

MAY 17 2014 LSCGG PRESENTATION

Using Research Time Efficiently

I. Overview

1. Choose your browser for research (see list of URLs for download)
2. Bookmark your important and very useful resources (see handout)
3. Open your chosen genealogy database (Family Tree Maker, etc.) or have available your paper records
4. Open multiple tabs, one for each of your important internet resources
 - a. Use only free resources if finances are limited
 - b. Use free and subscription resources (this method can be done at the guild on one of three workstations; one workstation at main desk is for staff, only)
5. Pick the individual(s) in your family tree that has/have been “hidden behind a stonewall”
6. Use the search engines at the sites of your important internet resources in concise and productive ways to get past that aggravating stonewall

II. Browser Download URLs (use your favorite choice)

As of January 2014, the market share of preferred browsers of those living in North America is (1) Chrome preferred by 47%; (2) IE preferred by 25%; (3) Firefox preferred by 20%; (4) Safari preferred by 5%; (5) Opera preferred by 1% and (6) 2% preferring other browsers

- IE (Internet Explorer Ver. 11) at <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/internet-explorer/download-ie>
- Firefox (Mozilla freeware) at <http://www.ez-download.com/lp/firefox/105/>
- Chrome (Google freeware) at <https://www.google.com/chrome/browser/>
- Safari (Apple freeware for Windows) at <http://support.apple.com/kb/DL1531>

III. Important Resource URLs (use to create tabbed locations)

- Ancestry.com Census Databases (subscription fee) at <http://search.ancestry.com/search/group/usfedcen>

- FamilySearch.org Databases (freeware after account creation) at <https://familysearch.org/>
- Findagrave.com (freeware, no account needed) at <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi>
- State of Illinois Database List (free access to searching) at <http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/archives/databases/home.html>
- World Connect Family Tree Collection (free searches but use with caution regarding stated “facts”) at <http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi>
- Books posted by Google that are past their copyright period at <http://books.google.com/>

IV. Case Samples of “Stonewalls” in My Researches:

Case #1 – The Family of Taylor Rutter and Etha Linda Redman

- This problem was a long standing one as I had misinterpreted the husband’s name because I placed too much trust in a marriage data recorded in one of the online databases maintained by the LSCGG; at the time of the original search, I was not interested in the pedigree of the groom, so I relied upon the surname spelling listed in the database.
- The ‘stonewall’ was found NOT to be in existence when I recently discovered that the husband’s name was NOT Taylor Butler, but rather Taylor Rutter; so *always visually inspect the original source* and NOT rely solely upon the transcripts completed by other people

Case #2 – This problem was encountered when I was doing research on the various families that had owned the city lot upon which my current home sits. The initial owner of my city lot was Jeremiah and Sarah Kiner.

- Kiner bought Lot #14 from the I&M Canal Association as an investment; he never built a home on the land
- His family was easily tracked in the census records of 1850 and 1870; a search of the census taken in 1860 was unsuccessful when using the search criteria of Jeremiah Kiner, native of Pennsylvania, born about 1818

- The family was located in the 1860 census by using the wife's given names, year of birth and birth state as the primary criteria for searching; given names of children were used to confirm the relevant image among the hits that were identified

V. Using the Search Engines at Various Sites:

The more criteria that you identify to begin a search the more limited will be the number of search returns ("hits"); a short list is always easier to visually search for your family member. The fewer the criteria you identify to begin a search, the more returns that will be listed for perusal. In addition, it is better to use "advanced search" features rather than those set as the default settings of the search engine(s) that you use.

VI. Search Engine Criteria That Can Be Used to Get Past a Stonewall:

1. Listing of given names of the family members that are part of your elusive head-of-household; can be used very successfully with any US Federal Census beginning in 1850 (lists of household names) and with assurance with the 1880 census and after (lists of household names plus their relationship to the head-of-household)
2. Listing of the given name, surname, place and date of birth of an elusive family member; specifying sex can also limit the hits
3. Decide the degree of accuracy you prefer regarding your criteria; criteria based upon given name or surname have many degrees of accuracy
4. Consider the use of the given name of a child (especially an unusual or rarely used name) rather than parents as the focus criteria; this is particularly useful with census years from 1880 to 1940, but can also be done with the census years of 1850 to 1870 though these years do NOT specify family relationships to the head of household

VII. Research Guidelines for Greater Success:

- Be willing to practice the techniques that you prefer and understand
- Be willing to try ... to even experiment
- Be willing to work both "forwards" as well as "backwards" in your researches, but based on a starting point well established in fact
- Be patient – with other people, with paper records, and with yourself
- Be aware that transcribers and enumerators were not perfectionists
- Be open-minded but principled

- Be persistent and unwilling to accept defeat
- Be willing to accept failure for the present and maintain optimism for future endeavors

VIII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: any names of individuals that have eluded the researches of the members of the audience will be accepted; do you currently know?

1. First and last name of the elusive person
2. Date and place of birth of this person
3. Name of person's spouse
4. Name(s) and birth year(s) of child(ren) of this elusive person

Questions and your concerns can be emailed to Jim Keating at jfkeating@sbcglobal.net