

# GENEALOGY CLOUD TIPS

By Carolyn H. Brown

Most people new to genealogy believe they can open their Internet browser and start researching their ancestors. New researchers know about Ancestry because of the television ads. Fortunately, there are many more websites, and some of those are *free*, versus the large *fees* (\$\$\$) charged by Ancestry and others to access all of their site.

Ancestry is a good place to start, but Ancestry doesn't have access to all of the information that is available to researchers. Also, all of the information available is not on the Internet and some of it may never be.

## TOP GENEALOGY SITES

Here are some sites that researchers should start with depending on the information they have at hand.

*FAMILY SEARCH*: This *free* site is owned by the LDS church at <[www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)> and an excellent place to start when beginning your research. They offer research by name, location and topic. They have a section of genealogy related books for select surnames and another for learning tools which can be downloaded. They also have family trees submitted by users which may be accessed to see what other researchers have found.

*ANCESTRY*: Basically a for *fee* (\$\$\$) site <[www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)> has a *free* version which is available through many libraries. Though Ancestry has a very large group of databases, some of the information they access can only be viewed by purchasing access to an associated site. Many of their members have put their family trees on *Ancestry* which can only be viewed through a subscription. They have a "help center" for you to learn how to do specific areas of research. They also have an App that may be used from a tablet and smart phone.

*MY HERITAGE*: Is a *fee* (\$\$\$) site built around family trees at <[www.myheritage.com](http://www.myheritage.com)> and is adding additional database information. Some genealogy societies provide their members access to this site.

*FIND A GRAVE*: Is a *free* site with links to cemeteries at <[www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)> with individual grave sites and additional information submitted by researchers all the time. Some of the entries provide photos of the grave site and may have information concerning the individual and others who are related.

*BILLION GRAVES*: Is a *free* site with links to cemeteries in 78 countries at <[www.billiongraves.com](http://www.billiongraves.com)>. They have teamed up with *MyHeritage* to launch an international App.

*Cyndi's List*: Provides a list of genealogy related sites at <[www.cyndislist.com](http://www.cyndislist.com)>. If you can't find what you are looking for from one of the above sites, then look at Cyndi's List that has 333,947 links in 207 categories for everything genealogy.

## TIPS FOR SEARCHING SITES

In the past, researchers were taught to open a site, enter the persons name with applicable dates, and start searching. For years we continued to do this until it became clear that we were just spinning our wheels on sites that don't have the information we are seeking.

*SEARCH BY LOCATION*: First search the site for databases in the states and counties of interest. If the site doesn't have a database in the place of interest, close it and go to another site.

*SEARCH MULTIPLE SITES*: Searches may display different data depending on the site accessed. The discrepancy is in the methods of indexing used by each site which is unique to that site. Therefore, researching a site may not display what the same search on a different site displays. Different indexers may index the same entry differently.

*SEARCHING IN INDEXES*: Unfortunately our ancestors didn't use the same name or spell it the same way on every document. In many of the early documents a name may be spelled different ways in the same

document. No name, including first names and surnames, has only one way to spell it. Therefore, you will need to search for each name as an initial, abbreviation, nickname, and using multiple spellings.

Another problem with indexes is the differences in handwriting. Many letters are mistaken for another letter, or letters, in indexes. Some examples are: I's for J's or L's, N's for M's, M's for W's, F's for T's and vice versa, and there are many others. Just because you can't find what you are looking for, doesn't necessarily mean it isn't there.

*SEARCHING IN CENSUS RECORDS:* There are cases in census records where an individual recorded with a family is recorded under the name of the head of household with the family surname, when their surname is different. There are cases where the person taking the census, or giving the information, doesn't know how to spell the name and can't understand the person saying the name. Some census takers were told to write in the surname SMITH if they couldn't discern the surname. So don't overlook searching under SMITH no matter what the surname really was. The way you can tell if you have the right family is when the family members names, ages, and places match the family of interest, also the address and neighbors may help determine if you have the right family. In some cases you will have to search every page of a census record in the county before you find the person(s) of interest.

*SEARCHING FOR WOMEN:* Unfortunately women, after marriage, didn't always go by their own name in documents. It was very common for women to be address as *Mrs. John Doe*, not *Mrs. Sally Doe*. This is particularly true in documents and articles where both are mentioned, or in other legal records. If you can't find the death record of a woman, look under the name of her husband.

## **CLOUD DATA STORAGE**

The *Cloud* has become the big thing in technology in the last few years. Many companies have started up just to support *Cloud* data storage. The *Cloud* is nothing more than thousands (maybe even millions) of computers linked together with technology to share information and digital files.

It is wonderful that so many companies will provide *free* or for a *fee* storage space. Many genealogists are using the *Cloud* to store data, and to actually do the work once done on personal computers. However, you need to take care that the information you store in the *Cloud* is also stored on your own computer. You never know, you may lose access to that data through a mistake of your own or something happening to the *Cloud* computers where your data is stored. I *Googled* "online data storage" and got 523,000,000 hits.

*ICLOUD:* Provides limited storage space to *Apple* device users. If needed, users can purchase more GBs.

*DROPBOX:* Free for limited space with a scale of prices for more storage space. This is the *Cloud* storage used by people who want to share data with others they invite to their box.

*GOOGLE CLOUD STORAGE:* Offers three paid levels of storage and access; 1. standard—full access; 2. DRS—durable reduced availability; and 3. "nearline" availability— for archiving.

## **ONLINE TRAINING TOOLS**

There are so many online training tools that there is no way to cover them all. However, there are some basic places to start searching.

*TRAINING DOCUMENTS:* It is easy to find documents on every subject relating to genealogy. Many of these documents are free to download. *Cyndi's List*, *Ancestry* and *Family Search* each have a category for learning tools. You can also *Google* any topic and find more information. So don't miss taking advantage of these individual training materials.

*QUARTERLIES, MAGAZINES AND NEWSLETTERS:* Genealogy related quarterlies, magazines and newsletters have great articles covering every aspect of genealogy research. The *Bouse Genies Newsletters* are an excellent place to start. They can be found on the *Members Only* page of the *Bouse Genealogical Society* site at <[www.bousegeniesaz.org](http://www.bousegeniesaz.org)>. BGS has many NGS *Quarterlies* available in the library.

*WEBINARS:* Several genealogy related sites offer webinars and more are being added all of the time. Some are free, however, most require membership in a website or genealogical society. One of the best is *Legacy Family Tree Webinars* at <<http://familytreewebinars.com/>>. Legacy also offers training videos to teach you how to use the *Legacy* program. *Bouse Genealogical Society* members can check out any of the 115 webinar and training video CDs in our *Webinar Library*.

*Books:* There are hundreds of books on the various topics of genealogy research. Some are free for the download, some have a minimal charge for an e-book, and others are available for purchase in paperback or hard copy. If you know of a book you want to study, first check the books in the genealogy section of the *Bouse Public Library*. These books may be checked out by any *Bouse Genie*. If you can't find what you are looking for, let us know and we can put it on our book purchase list. Beyond that *Amazon* has a large selection of books to purchase. If you don't find it there *Google* it and you may be directed to a site where it maybe found.

## **ONLINE FAMILY TREES**

Some online family trees may provide well researched information, but many others don't. The problem is that there was a lot of research done over the years before many records became readily available and that information has been passed down in families. Unfortunately, many of the non-sourced family trees are now online, and the people who are putting them there aren't doing the research required to prove every item of information.

*FAMILY STORIES:* It was not unusual for a family member to record what someone told them and recorded it wrong. Each time the document is copied, or the family story is told, errors are made and the story loses credibility. Therefore, we all have unproven stories of royalty, an Indian princess, or relationship to a famous person. That little scrap of paper was probably copied by hand many times, and a copy is still floating around somewhere. Once someone takes on the task of proving the claim, then finds the claim is false, they can't or don't get the truth out to *all* other family members to correct the problem. Therefore, even if someone did the research required, the rest of the family knows nothing about the problem. When someone new to genealogy research comes along, the scrap of paper is passed on again, and the same old problem continues to be posted online.

*CORRECTING THE PROBLEM:* It is not easy to correct the problem of wrong data, because of the many family trees on various sites. If you don't know where every wrong family tree is located or referenced, you can't contact the poster to have the information changed. However, every time you come across information which is wrong, and you have the documentation for the right information, it's up to you to contact that person and set the record straight. Unfortunately, even with the correct information the submitter may not believe it and wont make the corrections. So it is up to you not to post information copied from someone else's tree until you have personally proved it.

If you have copied a tree from an online posting, contact the tree owner to see what proof they have. Create a separate family file in your genealogy software for the copied data, and don't merge it into your tree until proven.

## **GENEALOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

The genealogy community jumped on the social media band wagon and has found it a wonderful way to contact new cousins and stay in touch with others researching the same towns and families.

### **MESSAGE BOARDS**

*MESSAGES BOARDS* were the beginning of social media for genealogists. A user may access an existing message board and read the postings of others researching the same families and locations. If a message board doesn't exist for the topic of interest, the user can create one. Like other forms of social media, members post messages and anyone may reply.

*US GENWEB Project:* One of the first message boards is <[www.usgenweb.org](http://www.usgenweb.org)> focusing on states of the United states. Each state has a coordinator, and provides links to many other sites. One area of interest on these sites is the county queries area.

*GenForum*: Focuses on surnames, places and topics at <[www.genealogy.com/forum](http://www.genealogy.com/forum)>. Each surname board was started by someone interested in that surname, but there is no control on who could post a query.

*ROOTSWEB*: This board is owned by Ancestry <[www.rootsweb.ancestry.com](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com)> and has links to many other areas of research and study including surnames, locations and topics.

### **MAILING LISTS**

A mailing list is the place where users can join a list, or start a new list, for any surname. When a member of the list posts a query it is immediately, or as an option once a day, forwarded to all other members of the list.

*ROOTS-L MAILING LIST*: Located at <[www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/roots-l/](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/roots-l/)> is owned by *Ancestry*. Though not every surname is on the list, a lot are. They also have an archives of old postings. This site has links to many websites you may never have known about.

### **FACEBOOK**

*Facebook* is a site where a person or organization can create a page to post to family, friends and/or the public anything they feel is of interest, and those belonging the group can immediately reply. When someone posts to their page, the post is forwarded via email to all others who are part of the group.

*BOUSE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY*: The BGS page is at <[www.facebook.com/bousegeniesaz/](http://www.facebook.com/bousegeniesaz/)>. If you wish to join the page let Gloria Freemon know and she will send you an invite.

*LEGACY FAMILY TREE USER GROUP*: Are you having a problem using Legacy? Then this is the page for you to join <[www.facebook.com/groups/LegacyUserGroup/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/LegacyUserGroup/)>. Do you want to see what others have found interesting in Legacy? Track their posts and you will surely learn something new.

*RANDOM ACTS OF GENEALOGICAL KINDNESS*: Do you need help locating a specific document, grave site, or just a question about genealogy research in a specific place? Then request to join the group at <[www.facebook.com/groups/raogkUSA/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/raogkUSA/)>. Once you join, you agree to help someone else.

### **TWITTER**

Twitter is one of the fastest way to get your thoughts out to friends and followers in 140 characters or less. Often used to let others know what you think about an event while it is taking place. Tweets can contain photos and other media.

*TWITTER - GENEALOGY*: Log on to *Twitter* and search for any topic of interest to see what others have tweeted or go to <<https://twitter.com/search?q=genealogy&src=typd>> for genealogy related tweets. Did you miss a showing of *Finding Your Roots* or any other genealogy related show? Then check out the *Twitter Genealogy* tweets.

### **GENEALOGY BLOGS**

Blogs are web logs or posts about anything you want to know more about. Some of the genealogy blogs are free, while others charge an annual fee. There are many genealogy blogs by professional genealogists but the best are:

*EASTMAN'S ONLINE GENEALOGY NEWSLETTER : EOGN* <<http://blog.eogn.com>> is *free* for some posts, but \$19.95 a year for the more extensive posts. Dick Eastman posts his blog once a week and covers everything of importance to the genealogy world and more.

*GENEABLOGGERS*: Thomas McEntee's blog <[www.geneabloggers.com/](http://www.geneabloggers.com/)> is a collection of genealogy bargains, and posts about his research techniques.

*GENEALOGY GEMS BLOG*: Lisa Louise Cooke's blog <<http://lialouisecooke.com/blog/>> has posts on many problems relating to genealogy and technology.

### **GENEALOGY PODCASTS**

Podcasts are similar to blogs except podcast's deliver information through the spoken word, much like

the radio.

*GENEALOGY GEMS PODCAST* : Lisa Louise Cooke's GG podcast comes in two formats. The basics are free at <<http://lialouisecooke.com/podcasts-2/>>. The premium membership is \$39.95 a year with has access to all past podcasts and her popular video class recordings.

*GENEALOGY GUYS PODCAST* : The genealogy guys are George G. Morgan and Drew Smith, both professional genealogists at <[www.genealogyguys.com/](http://www.genealogyguys.com/)>. They cover short notices about the latest hardware and software updates, and genealogy events as well as more in-depth genealogy related subjects.

### **YOUTUBE**

*YouTube* has videos on almost thing imaginable. *YouTube* has a large genealogy community where you can learn about everything relating to genealogy. When I access *YouTube* and entered "genealogy research" there were 45,700 results. To make *YouTube* work for you enter "genealogy research" followed by the specific topic of interest. You may need to try several formats of the request to locate everything available on the site. After listening to the post you may submit remarks.

*THE GOOGLE GENEALOGIST*: Devin Ashley has posted many ways to use *Google* for genealogy research <[www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=The+Google+Genealogist](http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=The+Google+Genealogist) >. Some of his posts are in multiple parts. This request also brings up 3,360 other posts for anything genealogy and *Google* related.

If you can't find what you are looking for in any of the above forms of social media, you need to change your search method.

### **GOVERNMENT SITES**

The *U.S. Federal Government* and every State and County in the *United States* has one or more websites. Start searching at the lowest jurisdiction where you suspect the information is retained. There is no way to include every site here, so it is best to read genealogy magazines, current and past issues, to see if you can find suggested sites for your personal research problem. Don't forget to check *Cyndi's List*.

*GENERAL LAND OFFICE RECORDS ADMINISTRATION*: The GLO-BLM site maintains all U.S. Federal Government land records at <[www.gloreCORDS.blm.gov](http://www.gloreCORDS.blm.gov)>. When looking for the earliest Federal land records this is the go-to site.

### **GENEALOGY SEARCH ENGINE**

Most of us use *Google* or *Bing* to search for genealogy information. However there is a special genealogy related search engine which can help you dig deeper into some individual sites with tools better than those used by the site itself.

*ONE STEP WEBPAGES*: Stephen P. Morse's site at <[www.stevemorse.org/](http://www.stevemorse.org/)> is the place to go to find information in specific sites when you feel sure what you want is there but can't find it. Stephen started with the *Ellis Island* site and has expanded to many passengers lists.

### **DNA SURNAME PROJECTS**

There are hundreds of DNA Surname Projects in Family Tree DNA <[www.familytreedna.com](http://www.familytreedna.com)> based on Y-DNA tests. Each project has a different owner, so they are often quite different. Some have a spreadsheet format, making it easy to see matches. The user can submit their Y-DNA results and join a project. It is the fastest way to determine if the person giving the DNA sample is related most closely to which surname, even when it is not that individuals surname. That is, the DNA of Sidney J. Brown matches the DNA of those in the *Winn DNA Project*, not those in the *Brown DNA Project*, because his grandfather changed his name from Winn to Brown. DNA projects can help prove or disprove family relations, and are an excellent way to overcome some dead ends.

### **ELECTRONIC DEVICE APPS**

With the fast growth of small electronic devices many genealogy related programs and websites have gotten on the Apps bandwagon. The *Bouse Genies Newsletter* Volume 9, number 3, Summer 2015 has an

article dedicated to Apps a genealogy researcher may be interested in.

*ANCESTRY*: Located at <<http://trees.ancestry.com>> offers users a list view, custom facts, prompts for location, and photographs and documents can be attached to trees. There is a relationship calculator available. The user can upload and download GEDCOM files.

*FAMILIES*: Used with *Legacy Family Tree* and other programs is available for *iPhone*, *iPod Touch*, *iPad*, or *Android* phone or tablet at <[www.telgen.co.uk/families/](http://www.telgen.co.uk/families/)>. The *Families App* lets you take your *Legacy* data, pictures, sources, to-do-list and more with you wherever you go.

*Find A Grave*: Offers a mobile method for searching *Find A Grave* for cemeteries and memorials at <<https://play.google.com/store/search?q=findgrave&c=apps>>. If you are a registered *Find A Grave* user, you can add a memorial.

*Reunion Touch*: Available for *iPad*, *iPhone*, and *iPod Touch* at <[www.leisterpro.com/reuniontouch/](http://www.leisterpro.com/reuniontouch/)> lets you take your family data with you. You can view, navigate, search, and edit your information on the go.

### **GENEALOGY PROGRAMS**

There are a lot of genealogy programs and they are not all created equal. There are programs which can only be used online, and programs which can be downloaded to your computer so a copy of your data remains on your computer. This past year two of the biggest genealogy programs *The Master Genealogists* and *Family Tree Maker* were discontinued. The best of the rest are:

*LEGACY FAMILY TREE (LFT)*: *Legacy* at <[www.legacyfamilytree.com](http://www.legacyfamilytree.com)> has kept up with the new trends in the market and also produces training videos to help you learn the tips and tricks of the product. Currently *LFT* is only available on the *Windows Operating System*. There is a free version which you can try to see if it is the program for you. *FTM* supports the *Families App* on both *iOS* and *Android* devices.

*ROOTS MAGIC (RM)*: *RM* at <[www.rootsmagic.com](http://www.rootsmagic.com)> came on the market shortly after *LFT*, but didn't get much publicity until later. It is a great program, very similar to *LFT*, but does things a little differently. I didn't find it as ease to use as *LFT*. *RM* is available for both *Windows OS* and *Apple OS*, with Apps available for both products. They also provide a free product so you can try it before you buy it, as well as training videos.

*REUNION*: From *LeisterPro* available at <[www.leisterpro.com](http://www.leisterpro.com)> is the best of the genealogy related programs written especially for *Apple OS*. It has Apps for the *iPad* and *iPhone*. They also offer training videos and tutorials.

The big issue is to not have your family tree and other digital files online without having a copy of the same files on your computer. You never know when a Cloud company will go out of business, or stop supporting individual parts of their site, and you could lose everything you have placed there. If you are using either of the discontinued programs it is time to change.

Happy Hunting!!!

