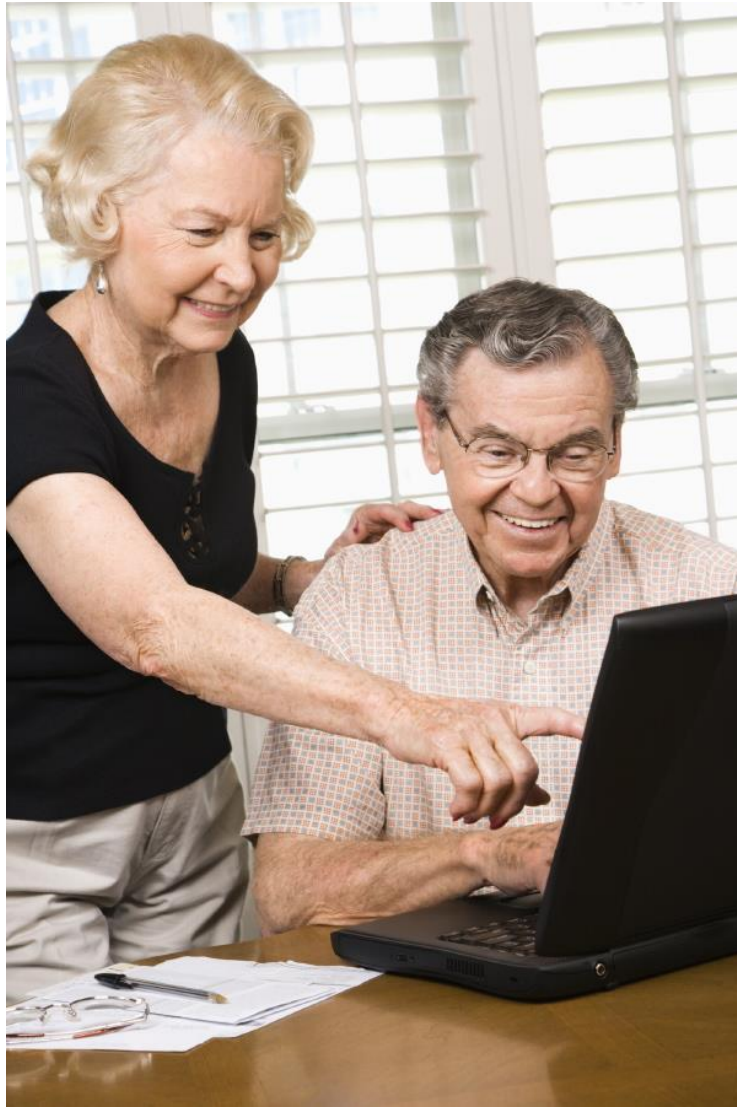




Genealogy 102: Research on the Internet



13986 Florida Boulevard
Livingston, LA 70754 / 225-686-2489

Sarah Colombo 10 2012

I. Introduction

a. The Internet and Genealogy

While the internet doesn't have everything a genealogist needs, it is a wonderful resource for beginning, intermediate, and advanced genealogists. We will explore some useful sites for genealogists and the information they provide.

b. Before Getting Started

Here are some things to keep in mind as you begin internet research:

i. Stay Focused

1. A problem encountered by many genealogists when researching on the internet is falling into the link rabbit hole. If you're on a site like Ancestry Library Edition, looking at a Census record for your great-great-grandfather, and there are two or three links off to the side showing you even more records for this same ancestor, your initial inclination will be to click on these links. Don't do it! Make sure that you get all the information from the site you are on, print or save the document to your computer, write down the web address, write down how you searched for it and what kind of record it is, before you click on another link. Otherwise, you'll end up one hundred clicks and an hour later unable to remember what you were looking at in the first place and forgetting to write down your great-great-grandfather's occupation, which was your whole reason for visiting the site.

ii. Don't Believe Everything You Read

1. Maybe you really are related to King Arthur, but someone posting a family tree on the internet should not be your definitive proof. Family trees and histories are all over the internet. People make websites to share their genealogy research, post on message boards, and share trees on sites like Ancestry and Family Search. These personal histories are great for getting leads and collaborating with distant relatives to overcome brick walls, but they should never be taken as evidence unless accompanied by citations for reliable sources.

iii. Make Friends

1. Genealogists love to share. In real life, that means they spend time with historical associations, genealogical societies, and at conferences. Online, that means they post on discussion boards, join online genealogical societies, and send e-mails. Do a Google search for an area of genealogical interest, and you'll come up with a blog post, a discussion board, or a website, and these resources will often have

contact information. You can e-mail people to exchange information and ask questions.

iv. Use Bookmarks

1. If you don't have a clue what that "Bookmark" option on your browser means, now is the time to learn. Bookmarking websites is a great way to save them for return visits, or to quickly mark them for later citation or future exploration when running low on time.

v. Be Careful

1. While the internet is a great place to share information, you want to be cautious about sharing anything private with strangers. If you feel uncomfortable answering the questions someone asks you, it's best to ignore them. Another benefit of the internet: you'll likely never see them in real life.

II. Websites to Find Records

a. Ancestry Library Edition

Ancestry.Com is a commercial genealogy database whose website requires a paid subscription to use. However, Ancestry Library Edition is a special version of *Ancestry.Com* for libraries and other institutions of learning, and accessing the database is free, through the Livingston Parish Library. The database contains:

- ◆ the 1790-1940 U.S. Federal Census
- ◆ birth, marriage, and death records
- ◆ immigration records such as passenger lists, and emigration records
- ◆ military records such as Civil War service records
- ◆ directories and member lists
- ◆ court, land, and probate records
- ◆ slave narratives
- ◆ American Genealogical Biographical Index
- ◆ Daughters of the American Revolution Lineage
- ◆ more than 1,000 historical maps
- ◆ reference and finding aids

b. Digital Louisiana Newspapers Project (DLNP)

lib.lsu.edu/special/cc/dlnp is managed by LSU Libraries. It contains 56 newspapers published in Louisiana between 1836 and 1922. You can search by keyword within a specific publication or across all publications in Louisiana. This site is linked with the Library of Congress's *Chronicling America* (Chroniclingamerica.loc.gov) project which contains digitized newspapers from across the country.

c. Family Search

Familysearch.org is a project of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is the largest genealogical organization in the world. Their website contains a combination of searchable records, microfilm, and books. Searching under “records” allows you to find census records, marriage records, military records, and more. The site offers transcriptions of records, and sometimes there is an option to view a scan of the original record.

Under “Catalog” you can search by place names, last names, call numbers, etc. for records of books or microfilm. Those on microfilm can be ordered and sent the library to be read on our microfilm reader. Books can be obtained through Interlibrary Loan and sent to the library. There is also a “Books” section which allows you to search digitized books from Brigham Young University.

By selecting “Learn” at the top of the webpage, you will be taken to the wiki, video tutorials about doing specific types of research, and discussion boards. The topics covered in the online tutorials range from beginning genealogy to deciphering foreign scripts. Check out the “Learn” section’s Louisiana page for local information: familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Louisiana.

d. Fold3 History and Genealogy Archives (\$)

Fold3.com combines original historical documents and personal histories. The collection features millions of digital images of records preserved in the National Archives and other regional archives. This archive features documents relating to the Revolutionary War, Civil War, WWI, WWII, U.S. Presidents, historical newspapers, naturalization documents, and much more. This is a subscription only database and is not currently available through the library. If you think this might be a database you would like to subscribe to, you can sign up for the free trial before making any commitments.

e. Genealogy Bank (\$)

GenealogyBank.com contains over 6,400 newspapers published between 1690 and today. The database also contains other documents important to genealogical research such as books, pamphlets, and military records. Genealogy Bank is not available through the library, and does have a subscription fee. If you are interested, visit the site and participate in a free trial.

f. Google Books

Books.google.com is a great way to find free books, or to get a preview of a book that you think might be helpful. Perform searches for places and ancestor names and see what you find. If you have an eReader, you can also transfer books you find to your device. Google Books features both free books and books for sale. If a book you are

interested in costs money, you can usually search the pages to see what it contains before deciding whether or not to purchase it, and then follow the links on the left-hand side to purchase a physical or digital copy.

g. The LAGenWeb Project

Lagenweb.net is another free site. The content of this site is managed by volunteers. It includes a Louisiana map library, tombstone transcriptions and photographs, Bible and church records, newspaper archives, and obituaries. There are Louisiana-wide records as well as parish-by-parish collections.

h. Louisiana Digital Archives

louisdl.louislibraries.org is “an online library of Louisiana institutions that provides over 144,000 digital materials.” The collection includes maps, oral histories, photographs, books, manuscripts, and other documents. It is free to use and you can search or browse for an area, time period, or person of interest.

i. Louisiana State Archives

To access the State Archives’ resources online, visit **sos.la.gov** and click **archives** on the left-hand side. While visiting the archives in person is the only way to access all of the available content, their website offers research guides and indexes to the physical collection. Use the site to access a database of Confederate soldiers included in the Confederate Pension Application Index, or to find a list of names included on New Orleans Ship Passenger Lists in 1851.

j. One-Step Webpages by Stephen P. Morse

Stevemorse.org

This site contains tools for finding immigration records, census records, vital records, and for dealing with calendars, maps, foreign alphabets, and numerous other applications. Some of these tools fetch data from other websites but do so in more versatile ways than the search tools provided on those websites.

III. Sites to Find Tips and Plan Research

a. Ancestry’s Family History Wiki

Even if you don’t have a subscription to ancestry.com, you can still use their Family History Wiki (ancestry.com/wiki) for free. There are two must-use resources on this page: *The Source: A Guidebook to American Genealogy* and *Red Book: American State, County, and Town Sources*. These are both books published by Ancestry which are now available for free online. *The Source*, sometimes referred to as the “genealogist’s bible,” is a reference book for genealogical research. *The Source* provides basic information about starting research, explains

the types of records used and how to find them, and even explains specific types of research such as African American and Native American research. *Red Book* explains how records work in each state. It is a great source when you are starting research in a new state or when you get stuck trying to find a record. You can also explore the Wiki for other general genealogical tips and resources such as information about military and immigration records.

b. Cyndi's List

Cyndislist.com is a free site which attempts to index all genealogical websites. You can browse topics alphabetically and find a list of sites related to that topic. Topics represented are as wide ranging as "Germans from Russia," "Births and Baptisms," and "African American." While you will not find any actual records by using this site, you will find information about how to search for records or how to research a specific area of interest. This site is a great place to start exploring the wide range of internet resources available.

c. Dick Eastman's Blog

Blog.eogn.com is Dick Eastman's blog. He also has a newsletter which you can subscribe to on his site and have sent to your e-mail address. Dick Eastman reviews genealogy sites and software and posts about important events in the genealogy world.

d. Factfinder for the Nation

census.gov/prod/2000pubs/cff-2.pdf provides helpful background information about the Census, including what questions were asked each year. One especially helpful aspect of this document is the list of things that you won't find on a Census record.

e. Guide to Genealogical Materials in the New Orleans Public Library's Louisiana Division and City Archives

nutrias.org/guides/genguide/gguide4.htm provides a guide to the genealogical materials held in the New Orleans Public Library's City Archives. While some of the material is specific to New Orleans, there is a great deal of information about Louisiana genealogical research in general.

f. Hill Memorial Library's Manuscript Finding Aid Online

lib.lsu.edu/special/findaid provides online guides to what is contained in the Hill Memorial Library's Special Collections. Examples of manuscripts described on the site include: Acadia Plantation Records, Baton Rouge Funeral Notices, and Civil War Photograph Album. While you cannot access the actual records on the site, you can find out what is contained in the records in order to plan a research trip.

g. Louisiana Cemeteries

la-cemeteries.com offers a parish-by-parish listing of cemeteries, a listing of CSA soldier burials, images from cemeteries, gravestone inscriptions, and much more.

h. Louisiana Clerks of Court Association

www.laclerksofcourt.org/clerksofcourt.htm contains a parish-by-parish listing of contact information for Louisiana Clerks of Court. The courthouse in each parish is where you will find marriage, divorce, land, and probate records. Use this site to find the address of the court, and call to find out the court's hours.

i. Roots Web

Rootsweb.ancestry.com is a free site hosted by ancestry.com. The site features message boards, a research guide, and family trees. Roots Web is also used to host sites for local historical and genealogical societies.

IV. Example: Using Ancestry Library Edition (in the library) to Search Census Records

a. Go to mylpl.info, click "Research," Click "Genealogy," and then Click "Ancestry Library Edition"

b. Your screen should look like this:

The screenshot shows the Ancestry Library Edition search interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Home', 'Search', and 'Charts and Forms'. The main search area is titled 'Search' and contains several input fields: 'First & Middle Name(s)', 'Last Name', 'Name a place your ancestor might have lived', and 'Estimated birth year'. There is also a 'Calculate it' button next to the birth year field. Below the input fields, there are two expandable sections: '+ Add life events (birth, marriage, death, and more)' and '+ Add family members (mother, father, spouse, siblings, children)'. At the bottom of the search area, there is a 'Search' button and links for 'Show Advanced', 'Clear Form', and 'Help'. To the right of the search area, there is a decorative image of a collage of historical documents and photos with green leaves overlaid.

- c. Narrow your search to the 1940 Census by clicking “1940” under the “US Census Records” section on the right-hand side.



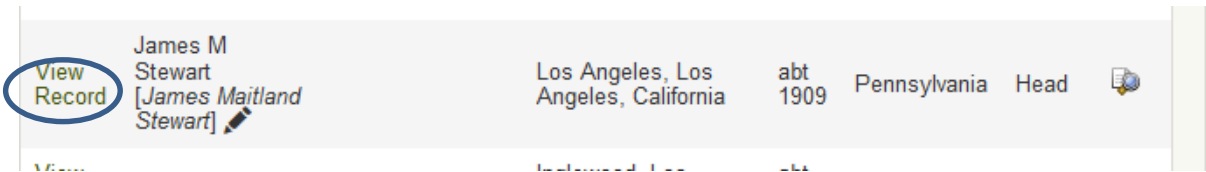
- d. Enter basic data about the ancestor for whom you are searching, and then hit the orange search button.

The image shows a search form with the following sections and fields:

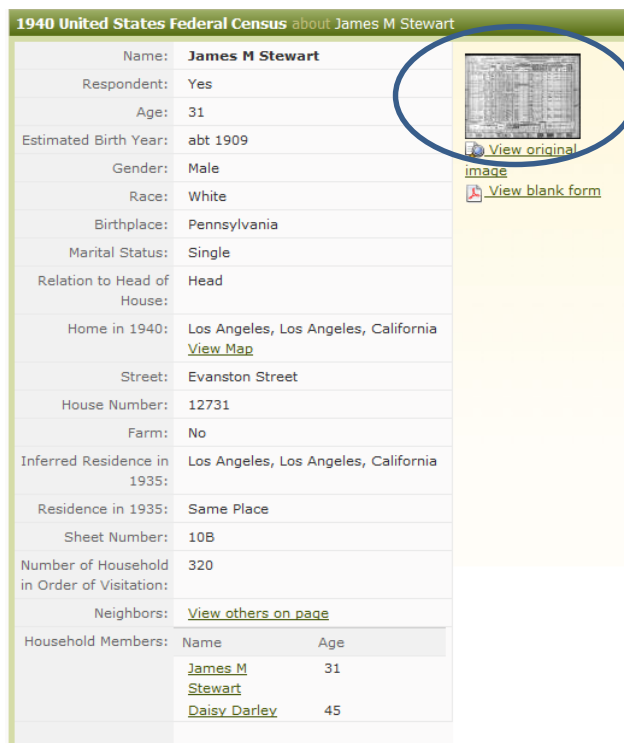
- Name**: First & Middle Name(s) (James), Last Name (Stewart)
- Event**: Birth (Year: 1908, Location: [empty]), Lived In (Location: Los Angeles, Los Angeles, Cali), Any Event (Location: Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California, USA)
- Family Member**: First Name (Choose...), Last Name ([empty]), Remove
- More**: Keyword (e.g. pilot or "Flying Tigers"), Gender (-- Select -), Race/Nationality ([empty])

The "Search" button at the bottom is circled in blue.

- e. Your results will look like this. Click “View Record” beside the Census record you would like to see.



- f. A screen will display with a summary of the ancestor’s line in the Census record. You can click the image in the upper-right-hand corner to see a scan of the original record.



g. Print, or save the record, and go back to search for more ancestors.

