

Presentation on What's New In Genealogy in the Past Five Years.

January, 2013

What's happened in genealogy in the past five or six years:

1. The Google Books project has developed scanners that can accurately scan books without flattening them. They have massive scanning centers in the Philippines and are attempting to scan and OCR all of the world's books. OCR techniques have improved dramatically.
2. LDS has finished its cross-indexing of all the 10 year federal censuses, expanded its view of a "Mission" and dispatched hundreds of missionaries to computerize foreign records. Probably using Google's technology, they have scanned and OCR'd over 40,000 family history books.
3. Ancestry.com (2 m subscribers) has developed and applied new rules of association that enable the computer to assist you in finding people.
4. Ancestry.com opened up a World Family Tree section that enables people to upload their family trees and applies their new search techniques and sourcing connections to these trees. You can communicate anonymously with the owner of a file.
5. The 1940 U. S. Census has been released and indexed (free access).
6. Many new records have been added, eg WWI Draft Registration Cards
7. Ancestry.com has opened a new site called newspapers.com which will be developing rapidly.

FOWTC genealogy group

Wednesday, 1/16/08, 1:30

Notes for "Why Now" presentation:

Rescuing family files

Fading photos and documents

Elders may not be around

Fading memories

New information on the Internet

People connections - You can contribute

New computer programs

Enable to distribute information & photos

DNA

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Getting started in genealogy - Jim Pearce - November, 2007

1. There is probably someone in your family who has already done some of the groundwork for your project. Find out who it is and try and get copies of their work. Also, look for relatives who might have old family photos, bibles, family history books, etc.
2. Start with yourself and build a family tree of known ancestors with their vital information. See how far back you can go. Don't worry about uncles and aunts and cousins at first unless their information is easy to come by.
3. Interview (talk to) the family elders and document their memories before they're gone. Try to develop "primary source" information from their memories.
4. Organize and document your work from the start. If you casually collect information you may soon find yourself hopefully mired in piles of paper with hundreds of relatives.

5. Source everything. If you don't, you'll reach a stage when you can't remember where you got a piece of information, and you'll have to go back and figure it out all over again.
6. If you're going to use a computer, get started with the software immediately so you don't have to punch in a lot later on.
7. Make use of online computer resources. Thousands of individuals have put up their family trees online and those files can save you hours of time.
8. Be aware of pitfalls in collecting family information:
 - a. Memories and second hand information is useful but often unreliable. Always try and obtain primary source documentation.
 - b. On-line family histories often contain errors, and these errors are multiplied by each person that copies a file and redistributes it.
 - c. Family history books are like on-line files and often contain erroneous material. Always try and obtain primary documentation.
 - d. Do NOT use commercial genealogy mills that promise your coat of arms and suggest you are related to someone famous (often Napoleon or Ghengis Kahn). They only take your surname and find some Earl or Duke who had the same last name. Your true relatives were probably farmers.
 - e. Be aware about individual privacy issues. Many people are sensitive about their personal information and may not release it without some assurances that you won't publish it. Do NOT collect social security numbers or other information that may be used in identity theft.

Resources for genealogy research, January, 2013.

There are hundreds (thousands?) of genealogy sources both on-line and in person. Below is a basic startup list:

Libraries with family history sections

California State Library – California Room
<http://www.library.ca.gov/>
California historical materials.
Side room (microfilm) has extensive collection of California
Newspapers (obits), City directories, Tax records,
and other listings. Located on second floor at 10th
and N Streets. Online catalogue at <http://www.library.ca.gov/>

Sutro Genealogy Library (Cal State Library genealogy branch)

<http://www.library.ca.gov/>
Extensive collection of genealogy books on US
organized by surname or location. Located at
480 Winston Drive, San Francisco just behind the
Stonestown Shopping Mall. Catalogue online at
<http://www.library.ca.gov/>

Church of Latter Day Saints Genealogy Library
<http://www.familyhistorycenter.info>
Variety of family and regional materials.
Probably free computer access to all of Ancestry.com.
Located at 2745 Eastern Ave, just south of Marconi.

Sacramento Genealogy Society Library
<http://www.rootcellar.org/library.html>
Variety of family and regional materials. Located
on the fourth floor of the California State Archives, 1020 "O" Street, Sacramento

On-line databases

Worldconnect
<http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/>
Family trees submitted by users, millions of names, much
undocumented information, e-mail addresses

Ancestry.com*
<http://www.ancestry.com/search/>
Probably most comprehensive genealogy search site, best
source of census data (mostly subscription)

Church of Latter Day Saints research site

<https://familysearch.org/>

Some individual information submitted by members, much undocumented.

Over 20,000 family history books on-line and word-searchable.

Google Books

<http://books.google.com>

Extensive set of online books, all word-searchable, some readable

Gencircles

<http://www.gencircles.com/>

Not as much info as Ancestry.com, but different material

Vitalsearch*

<http://www.vitalsearch-ca.com/>

I've only used the California vital records, but they have the only complete index to California births, deaths and marriages.

Google and other search engines

www.google.com

There are many personal websites with genealogy information. Try searching for variations of a name in quotes, eg.

"James E. Pearce", "James Pearce", "Pearce, James"

"J. Pearce", etc.

County volunteer genealogy websites:

GenWeb

<http://www.usgenweb.org/>

Hit and miss genealogy organization structured around county volunteers. Sometimes a real gold mine if volunteers are active.

Extensive message boards on locations and surnames:

<http://boards.ancestry.com/?binfo=indexcolumn&rc=locale%7E&us=0>

<http://www.familyhistory.com/>

<http://genforum.genealogy.com>

Genealogy Societies

<http://www.calgensoc.org/>

General References

<http://www.cyndislist.com/>

<http://www.genealogytoolbox.com/>

* Some free materials, but much is subject to subscription fee