

Getting the Most from Free Genealogical Web Sites

Everyone will have different sites that they find most useful - these are mine!

FAMILY SEARCH <www.familysearch.org>

Website of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (a.k.a. LDS or Mormon)

See handout for next talk

ROOTSWEB <www.rootsweb.com>

Oldest and largest free genealogy website. [began about 1988]; partially funded by Ancestry.com

Help for Beginners: Guide to Tracing Family Trees; Getting Started at RootsWeb; Ancestry Tour

Search Engines and Databases

Rootsweb surname list - simple but effective - almost 20 years old

US Town / County Database - find what county a town is in, link to the GenWeb site for that county

World Connect - best place I've found to post family data online. Submit via GedCom, set options for who to include, how much can be downloaded, how to treat living folks, etc. Also stores all your data, so you can retrieve it if you lose your computer files. Password protected. Fairly easy to use

Mailing Lists – You get copies of postings via Email

Message Boards – You go to site to look at postings

Both have archives to look up earlier postings; Both have surnames, localities, topics, etc.

CYNDI'S LIST <www.cyndislist.com>

Where to go when you don't know where to go!

Links to 254,500+ genealogy websites – by category; 180+ categories

Everything from A (Acadian) to W (Weights & Measures)

Each link has lists of other links and related topics i.e. The Jewish link has links to 552 other sites

US GENWEB <www.usgenweb.com>

WORLDGENWEB <www.worldgenweb.org/> For the rest of the world!

Links to sites for every state/county

– Manned by volunteers so websites vary in usefulness

– Generally has history of locale

– Links to resources for that locale

– Place to post queries about the locale

– Often has lookup volunteers

ANCESTRY.COM <www.ancestry.com>

Often end up here without planning to...beware the “fill in boxes” on many genealogy sites

Available through Orange, Seminole & Winter Park Libraries. Some content available at local Family History Centers; Must be used on site – no remote access

Some areas of Ancestry are free but require registration to use -

American Biographical Library; WWI Civilian Draft Registrations

Ancestry World Tree; 1940 census

For a listing of free databases see <www.genealogysearch.org/ancestry/freeancestry.html> or <www.searchforancestors.com/ancestryfreebies.html>

Contains vast amounts of information

– US Census – all years, indexed and searchable – linked to scanned images

– Passenger lists – index & images; Historical Books / Newspapers; Databases of all types

– Much more

HERITAGE QUEST Free in some cases

Available at FHC and through most local libraries with remote (from home) access through library

Images for all census years. Most census years searchable only by head of household. Easier to read & save than Ancestry

PERSI (PERiodical Source Index) - Index to genealogical periodicals
Revolutionary War Pension & Bounty-Land Files
20,000 Local & Family Histories - Digital images, searchable

To use Ancestry or Heritage Quest through local libraries:

Orange County <www.ocls.info>; “virtual library”; “online databases”; “genealogy”
Winter Park <www.wtpl.org>; “electronic resources”; “databases”
Seminole County: <www.seminolecountyfl.gov/lis/library>; “reference resources”; “genealogy”

SEARCH ENGINES

Genealogy Search Engines

Mocavo <www.mocavo.com> - upload tree, it will search for matches. Some parts free.

Genealogy In Time <www.genealogyintime.com>

Search engine for genealogy / family trees - good newsletter

General Search Engines - Not specific to genealogy, but very useful

Google <www.google.com>

General search, images, translations, addresses, maps, etc.

Use “quotes” to keep words together in search “Orlando Florida”

For surname searches, use family name genealogy or family name ”family history”; ~before word expands to include synonyms. [~genealogy includes family history, family, history, etc.]

To limit finds, use “-“ [i.e. Stockton-golf-basketball – to get Stockton without sports figures]

To get a map, simply type the address into the Google search box

Lots of other searches - maps, images, books, newspaper archives, translations

Switchboard - <www.switchboard.com> - names, addresses, phone numbers, reverse phone directory; **Yellow Pages** <YP.com> - online yellow pages

Mapquest - <www.mapquest.com> - find addresses, directions, etc.

also **Yahoo Maps** <<http://maps.yahoo.com/>> or **Google**

VitalRec <www.vitalrec.com> - how to obtain vital records, county addresses, costs, etc.

STEVE MORSE 1-step web searches <<http://stevemorse.org>>

Makes searching other sites much easier

- Ellis Island / Castle Garden - Passenger lists; Other ports of entry
- Birthdays; Census; Addresses; **much more**

IMMIGRATION

Ellis Island <<http://www.ellisland.org>> 1892-1945

Castle Garden <<http://www.castlegarden.org>> 1820 through 1892

Use Steve Morse site for easier searches

Other ports available through Ancestry.com; FamilySearch.org; others

GOVERNMENT SITES

Library of Congress <loc.gov> Has historic newspapers, much more.

National Archives - <<http://aad.archives.gov/aad>> World War II Enlistment Records; Casualties; Civilians; Military Personnel; Passenger Lists; Prisoners of War

Civil War Soldiers & Sailors System - <www.itd.nps.gov/cwss> Information on those who served in the Civil War

Bureau of Land Management - <www.glorerecords.blm.gov> Land Office records - patents, surveys

MEMORY PAGES

Most states and many localities have “memory” pages - sometime with other names. Do a Google search to find them. Examples: Florida Memory <www.floridamemory.com>; Central Florida Memory <www.cfmemory.org>; Orlando Memory <orlandomemory.info>

WORLD VITAL RECORDS

Now owned by Ancestry.com. Affordable access to 1,051,128,748 Names in 7,801 Databases - partners with Godfrey Library, Evertons, / many genealogy books, newspapers, etc.
Less expensive than Ancestry - about \$75 per year, sometimes has special prices
Free at Family History Centers - US & World records

FOLD3 (formerly Footnote)

Emphasis on military records; Arranges materials by era - Colonial, Civil War, etc.
Free at Family History Centers

NEWSPAPERS

Lots of papers scattered around web: Google Search will find many of them
Library of Congress *Chronicling America* <chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/newspapers/>
Orlando Sentinel & Southeast newspapers on Orange Co Library site <ocls.info>
Genealogy newspaper sites: Genealogy Bank \$ <genealogybank.com>; Newspaper archives (free at FHC)

OTHER USEFUL SITES THAT I USE OFTEN

- **National Archives** <www.archives.gov/genealogy> - Background; databases i.e. WW II records
- **US Geological Service** <geonames.usgs.gov> - Maps ; locations of cemeteries
- **Central FL Genealogical Society** <www.cfgs.org> - Local genealogical news
- **Genealogy Home Page** <www.genhomepage.com> - A good general starting place
- **Immigrant Ships Transcription Guild** <www.immigrantships.net> - Transcriptions of passenger lists
- **DAR** <www.dar.org/library/online_research.cfm> - database of DAR Genealogical Research System [Revolutionary ancestors & descendants]
- **Italiangen** <www.italiangen.org> Best for New York City records
Naturalizations; Death Index; Marriage Records
- **Town Locator (formerly ShetlSeeker)** <http://www.jewishgen.org/Communities/LocTown.asp> - locate places in Central & Eastern Europe.
- **HomeTown Locator** <hometownlocator.com> Find towns and counties.
- **Find A Grave** <FindAGrave.com> - burial records from all over the world. BillionGraves.com is new competitor.
- **Bureau of Land Management** <http://www.gloreCORDS.blm.gov/>.

LISTS OF GENEALOGICAL WEBSITES

Family Tree Magazine Top 101 websites - Sept issue each year - online at:
<familytreemagazine.com/article/best-websites-for-genealogy-in-the-usa-2012>
Genealogy in Time - <genealogyintime.com> - 100 most accessed websites for genealogy

OTHER USEFUL SITES: Not specifically for genealogy - but very useful

Dropbox <dropbox.com> - store your data online, access from anywhere (including smart phone / tablet); backs up info "in the cloud" (also Google Drive & SkyDrive); easy way to share data or photos
Evernote: <evernote.com> - store data - access from anywhere (including smart phone / tablet). Clip webpages complete with URL. Include photos, handwritten notes, drawings, etc.
Picasa <google.com/picasa> - organize and edit photos
Webinars - variety of sites - Legacy <legacyfamilytree.com/Webinars>; Calendar of Webinars: <http://blog.geneawebinars.com/p/calendar.html>; State genealogical societies
Newsletters - Eastman <eogn.com>; GenealogyInTime <genealogyintime.com>; Legal Genealogist <legalgenealogist.com/blog/>
Podcasts: GenealogyGuys <genealogyguys.com>; Genealogy Gems <genealogygemspodcast.com>; Dear Myrtle <blog.dearmyrtle.com/>

**Less than 5% of genealogical data is online, so don't use only online sources.
You'll miss a lot!**