

Linking Generations: Enhance Your Research through Networking

Request the companion resources:

1. Copy of PowerPoint presentation
2. 40-plus page ready reference. The resource will provide a quick reference to many aspects of networking with other genealogists.

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Request: Boise Spring 2009

Course Description: Learn important sources for making connections with other genealogists to share information and ask for help. Sources include societies, emailing lists, message boards and more.

Network to Expand Your Research Networking

- Making contact with others who share similar interests—can speed your research progress
 - Have a research question? Try networking
 - At a crossroads and not sure in which direction to turn? Try networking
 - Need someone to talk to about your successes or frustrations? Try networking
- Networking can
 - Take place online
 - By correspondence
 - In person
- Can include
 - Society membership
 - Classroom participation
 - Workshop or national conference attendance

1. How do I know with whom or how to network?

- The more information you have about your ancestor
 - The more ideas you will have on who might be able to help you
- Write down or list the different "groups" your ancestors fit into
 - Classifying your ancestors by
 - Ethnic group
 - Fraternal or religious association
 - Residence locale (local, county and state)
 - Gender,
 - Occupation

- Military service
- Time frame or era
- Social class
- And any other classification

2. Who can help me?

- The following is beginning of those who can help you
- Family
- Local, regional and state libraries
- Local regional, and state museums
- University library and archives
- Genealogy Societies
- Historical Societies
- Message boards
- Mailing lists
- Social networks
- Blogs

3. What kind of help do individuals and groups provide?

3a. Email

- E-mailing is a quick, inexpensive, and effective means to communicate
 - Email with attached documents and photographs
- A brief and polite email to a potential, newfound, or well-known relative is often the beginning of a wonderful exchange
- When communicating via e-mail, traditional courtesies should be observed

3b. Mailing list

- A mailing list is simply an e-mail party line
- Every message that a list subscriber sends to the list is distributed to all other list subscribers
- Subscribing to a mailing list is one of the best ways of connecting to people who share your interests
- Genealogy-related mailing lists can cover
 - Surnames
 - U.S. counties and states
 - Other countries and regions
 - Ethnic groups
 - Other topics
- Many websites host mailing lists, including
 - RootsWeb.com
 - Ancestry.com
 - Genealogy.com

3c. Message board

- There are message boards focusing on
 - Surnames
 - Localities

- Many other topics
- By posting a message to the appropriate message board
- You create a record through which other researchers can find you
- You'll find message boards on
 - Ancestry.com
 - RootsWeb.com
 - Genealogy.com

3d. Digital stick notes

- Some websites allow you to add "digital sticky notes"
- Post-em is the electronic equivalent of a yellow sticky note
- It allows you to attach your
 - e-mail address
 - A link to another website address
 - Other information to the record of any individual
- Search for your ancestors and leave your calling card attached to their names
- On RootsWeb.com, these notes are called "Post-em Notes"
- You can add them to
 - The Social Security Death Index (SSDI)
 - The WorldConnect Project
 - Other databases
- On Ancestry.com these notes are called "Comments and Corrections."
- Use these to add to
 - An individual's record alternate names
 - Other comments about the person
 - Both viewable by other researchers
- On the Ellis Island website www.ellisland.com you can add annotations to individual records
- All of these additions to records are
 - Viewable by other researchers
 - Could potentially help in your research
 - Connect you with other researchers
- Search for your ancestors and leave your calling card attached to their names

3e. Family tree databases

- Online family tree databases can help you locate others interested in the surnames you are researching
- These resources include
 - Pedigree Resource File on FamilySearch.org
 - Ancestry World Tree on Ancestry.com
 - WorldConnect on RootsWeb.com
- You can initiate contact by e-mail
- A number of online services also allow you to locate living individuals who may have family information to share.

3f. Repositories/Libraries

- There are many libraries, archives, and societies that have excellent and well-known collections of genealogical research materials.

- Several of these repositories, particularly the smaller ones, maintain lists of researchers and the local area families they are researching

The LDS Family History Library (FHL) www.familysearch.org

- of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- Salt Lake City, Utah
- The most widely known repository of genealogical materials
- The FHL has been acquiring and preserving genealogical data since its founding in 1894
- The library has collected vital information on hundreds of millions of deceased individuals.
- This data includes print and microform copies of records from all over the world
- Are made available at the library in Salt Lake City and at Family History Centers throughout the United States and in many foreign countries
- Many of the records described in The Source have been microfilmed and a good portion are indexed and accessible by visit to the library or a family history center
- A catalog of FHL sources is available online www.familysearch.org

3g. Societies

- Hundreds of genealogical and historical societies across the country seek to preserve records and provide instruction to family historians
- Family historians are usually willing to
 - Share findings
 - Exchange ideas and research experience
- There is a vast system of societies
 - Working to preserve records
 - Make records available
 - Promote educational opportunities
 - Participation in society activities
- Societies provide
 - Educational opportunities
 - Instructional articles published in their periodicals
 - Local skill-building sessions
 - One- or two-day seminars featuring nationally-known professionals
- Individuals at the societies know
 - What records are available?
 - How you can access them those records
 - What information is online, in books, in folders?
 - Experience of members and other genealogists
 - Where information is located if they don't have it
 - Who to talk to if they don't know the answer
 - Leads to others who may be researching your surname
 - History of the immigrants
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- Many groups form at the county level because of the research significance of local area records Organizations also exist to study a single surname or the descendants of a particular couple

- Ethnic or religious origins account for many such groups, such as the
 - Polish Genealogical Society of America and
 - P.O.I.N.T.— Pursuing Our Italian Names Together
- Other societies bring together researchers with common locales of origin, for example
 - The Palatines to America a
 - Germans from Russia
- Virtually all states have a state genealogical society, a state council, or both
- In addition to major projects, a state-level group might coordinate the efforts of local societies within the state
- Their publications (newsletters and journals) supplement those produced by local societies
- Some state organizations, such as the Ohio Genealogical Society, offer chapter membership throughout the country
- Other state organizations operate on a less-structured basis
- At the national level, a number of organizations serve individual genealogists or societies
 - The Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) www.fgs.org
 - Umbrella organization for genealogical and historical societies and research institutes such as libraries and archives
- The National Genealogical Society (NGS) www.ngsgenealogy.org
 - Comprised of individual researchers
- The oldest society in the United States is the New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS) www.nehgs.org

3h. Volunteer Efforts

- Societies undertake valuable projects to benefit the genealogical community
 - Indexing and preservation activities
 - Produce periodicals and other publications
- There are also efforts by family historians working independently of societies
- The availability of online indexes and databases are often the work of these volunteers, as are some national ventures to provide access to local records
- The USGenWeb Project at www.usgenweb.org
- Volunteer-driven site that publishes
 - Historical information
 - Resource material such as
 - Cemetery indexes
 - Newspaper abstracts
- The sites they maintain often provide important
 - Local detail about an area's history, geography, and settlement
 - Overview of record availability
 - Access and research tips

3i. Professional Groups

- Family historians interact with professional genealogists in several ways
- Professionals
 - Write articles and books
 - Present lectures that provide new information
 - Give examples of methodologies to help in difficult research situations
- Professionals often lead efforts to protect records in jeopardy and to make them available for wide use

- Many (but not all) professionals conduct research on a contract basis for others and can assist a family historian with a quest that seems impossible
- The research that professionals do ranges from an entire lineage to small but significant tasks in their field of expertise
- In the United States, there are several groups that serve the interests of professional genealogists and their clients, as well as those of the genealogical community.

4. Genealogy Social Networking Sites

- An online community
 - Created as a place for individuals with common interests
 - To build new relationships
- These online services provide simple tools to generate collaborative opportunities for
 - Finding
 - Sharing
 - Interacting with like-minded people
- Social networking websites use networking technologies like
 - Wikis
 - RSS
 - Mapping
- Online family tree building to help people connect with family members and other researchers

With the "new" web 2.0 and its features

- More and more companies are creating their own versions of websites
- Most of the sites are free
 - That means you'll have to put up with a few ads that display on the web pages as you build your tree and view it, but they're not too intrusive
- Researchers can share their research and ask others to help them build their family tree
- New genealogy social networking websites allow you to view your family tree as you build it on line
 - The older websites let you upload a family tree (gedcom file) to the website and then when it's opened, you can see the family tree
 - Most of the websites allow you to upload a gedcom file to build your family tree.
 - Some allow you to give visitors the ability to download a gedcom file from your website

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