasting marshmallows, dipping them in chocolate syrup, and rolling them in chopped pecans. As a diabetic, I can't consider that treat for myself anymore but, boy, wouldn't the kids (and adults) in your family love this delicacy? Yummmmmmm!

Celebrate!

If you're like me, you savor every opportunity to search for more family information. Let this October be a true Family History Month for you and CELEBRATE!

Happy Hunting!

George

Visit George's Website at ahaseminars.com/atl for information about speaking engagements.

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DOUBLE-CHECK PAGE NUMBERS

As a follow-up to George Morgan's column about citations I've learned that it's a good idea, when working with micro-filmed documents, to check the page numbers of adjacent pages to make sure that you are citing the correct page number. On more than one occasion, I've gone back to the page I have in my citation, only to discover that I didn't have the correct page number.

In each of these cases, it turns out that I had misread the number on the microfilm. Once I found the correct page (sometimes after considerable work), I still would have cited the number that I originally had. It was only after checking adjacent pages that I convinced myself what the correct page number really was. This has happened both with handwritten documents, such as census forms, and printed material, such as city directories.

David Inman

Beyond the Index: "A 1930 CENSUS PROJECT FOR KIDS,"

by Michael John Neill

My daughter had to do a family tree display for her 4-H project. Tired of run of the mill family trees and pedigree charts, we decided not to create a display of the names of 4,000 relatives. We chose to concentrate on eight ancestors instead of 1,024. Her project (or was it mine?) would focus on locating her eight great-grandparents in the 1930 census. The specific nature of our project would allow us to dig a little deeper and include information other than just names and dates in our project.

We could do more than simply list each great-grandparent's age. After all, the 1930 census provides significantly more insight into a family's life than the mere age of each household member. The desired individuals had already been located in the 1930 census, so her actual searching would not be too difficult.

LET THE CHILD SEARCH

Allowing the child to make the finds themselves is part of the work and part of the fun. It also gives the child some confidence in the process. My daughter was going to perform the searches herself and print out the located census entry for each relative.

However, her tolerance for difficult-to-locate ancestors would be short, so I gave her some guidance when conducting her searches.

Before my daughter searched the census, I searched for each entry and made notes as to what search strategy was most effective for each ancestor. This way my daughter's searching would not take an inordinate amount of time and neither of us would run out of patience

before the project had even begun. Age-appropriate comments about handwriting and spelling errors were made when necessary and when applicable to the search at hand.

KIDS NEED ORGANIZATION TOO

I created a sheet for each ancestor, so my daughter could abstract specific census information as each entry was located. The form asked a few simple questions that served several purposes.

Some questions revolved around the location of the census entry, state, county, town (or township), address (if given), district, and page number. These questions served two purposes: One was to assist us later in the geographic aspect of our project. The other was to make a point about keeping track of where we find things.

Our discussion about documentation and citation was not lengthy, but specific and to the point. For our purposes, it was sufficient to say that the census was taken in books based on where people lived. If we kept track of where the entry was located we could easily find it again without having to search all over again.

The remaining questions revolved around the census entry itself and included the name, age, place of birth, and occupation (if applicable) of the located individual. We also noted whether the family had a radio. (Note: The form we used can be downloaded here: <http://www.rootdig.com/1930kids/>)

PICTURE THE LOCATION

Maps were an integral part of our project. Visualizing where family members lived is an important analytical tool for genealogists, regardless of age. Our eight relatives were spread out over the northern half of Illinois and were living in the following locations:

- Bear Creek, Prairie, and St. Albans Townships in Hancock County, Illinois
- Keene Township in Adams County, Illinois.
- 1528 4th Ave., Rock Island, Illinois
- 1207 19th St., Rock Island, Illinois
- 542 Forest Ave., Glen Ellyn, Illinois
- 221 E 115th St., Chicago, Illinois

We started with a map of the state of Illinois. Our families have not moved too much in the last seventy-five years. Others may need to start with a map of the United States or of the entire world.

While the state map provided a nice overview of our locations, we realized that it did not show adequate detail and decided to also include maps more narrow in scope so that the precise locations could be shown.

For the rural ancestors, we printed out township maps of the counties involved and indicated on those maps who was living in what township. We were fortunate that the county USGenWeb site (<http://www.usgenweb.org>) and searches on Google (<http://www.google.com>) easily located township maps for the counties involved.

For those urban dwellers, we used

(Continued on page 7)

IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUESTED-- LEGISLATION IN CONGRESS SEEKS TO RESTRICT ACCESS TO BIRTH RECORDS;

The U.S. House of Representatives is considering a bill, House Resolution 10 (H.R. 10), which seeks to restrict access to birth certificates. This bill, which purpose is to respond to the threat of terrorism, is on a fast track to passage and has been voted on by several committees already. Your help is needed now.

David Rencher, Chairman of the Record Access and Preservation Committee, a joint committee of the National Genealogical Society and Federation of Genealogical Societies, has sent a letter to the bill's sponsor, Congressman Dennis Hastert, recommending an amendment to the bill as follows:

"However, nothing in this Chapter 2 shall be construed to require a State to change its law with respect to public access to (A) non-certified copies of birth certificates, or to (B) birth certificates or birth records once a period of 100 years has elapsed from the date of creation of the certificate or record."

A copy of the letter is available on the FGS site at: <http://www.fgs.org/rpa/formalactions.htm> (see editor's

note)

To view this bill, go to: <http://thomas.loc.gov> Enter HR 10 in the search box for "Bill Number."

ACTION IS NEEDED NOW

Because this bill is moving toward passage so quickly, it is urged that the genealogical community take action immediately and let their representatives know that they are in support of David Rencher's amendment and the FGS position in this important matter. To find your state representative's contact information, go to: <http://www.house.gov/writerep/>

HOW SHOULD I WORD MY LETTER?

While you should word the letter in any way that is comfortable for you, it is recommended that you include the following as a portion of the letter:

"While I support the intention to increase security to protect the U.S. from terrorists and those who wish to improperly take U.S. identities, I am concerned that those researching their family's history continue to have access to non-certified birth records.

Therefore, in order to support HR-10 I ask that you amend HR-10 Section 3063(d)(2) by adding the following wording to the existing paragraph:

'However, nothing in this Chapter 2 shall be construed to require a State to change its law with respect to public access to (A) non-certified copies of birth certificates or to (B) birth certificates or birth records once a period of 100 years has elapsed from the date of creation of the certificate or record.'

I believe that this additional language is imperative so that the states do not react by restricting all certificates to comply with the law, rather than dealing with certified as opposed to non-certified birth certificates. This proposed amendatory language would remind them that they can and should be treated differently."

Editor's note: we have provided a copy of the letter mentioned above, on page 6 of this newsletter.

FORGOTTEN MEMORIES REMEMBERED

Never underestimate the memories of an older relative. When I first began my family history research, I asked my mother's half-brother if he knew anything about the orphanage to which my mother had been sent. He said he did not. Eventually I found the name of the orphanage somewhere else and learned that the orphanage no longer exists.

Fast-forward two years to when I visited my uncle a few months ago. His daughter drove us around in search of houses in which the family had lived. At first, my uncle didn't recognize any of them because his mother had lived there before he was born. When we came to a street he did remember, he announced that the house for which we were

looking was long gone, but he insisted that we take a turn and then another turn. When the driver asked "Why?" my uncle explained, "That's where the orphanage was."

Now, I didn't even remember telling him the name of the orphanage but being in the neighborhood had brought his memories flooding back.

And, while it was true that the church-run orphanage was no longer there, the orphanage's chapel and the associated church were still there for me to see. I highly recommend taking an older relative along for a tour of the old neighborhood!

Louise

Record Preservation and Access Committee

Federation of Genealogical Societies and
The National Genealogical Society
5 October 2004

Congressman J. Dennis Hastert
235 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515-1314

Re: Formal Statement of Support if Amended to HR10

Dear Congressman Hastert,

Speaking for the genealogical community that includes millions of people throughout the United States, we commend the intent and efforts by Congress to prevent the abuse of identity theft in a post-9/11 world. While we recognize the need to protect the privacy of individuals, we are seeking a balanced solution with this resolution that will protect the privacy goals you desire and allow appropriate access to the family history information that the genealogical community desires. Please consider amending this resolution to include the following:

HR-10 Section 3063(d)(2) by adding the following wording to the existing paragraph:

“However, nothing in this Chapter 2 shall be construed to require a State to change its law with respect to public access to (A) non-certified copies of birth certificates, or to (B) birth certificates or birth records once a period of 100 years has elapsed from the date of creation of the certificate or record.”

We believe that this additional language will assist states in complying with the law without jeopardizing the legitimate use of these historical records for the preservation of a family's history and still provide the security the nation needs to prohibit the misuse of certified copies of birth records.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,
David E. Rencher
Chair, Record Preservation and Access Committee

P.O. Box 200940
Austin, TX 78720-0940
(801) 240-3997
Fgs-access@fgs.org

"A 1930 CENSUS PROJECT FOR KIDS,"

(Continued from page 4)

Mapquest (<http://www.mapquest.com>) to print out street maps showing the location of each address. Before this was done, I made certain that there had been no street renamings or house renumberings since 1930 (these determinations can be made by visiting the appropriate county or city USGenWeb page or posting the question to the county or city mailing list via <http://lists.rootsweb.com>).

CAN WE HAVE MORE DETAIL FOR THOSE RURAL PEOPLE?

After mapping out the specific urban addresses, my daughter wondered why we were not as precise with the other four ancestors (the ones living on farms whose residences are only given down to the township

level). I told her that in the 1930 census, street addresses were not usually given for rural dwellers as knowing their precise residence would require additional work. We would have to use other records besides the census (such as plat maps, deeds, and other records). In our case, I knew where the four rural ancestors lived, so we could mark the locations more precisely. (Note: Those whose ancestors were renters or tenant farmers will have more difficulty pinpointing the location if it is not known what farm or house the family rented.)

WHAT ABOUT OTHER MIGRATIONS?

An additional project might have been to map out the family's migration from 1930 until the present. My own families all ended up in central Hancock County, Illinois, where I was born. My wife's families ended up in Rock Island County, Illinois, where she was born. A map showing as many moves as possible would have been a nice visual addition to this project or even a separate project in and of itself.

WHAT WERE THEY DOING IN 1930?

Three of our people were too young to have a job in 1930. For those that were employed, we listed their employment:

- Farm laborer on a farm, working for father
- Servant on a farm, working for a neighbor
- Pinsetter in a bowling alley
- Worker for sewer department
- Clerk in a drugstore

While in our report we simply listed the occupation, we could have learned more about these jobs and written brief descriptions (or even included clip art depicting the work if possible). Some jobs are fairly self-explanatory. Some are not. We had a difficult time reading the "pinsetter" occupation on the actual census, and it was difficult for one of us to imagine a time when people, instead of machines, actually set the pins back up!

DID THEY HAVE A RADIO?

Half of our families had radios and half did not. From eight families it is hard to extract any general tendencies, although for my side of the project (the rural side) the only family with a radio was one that was "better set" than the other three. On my wife's side (the city side) the only family without a radio was the one that most likely had the greatest difficulty making ends meet (not that any of them were well-heeled). We concluded that in our families it appeared that rural families were less likely to have radios. However, we made the point that eight households out of millions is NOT a representative sample. (We even snuck in a few statistics, too!)

There were several things we did as a

part of this project:

- Performed searches, providing us with time to discuss spelling (and sounds) and handwriting (especially sloppy handwriting).
- Cited our sources, discussing the importance of knowing where we obtained information and why sometimes we need to be able to go back to it again.
- Used maps to visualize where people lived and determine their relative proximity to each other.
- Discussed the differences in occupations between our rural and city dwellers.

We (rather, I) tried to avoid making this a project of the parent. It was necessary for the author to remember that this presentation was not for a speech at a genealogy conference. However, all the discussion and preparation caused me to think of some things I had not noticed when locating these entries a few years ago. If there's a school activity or assignment where this type of project might be appropriate, consider doing it with your child, grandchild, niece, or nephew. You might learn just as much as they do during the process

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"Ancestry Daily News"
(<http://www.ancestry.com/dailynews>)

VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE

(Continued from page 1)

1880. The 1890 U.S. Federal Census was the first to ask about naturalization status and most of that enumeration is gone. The 1900 census was the first to ask how long an immigrant had resided in the United States. No publicly available U.S. federal enumeration asks how long a resident has been in a particular city.

The biggest hang-up with searching state censuses is the lack of indexes, but even this problem is being overcome as new indexes are created. Ancestry.com has a number of indexes of state-census available (<http://www.ancestry.com/rd/census.htm>). There are other indexes being created by individuals and organizations, such as the ongoing effort at the Kansas State Historical Society website for 1895 (<http://www.kshs.org/genealogists/census/kansas/census1895ks.htm>).

A table of state censuses by state is available in "Finding Answers in U.S. Census Records" on pages 84-85. "Red Book: American State, County, and Town Sources," which has been newly revised, also includes information on what state and territorial censuses were taken for each state. Check out Paula Stuart Warren's article on state censuses for more information (<http://www.ancestry.com/rd/prodredir.asp?sourceid=851&key=A889901>).

EARLY NATURALIZATIONS

While naturalization records might seem obvious, because early naturalizations typically don't contain a lot of valuable information (as opposed to more recent naturalization records), I was tempted to overlook them. We found my 3rd great-grandfather's brother, Peter C. Tobin, in the New York Petitions for Naturalization (<http://www.ancestry.com/rd/prodredir.asp?sourceid=831&key=D7733>), which is part of the Immigration Collection at Ancestry.com and since the record would be relatively easy to locate, I decided to cover all bases. The database links to an image of the index card with fields for first name and surname, date of naturalization, address, occupation, birth date or age, former nationality, port of arrival, and date of arrival and witness name(s). (In many cases some of the fields are blank though.) But the card also gives the location of the original record. In this case the naturalizations were filed in the Common Please Court, New York County, bundle 69. Using this information, I was able to locate the correct microfilm in the Family History Library Catalog and quickly found the record.

As luck would have it, the record didn't give me any more information than what was included in the card on the database, but I did get copies of what appear to be his signature and that of his witness, one William B. Tobin. The handwriting styles are different enough to tell that more than one

person signed the document. In some cases, you may find the handwriting and "signatures" are all the same throughout the document, and it was likely filled out and signed entirely by the clerk. Now I just need to figure out who the heck William is and how he's related!

But despite not finding anything really significant this time, if I find any other family members in this index, I will still continue to seek out the full naturalization records. As I was browsing through, I noted varying degrees of information, some with much more than I found, and some records even have supporting documentation that was filmed as well. Maybe next time I'll have better luck.

JUST THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG

These are just a few records that I had previously overlooked but dug up in the one day I had at the Family History Library. There is so much more out there beyond these examples--cemetery records, burial permits, land and property records, probates, tax records, military records, and church records to name a few. If you've been procrastinating the investigation of a particular record because you're not sure it will pay off, give it a shot. Even where I only found a signature, the records I found add diversity, interest, and depth to my family history, and, in one instance, what I found may hold the key to one of my brick walls. In each case, I'm glad I went the extra mile to explore them and bring a little variety to my family history.

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"Ancestry Daily News"
(<http://www.ancestry.com/dailynews>)

"ANOTHER COLD-CALLING SUCCESS STORY"

I was looking for my great-aunt who was a half-sister to my grandmother. When I couldn't locate her under either her maiden or married name, I started looking for the names and telephone of her half-brothers and half-sisters on her mother's side of the family and hit pay dirt.

I was very nervous when I called the number, but, as a result of the call, I found out that my great-aunt was left a house near to mine by a half-brother on her mother's side, and we made plans to meet there when she came to town again.

I was able to meet someone that I hadn't known existed for 41 years, and let her meet her great-great-niece and nephew (which just thrilled her). I also started to close the big black hole that was there on that side of my family.

Now my great-aunt and I keep in touch all the time and are great friends.

Kathy Sill

Genealogical Standards

GUIDELINES FOR GENEALOGICAL SELF-IMPROVEMENT AND GROWTH

Recommended by the National Genealogical Society

Faced with ever-growing expectations for genealogical accuracy and reliability, family historians concerned with improving their abilities will on a regular basis—

- study comprehensive texts and narrower-focus articles and recordings covering genealogical methods in general and the historical background and sources available for areas of particular research interest, or to which their research findings have led them.
- interact with other genealogists and historians in person or electronically, mentoring or learning as appropriate to their relative experience levels, and through the shared experience contributing to the genealogical growth of all concerned.
- subscribe to and read regularly at least two genealogical journals that list a number of contributing or consulting editors, or editorial board or committee members, and that require their authors to respond to a critical review of each article before it is published.
- participate in workshops, discussion groups, institutes, conferences and other structured learning opportunities whenever possible.
- recognize their limitations, undertaking research in new areas or using new technology only after they master any additional knowledge and skill needed and understand how to apply it to the new subject matter or technology.
- analyze critically at least quarterly the reported research findings of another family historian, for whatever lessons may be gleaned through the process.
- join and participate actively in genealogical societies covering countries, localities and topics where they have research interests, as well as the localities where they reside, increasing the resources available both to themselves and to future researchers.
- review recently published basic texts to renew their understanding of genealogical fundamentals as currently expressed and applied.
- examine and revise their own earlier research in the light of what they have learned through self-improvement activities, as a means for applying their new-found knowledge and for improving the quality of their work-product.

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Committees / Standards

My First Digital Research Trip

— Juliana Smith

This year for our anniversary, my husband and I decided to take the plunge and buy a digital camera. I was thrilled with this addition to my genealogical arsenal. (Although if my husband asks, it's for family photos. Shhh!) I've found that digital cameras really bring out the photographer in me. Those of you who already own one have probably caught yourself taking shots of things you normally might not. It really gives you a sense of freedom that way.

I probably wouldn't normally take a picture of a house spider, but one night out on my back porch, a large house spider spinning its web caught my eye. With a traditional camera, a) we would have probably taken one picture and hoped for the best, and b) I would have thought, "Do I really want to pay to develop a picture of Mrs. Spidey?" and possibly skipped the photo entirely. With the digital camera, we experimented with various settings, discarded the photos that didn't turn out, and ended up with a neat picture of her (or him—despite the close-up, we couldn't really tell). We have the picture stored electronically, so if we want to we can print her out for Halloween or a school science project and it's added to our "nature collection" of photos. (I've also had some fun out in the garden.)

Last week, we talked a little about the rush planning I did for a recent trip to Utah and the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. This was my first research trip accompanied by a digital camera, and I was excited to be able to capture images of records as I viewed them. I spent most of my time at the library looking at microfilms and started taking notes in a notebook, as I usually do. When I ran across a state census record for a potential family member, I decided it was time to give

this new tool a try.

Other than the Mrs. Spidey, I didn't have much experience with taking photos in the dark. It took me a few minutes to find a setting that allowed me to get a good shot. At this point I was grateful that we had spent a little more on a larger viewing screen so that I could get a decent look at the image I was capturing. The screen also allows me to zoom in on the shots I have taken, so I could get a closer look to make sure that the writing or print was readable.

Because the setting I chose required a slower shutter speed, I had to be extra steady, and at first I ended up retaking photos several times before finally figuring out that I could steady my hand on the top of the microfilm reader while photographing the screen below. This was really cool! I could take pictures of entire pages, and, zooming in, I was still able to read all but the tiniest of print. I felt that same freedom at the library. Documents I might have jotted a brief note about or not recorded at all, instead got photographed because it was so easy.

At first I was taking copious notes, transcribing each record that went with pictures. After a while (as my hand began to cramp up and I could almost hear the clock ticking as my time in the library was running out), I began to take some shortcuts. But I kept imagining myself at home looking at photos and beating myself on the head as I tried to figure out what each photo represented.

To avoid this, I found myself recording the sources of the photos in varieties of ways. In today's "Family History Compass," I thought I'd share some of the things that worked for me (and some that didn't work as well) as I embarked on my first digi-

tal research trip.

Notes in the Notebook

As I mentioned, the first method of documenting the subject of each photo was in my notebook. Not completely trusting in the powers of the digital camera, I wanted to be completely certain that I had complete transcriptions of everything. And, for the majority of the day, I kept to it. I included identifiers like page numbers or certificate numbers so that by looking at the notes and the photos, I could easily pick out the source.

Advantage: Very orderly (when I could read my writing); I still had all the information for photos that didn't turn out perfectly; I could add observations about the record condition or reasons why I was photographing it; complete source information was included.

Disadvantage: Time consuming and some serious writer's cramp.

Photos of Cover Pages

As I started taking more pictures, I began thinking ahead and filming the introductory pages to the film with the descriptions of the record group. When I was working with books or city directories, I photographed the cover page containing all the publication information. I noted the film number and each directory name in my notebook and then photographed the subsequent entries immediately following this cover page.

In some cases, I made my own cover pages, writing a description of the film and in one case I even photographed the film box with the number showing just below the description.

Advantage: Much quicker. I was able to get several pages of Kelly

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Digital Research Trip

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listings in city directories in about a minute, where I had previously only recorded those with the same name as my ancestors because it would have taken too long to record them all. Also, going through several years in succession, it was a pain to keep going back and forth to the microfilm printers.

Disadvantage: Easy to mix up, particularly when it came time to e-mail the photos from the laptop, where I had downloaded them, to my office computer. (More on how I got around this later.)

The Miracle of Post-it Notes

As time grew short, I began writing film numbers and other identifying information on post-it notes that I stuck on the viewing surface in margins and below records. I photographed the records with this tag so it could be readily identified just by viewing the photograph.

Advantage: Didn't have to worry about mismatching notes or source photos

Disadvantage: I only had darker colored post-it notes. I ended up using strips of paper, but they didn't sit as flat. Lighter-colored post-it notes would have worked better, and I'll make sure to bring them on upcoming trips.

Still Need Notes

With both of the latter solutions, I still jotted down some notes in my notebook, mainly the film number, a quick description of the records, and the condition they were in. For example, one roll of 1870 death records I had gone through contained a section where the writing was very faint, to the point of being nearly invisible. Naturally this was a section in which the person I was looking for would have most likely have been, so I made a note of that fact, rather than just noting that I didn't find her. There's a big

difference between not being able to locate someone in a record group and them not being in the record group.

Sorting the Aftermath

I downloaded the photographs as a group in the order in which they were taken, and the program we loaded them into numbered them as such. This was very helpful.

When I e-mailed them to my office computer and saved them to my hard drive, I kept the same names to make sure that I had captured all of them and that their order could be preserved until I could match them up with the notes I had taken. For the instances where I had taken a cover photo, this also kept them in sequence.

I started a spreadsheet to record basic information on each image, and the images and spreadsheet are all in one folder in my hard drive. These images will be burned on a CD and preserved "as is" before I begin any editing to enhance the images. This way if I mess anything up in the editing process, I won't lose the photo.

In the spreadsheet, I've included the photo number, surname, given name (individual or head of household), record description and year, FHL film number, and whether or not I transcribed that record in my notes. I'm also including the notes I referenced earlier on the quality of the film, etc.

This spreadsheet not only serves as a directory to the original photos, but also as a research log of the work I did that day. As I transcribe the notes into the computer for those records that I didn't take pictures of, I will add those films as well to make the log complete and share it with my mother so that she won't duplicate my efforts when she visits the FHL next.

My next steps will be editing the photos to make them more printer-friendly and saving them with

more descriptive names. Then I'll add to our family history database those that I know apply to my ancestors.

What I'd Do Better Next Time

- Do a little more experimenting and read the instruction manual more thoroughly so that I'm more familiar with the settings and don't have to spend as much time experimenting when I should be researching. My experience with Mrs. Spidey helped a bit, as the techniques we used to capture her ended up being similar to those I used to photograph images on the microfilm reader, but I know I still have much to learn about digital photography.

- Put it all together sooner. Family emergencies this week kept me from putting my research finds together when I first got home, but I typically try to do this as soon as possible. That way as I put the information together, it is still fresh in my memory and I run less risk of mistake.

- I won't be so stingy with pictures. This was easier than I had anticipated, and the photographs allowed me to fit much more research into my busy day.

Juliana Smith is the editor of the *Ancestry Daily News* and author of *The Ancestry Family Historian's Address Book*. She has written for *Ancestry Magazine* and *Genealogical Computing*. Juliana can be reached by e-mail at ADNeditor@ancestry.com, but she regrets that she is unable to assist with personal research.

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USING DIGITAL CAMERAS

"My First Digital Research Trip" by Juliana Smith brings to light just how valuable a digital camera can be for genealogy.

I'd like to add yet another use for digital cameras as a genealogy tool.

Getting together with elders in the family has taken me into their homes where they keep treasured heirlooms and vintage photographs. Often times these visits are out of state. It's not always feasible to borrow the items--most often the owner doesn't want the item to

leave their home. That's where a digital camera can be your best friend.

I always ask if it's okay if I photograph the item, document, or picture. The ability to take pictures of pictures is an excellent reason to have a digital camera. I've found that the photographing works best if you're able to put the item near a window with natural light and use no flash. View the image right away to know if you need to take another.

Recently I spent hours with a distant aunt who allowed me to photograph several family letters from the mid to late 1800s, a brooch from the civil war, city directory pages, delicate antique garments, and many, many vintage

photographs and tin types. I would have never been able to remember all these items had I not been able to digitally record them. (Oh, a little tip--take a picture of the back of photographs as well, if they're written on. This way you don't have to try and remember the names of the pictured individuals.)

Now, no matter what happens to those items or whom they're passed on to, I have a visual digital record of them for future generations to enjoy.

Sherri Camperchioli
Ohio