

Genealogy: good 4 U?

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SILICON VALLEY COMPUTER GENEALOGY GROUP

PastFinder

By Janet Brigham

Let's be honest. How many addictive or obsessive behaviors in life are actually good for you?

Research over the last couple of decades has established the value of doing genealogy (lineage) and family history research. In fact, one researcher reported that engaging in genealogy searching facilitates the human growth and "psychosocial" development (in other words, psychological and social growth).

In 2003, Ronald D. Lambert of the Department of Sociology at the University of Waterloo (Ontario, Canada) administered thousands of mailed and telephone surveys to determine what value genealogy had in genealogists' lives in Canada and Australia.

Respondents (those participating in the research by responding) interested in genealogy reflected a belief in an afterlife, but not necessarily a religious orientation. Lambert's research indicated that genealogists find that genealogy helped them cope with the deaths of family and friends, as well as helping them deal with their own anticipated eventual death.

Genealogists also used genealogy to "reconstitute" their families. This involved "undoing symbolically the destruction that the passage of time had visited upon their families. For these individuals, genealogical research had allowed them to reconstitute their families either in fact or in their imaginations."

He summarized: "Genealogy is all that its definition claims.... However, ...it is also something more for many genealogists, ...this is what partly accounts for the pastime's grip on the imagination and motivation of so many practitioners."

He outlined four aspects of genealogy research that can account for its appeal.



First, seeing the past as represented by ancestors "has the twin effects of compressing time and of giving it a human face." As Lambert explained, "Time is robbed of its remoteness, impersonality, and uncaringness."

Second, Lambert asserted, "Admitting ancestors as prologue to their own life stories assists genealogists in dispelling a sense of their lives as brief and inconsequential." Thus, genealogy research can help life seem more meaningful.

"Third, by offering their family histories as gifts to posterity," Lambert continued, "genealogists imply an existence beyond the grave, if only in the stories through which they and their kin are remembered."

What Lambert called "a commemora-

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Outside and Inside

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tive afterlife” might give genealogists without a religious belief something to look forward to. Also, “by stretching personal biography backward and forward in time,” genealogists can view life before and after death through a secular interpretation.

Fourth, genealogy research places death “firmly within a larger family context,” implying that death’s journey “is not taken alone, but occurs in the company of others who ‘belong’ to one another.”

More recently, S. Brady Humfleet of San Jose State University submitted a master’s thesis in 2009 relating older persons’ interest in genealogy with psychologist Erik Erikson’s theory of stages of human development.

In Erikson’s theory, the second stage of adult conflict in human growth is “generativity vs. stagnation,” which (in less technical language) pits selflessness against selfishness. Erikson’s “generativity” involves helping the next generation, by directly raising progeny or by building a legacy for the next generation. These activities provide a sense of purpose. “Stagnation” can bring feelings of regret and uselessness. (It is not unusual to experience mixtures of these states and feelings.)

Humfleet found a relationship between engaging in genealogy research and adult generativity.

Humfleet administered packets of surveys to genealogy enthusiasts in northern California and elsewhere in the United States, with ages ranging from 39 to 89 years old, and an average age of 68. He also asked questions to probe the value of genealogy in adults’ lives and to understand reasons why genealogists continue their research.

“A consistent theme throughout the open-ended questions was the cognitive benefits of genealogy,” Humfleet wrote. “For many genealogists, genealogy’s value is the challenge of solving puzzles.” This provides mental benefits that help keep genealogists engaged. This “cognitive behavior” is important for well-being and

helps keep mental skills sharp.

“Participants were asked what their friends and family think of their genealogical work and how this makes them feel . . . [A]ppreciation of their work elicited feelings of respect, appreciation, satisfaction, worthwhile, accomplishment, and usefulness among genealogists.”

Sources

- Lambert, R. D. (2003). Constructing symbolic ancestry: Befriending time, confronting death. *Omega*, 46(4), 303-321. Accessed at <http://ome.sagepub.com/content/46/4/303.full.pdf+html>
- Umfleet, S. B. (2009). Genealogy and generativity in older adults. Master’s thesis, San Jose State University. Accessed at <http://www.sjsu.edu/socialwork/docs/5S.BradyUmfleet298Outstandingproject.pdf>

Over the life cycle, evidence suggests that genealogists’ commitment to the pastime undergoes significant change. Older genealogists, for example, are less likely than their younger peers to be oriented towards learning about themselves.

Sociologist Ronald D. Lambert

Whadya think this is?



Whadya think this is? (Answer is on page 8.)

- A. An early version of the French horn
- B. A hot tub nozzle designed by Benjamin Franklin
- C. An antique tin ear trumpet
- D. The speaker for Edison’s first cylinder **phonograph**
- E. E. A portable rain collector for pioneers crossing the American plains. 

FamilySearch revisited Part 2

By Lesly Klippel

Part 1 of this series was in the February 2015 issue.

Books

Seven large, popular genealogy libraries are participating in the FamilySearch book digitization project, including the Allen County Public Library in Indiana and the Mid-Century Public Library in Missouri.

More than 150,000 publications have been digitized, including family histories, record collections such as cemetery and vital records, county and local histories, genealogy magazines, how-to books, and gazetteers.

You can search for a surname in the basic template or use the Advanced Search to find a particular locality or type of information in one of several languages.

Some books may have access restrictions, but most of the books can be freely read, searched, and downloaded. I recently was researching Blount County, Alabama, and found four volumes of cemetery records that I could save to my computer. Cross-

checking proved that many of the entries were not included in Findagrave.com. Since the books were printed in 1965, some of those stones may be no longer readable or may have been displaced.

Catalog

The catalog lists all the holdings of the Family History Library (FHL) in Salt Lake City, Utah, including the 2.4 million rolls of microfilm in the FHL and the Granite Mountain Records Vault; 727,000 microfiche; 356,000 books, serials, and other formats; more than 4,500 periodicals, and 3,725 electronic resources. The films and microfiches can be rented and mailed to your local Family History Center through familysearch.org/films/.

Find your nearest center by clicking on the link at the bottom of the FamilySearch home page. The catalog can be searched by place, surname, title, author, subject, and keywords. You can also search for a title by entering a call number. WorldCat links list other libraries that may have the item.

Look for the red type in the notes section of the catalog entry that indicates that a digital version of

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This search page helps you locate Family History Centers worldwide.

FamilySearch revisited *(continued)*



The Research Wiki, reached through the Search tab at FamilySearch.org, provides research guidance.

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the book is available online. When you find an item in the catalog that you want to see on your next trip to the FHL, click Add to Print List to include the item on your catalog print list. The list will be saved, and you can add more items as you desire and print the list when you next visit the FHL.

The holdings of local Family History Centers are being added to the catalog. Choose the nearest center from the list and fill out the template to find local resources to search. Again, you can add items to your print list to take to your local center. This can be an efficient time-saver.

Wiki and blog

The FamilySearch Wiki is a great place to find information on multiple subjects and locations. Reach the wiki by selecting the *Search* pull-down menu and clicking *Wiki*. You can add your comments and

helpful hints for researching in a particular location. At the bottom of the Home Page in light gray type is the link to the Blog. Additions to the site and news articles about various subjects make this a place to check often.

Get Help

The Get Help link located in the upper right of the screen has the Call Us number, which is answered 24/7. You can even ask research questions and an expert will call you back to discuss your problem. Click on Find Local Help to locate a nearby Family History Center and the contact information for local Family History consultants. (See “Ask the Doctor,” page 8 of this issue.)

The Learning Center currently contains more than 350 online research courses about almost every country in the world, complete with printable handouts.

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Review: Online course on documentation, sources

By Leonard F. Jakubczak

The online source *Guide to Documentation and Source Citation* is a recent contribution to the literature on mastering documentation and citations in genealogy and family history. It is designed for anyone aspiring to meet today's developing standards in such research and communication, especially for beginning- and intermediate-level genealogists and family historians. The course has no prerequisites. It is available for \$30 for members of the National Genealogical Society (NGS; \$45 for nonmembers), giving the participant access to it for six months from the date of registration. For further information see: www.ngsgenealogy.org/cs/guide_documentation_sourcecitation

Michael Grant Hait, Jr., a professional genealogist, authored the three-module, self-paced course. Its modules consist of lessons, examples, citations, and graded quizzes. A desktop or laptop computer or a tablet with an Internet connection is needed to access the course. Students work independently and receive a certificate upon completing the course.

Module 1, "Introduction to Documentation," covers why citations and consistent styles are necessary. After completing a five-question quiz, the student receives the scored quiz. The instructions and quiz seem appropriate for beginning- or intermediate-level participants.

After successfully passing the quiz (80 percent correct), the participant can move to the second module, "Basic Citation Principles," which covers the citation of reference notes and source lists, as well as their organization, formatting, and punctuation. Simplifying matters, Hait groups a citation's ele-

ments into three subsets: (1) author/creator, title/description, and publication information; (2) internal locators; and (3) access information. Missing from this module, however, is how to cite online services. Nevertheless, as in Module 1, the instruction and the quiz seem appropriate for the intended audience.

The final module, "Applying Citation Principles," the most challenging of the three, covers the application of the principles presented in the earlier modules to a wide spectrum of actual sources. The quiz for this module is ten questions and requires disproportionately greater experience or instruction, with complex "layered, double-reference-note" citations.

If this third quiz proves to be too difficult because of such issues, participants may abandon the course, thwarting NGS's educational goals as well as the participants' goals. Although the instruction in this module generally is appropriate for beginning- or intermediate-level genealogists, the quiz seems more appropriate for advanced students.

Despite some fixable issues, the National Genealogical Society's course, *Guide to Documentation and Source Citation*, is a good—though in parts challenging—online introduction to the current practice of genealogical documentation and citation. Beginning- and intermediate-level genealogists may need to persevere to complete the course; it offers updates for more advanced participants. 

This abridged version of a review in the winter 2015 issue of Rodziny, the quarterly publication of the Polish Genealogical Society of America, is used by permission.

FamilySearch revisited (continued)

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To change your settings, sign in and click on your name in the upper right of the screen. On that drop-down menu is your Source Box, where you can add sources from FamilySearch and from other websites, which you then can attach to names in your tree on FamilySearch Family Tree.

FamilySearch is working on a function that will attach sources from Ancestry.com with a single click. Watch for that improvement to appear.

Some other important features on this massive site include the Indexing pull-down menu on the home page, where you can help turn digitized images into indexed databases. Join the 350,000 registered indexers around the world who are helping to make all this data more accessible. The Getting Started link shares three nice videos to inspire and instruct. The Help Center link has a list of the site's functions with video help for using the function, FAQs, Tips and Tricks and other resources to help the user get the most out of their time at FamilySearch. 

How I found it

What we can learn from three types of DNA testing

By Carleen Jayne Thompson Foster

DNA testing does not replace hunt-and-dig in finding one's ancestors, though the sequence of events is reversed if one is adopted.

Usually one begins with a paper trail (computer trail) consisting of pedigree charts and family group sheets and turns to DNA testing when dead ends are encountered. On the other hand, an adopted person compares his or her DNA with that from other people. Once an adoptee finds matching DNA, he or she can begin to build pedigree charts and family group sheets — or, nowadays, a personal genealogy database.

What does DNA testing find, and how invasive are the tests?

Currently, genealogists use three types of DNA tests. One test is for the *Y chromosome* (sex chromosome) in the DNA string. The Y chromosome is found only in males, and it is passed down from father to son to son to son to son, and so forth, with little variation.

Another test is for *mitochondrial DNA*, or what is known as the *mt* chromosome. This chromosome is passed from a mother to both her sons and daughters, but only the daughters pass it to their offspring. A son does not pass the *mt* chromosome to his offspring.

A third test is an *autosomal* test. This test is based on DNA material from the autosomal chromosomes, and when compared to others who have taken the same genetic test (autosomal), may reveal

relationships with siblings, uncles, aunts, and cousins.

In my case, I matched with my half-brother and with a second cousin on my maternal side and a second cousin on my paternal side. These were relationships I had discovered prior to being tested, so they confirmed the validity of the testing.

This matching is possible because of the way DNA is passed down from generation to generation. A person receives half of his or her DNA from each parent. Each parent, who has received half of his or her DNA from each of his or her parents, can then pass down 25% of the parent's DNA and 12.5 % of each grandparent's DNA.

Therefore, siblings share the same percentages of DNA from parents and grandparents, cousins' share 25%, cousins once removed share 12 ½%, and so forth. If one's great-grandparents had six children, one may find a lot of previously unknown cousins. Each cousin could have a different piece of family information to help open a genealogical dead end.

To provide a test sample, the client spits a small amount of saliva into a tube, where it is mixed with stabilizing agents, and mails the tube using a pre-addressed mailer provided by the DNA testing company. Three U.S. companies conduct most genealogical testing (23andMe.com, FamilyTreeDNA.com, and AncestryDNA.com). Results from the National Geographic Genographic Project can be transferred free to FamilyTreeDNA. All three companies do autosomal testing; only one does Y and mitochondrial

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From the 23andMe.com home page



How I found it *(continued)*

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testing. The cost charged by each company is similar, about \$99.

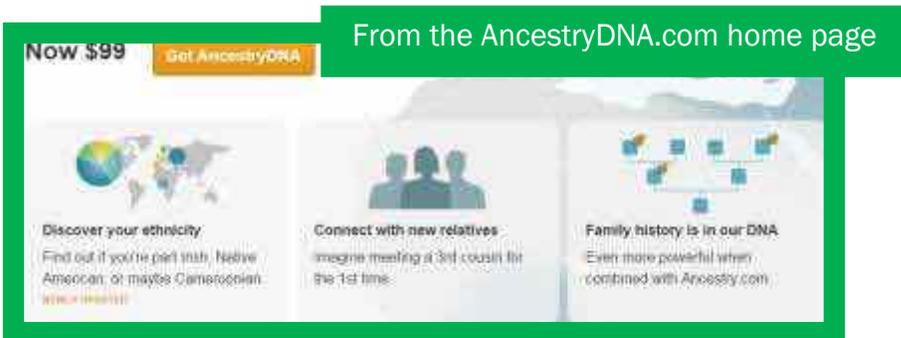
While many positive findings from DNA testing are possible, the chance remains of not finding anyone else from your family, or finding out things you may not especially want to know.

For example, a man I believed was a cousin took a Y chromosome test to determine if he matched descendants of a family who emigrated from Switzerland in the 17th century. He not only didn't match anyone believed to descend from that family, but five years later he has not yet matched anyone else in the test group.

These inconclusive results could happen for a variety of reasons. Of course, the supposed descendants of the Swiss family might not be descendants at all. In matching DNA with that of other people, we are at the mercy of their genealogical information. If others have not conducted careful, accurate research, matching our DNA to theirs might yield us no new usable information.

Also, we have no way to know through a Y chromosome test when or whether a "nonparental" event might have taken place, resulting in negative paternal results. Since my "cousin's" mother knew of the testing and gave tacit consent, a "nonparental" event, if one occurred, most likely came before his parents' generation.

I became interested in DNA testing because of a book written about persons with my mother's maiden name. The book traced descendants of a man who came to America in the 17th century. The first part of the book was about these people. The second part was about others with the surname who could not be matched to the first part. One of my ancestors who was in the second part



of the book shared the same last name, lived next door to someone from part one of the book, and the son of the neighbor and my ancestor went from Pennsylvania to Michigan together. A person in part one of the book even could have been my ancestor's parent.

Autosomal DNA to the rescue — except that DNA testing comparisons indicated that that my ancestor not only did not match anyone with proven descendancy from the first part of the book, but did not match with anyone with the surname.

Fortunately, I found a grandson of the ancestor, through another wife, who was willing to be tested and who matched with the first man tested. We concluded that the "nonpaternal" event had to have happened in the 19th century. Finally, in my own case, as noted previously, my DNA matched with two second cousins. However one of the second cousins' DNA matched with the DNA of a great-grandmother whose DNA does not match with mine. His grandfather was the third of eight children, whereas my grandfather was the eighth child. Since we match on the male side, it may have been the case that our great-grandfather had the older children with his wife and then had a child with another woman; his wife apparently raised this additional child.

I'm still working on this one! My grandfather couldn't have been the child of a son or daughter, as grandmother's DNA would have been passed on. But if my grandmother's mitochondrial DNA had been passed on to a male offspring, that would not show up in my DNA.

I've spent a lot of time and money on "great-grandmother's" family. I'm not overly excited to discover a "nonmaterial" event in my lineage.

So the buyer must beware, but DNA is a force to be reckoned with. 

What didja think it was? Were ya right?

(Answer to question on page 3:)

C. Funnel-shaped hearing aids for the deaf appeared in annals as far back as the 17th century and became widely used by the early 19th century. Most were designed for specific individuals, and some were collapsible. All were intended to gather sound waves and focus them on the human ear. In 1819 the King of Portugal, John VI, commissioned a throne that included two arms with large gaping mouths of lions that served as ear trumpets. 



Ask the Doctor Finding help

Q I don't live close enough to Silicon Valley to attend your classes or ask questions of your many knowledgeable members. I have relied on the helpful staff at my local Family History Center (FHC) for that. Now I will be away from home for several months, and I am wondering how to find a local FHC.

At the bottom left of the FamilySearch.org screen a heading says *Family History Centers*, with a link *Find a center*. Click on that link, which takes you to a page with *Find a Family History Center*. (see illustration, page 3 of this issue).

Enter a location (e.g., Ipswich, England) or a U.S. zip code (e.g., 83501), and the underlying map will show you FHC locations.

Once in a while, this feature of the website might be down. You can report that through the *Get Help* pulldown menu (select *Send Message* or *Call Us*.) If you select the *Call Us* option, a friendly volunteer may be able to help you, wherever you are in the world. The *Find Local Help* option also works, unless you are a FHC consultant making that selection from home, in which case it may refer you to yourself. 

Upcoming meetings

The Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group **meets monthly except December**, on the second Saturday of the month from 9 to 11 A.M. at the meetinghouse of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 875 Quince Ave., Santa Clara, California (see map at right). SVC GG is not affiliated with any church or other organization.

14 March 2015, 9–11 A.M.

- What's free in Irish research
- The best of RootsTech
- Reunion 10 for the Mac
- Reunion for the Mac Basics
- Getting started in genealogy

11 April 2015, 9–11 A.M.

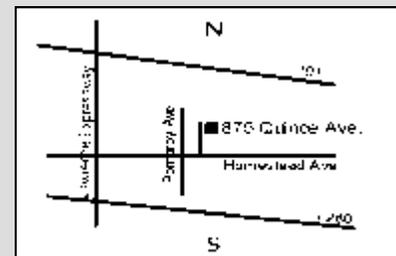
- Azores/Portuguese research
- Data backup strategies
- Using Ancestral Quest
- Reunion for the Mac
- Getting started in genealogy 

PastFinder
First place, Major Society Newsletter, 2013-14
First place, Local Society Newsletter, 2012
National Genealogical Society
Website: www.svcgg.org
Email: siliconvalleygroup@earthlink.net
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Meeting site has ample free off-street parking, with a wheelchair-accessible entrance at the front.

About the Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group

SVC GG, the former Silicon Valley PAF Users Group, is a nonprofit group of more than 500 genealogy users. We are based in Silicon Valley in the Bay Area of northern California; members live all over the world.

SVC GG offers classes, seminars, and publications to help family his-

torians improve their skills in using technology for genealogy research.

PastFinder is published monthly except December. It is distributed at meetings to members and mailed to others after the meetings. Members can receive the newsletter digitally by emailed link. 