



March 2009

Organization Checklist

I received a heart-warming e-mail yesterday from a man whose wife is beginning to rue the day he got into this "family history stuff." He said he's branched out with piles of papers not only all over his computer table in the guest bedroom, but stacked all over the queen-sized bed. Now he's sorting through things on the dining room table. I can certainly relate, I've found piano benches and dining room sideboards are also good sorting platforms! Seems these papers multiply overnight when we're not looking.

What wonderful ideas you have been having, and what GREAT PROGRESS you are making in attempting to organize your all your genealogy documents and photos! I am really proud of you! I may have to break down and work a little harder at things myself!

Well, enough resting on our laurels. Here's the plan for this month! GOOD LUCK everyone!!!!

WEEK ONE: 1-7 March 2009



Tackle surname binders G through L and verify that EACH document you've collected for an ancestor is listed at the very least in NOTES for him in your genealogy management program.

The importance of systematic and thorough documentation cannot be overemphasized. As we grow in our experience as researchers, we understand the value of primary documents to support a lineage, rather than hearsay evidence from old family stories or undocumented online ancestral charts.

<p>Primary evidence is provided in documents that have survived from the time period that mention your ancestor. The closer to a report from an actual eye witness, the better.</p>	<p>Examples: Marriage return, baptismal record, birth or death certificates signed by the attending physician.</p>
<p>Secondary evidence is documentation that is removed from the original event either by time, or personal circumstance.</p>	<p>Examples: Newspaper announcement of birth, marriage or death.</p>



BRIGHT IDEA

Read up on discussions attempting to define an "original" or primary document by studying these blog entries:

- [Confusion with the Various Definitions of Original Source](#) by Mark Tucker at ThinkGenealogy. This blog entry traces the evolution of the term original source as applied to the GPS Genealogical Proof Standard which has now replaced the Preponderance of Evidence theory of analysis in the world of genealogy.
- [Attending physicians aren't usually stone cutters](#) by DearMYRTLE. This is my response to Mark's initial posting.
- [More on Sources: Original, Derivative, or Otherwise](#) by Mark Tucker at ThinkGenealogy in a follow-up blog entry.

Begin making note of weak lineage assumptions. After reading the three blog entries, you'll begin to notice holes in your research. So as you are making sure each collected document is listed for an ancestor, make a note. Since we're getting ORGANIZED, we're not getting lay-wayed doing RESEARCH at this point, so just jot down your thoughts in notes for the weak link ancestor, like "Look for probate packet to verify heirs."

WEEK TWO: 8-14 March 2009

Gather with other genealogists.



Back in 1995 when Ol' Myrt here first began this organization checklist, I was encouraging folks to break out of their comfort zones, and join the local genealogy society. Boy, did I get a lot of flack about it. People didn't want to join a local society when their ancestors had never lived in the area.

But joining the local genealogy society is sort of like joining AA – where we learn we are powerless over paperwork, the internet, burned courthouse and 15 ways to spell names like Smith.

So ask around at the public library and local Family History Center to learn about genealogy society meeting times and dates. Attendance will open up opportunities to meet interesting folks with varied talents and experiences who might be able to help you learn better research techniques. At the very least, they will understand what it means to be ancestrally challenged by those aggravating brick walls.

Ol' Myrt here found friends who are very good with computers and are willing to share their talents with others. During the past 18 years of membership in two local societies, I cannot think of more than two meetings devoted to Florida research. Topics have included tracing immigrant ancestors, report on research trips overseas, spotlights on what's new at our local FHC, migration patterns, New England, printing a family history book, and preserving photos. I attend every meeting and note that during the introductions of new members there is always someone in our society who has experience researching in the area the newbie finds challenging.

Consider joining Twitter. If you followed last month's checklist, you elected to subscribe to some RSS feeds of genealogy blogs. All sorts of gadgets and online tools have emerged since the "olden days" of 1995. I would never have guessed then I would recommend becoming a "tweet". Twitter.com provides a quick method for keeping up with genea-bloggers who tend to know what's going on in the world of online genealogy.

Unlike [Bloglines](#), where the entire blog is posted, Twitter offers short, clickable blurbs for each blog title that may be viewed on your cell, or at Twitter. Ol' Myrt here likes to do a quick review of blog titles, saving the important full reads for urgent blog entries, or the 2-hour reading time she spends learning about what's new each day in the world of online genealogy.

WEEK THREE: 15-21 March 2009



Start planning your summer vacation now, so you won't miss ancestral spots along the route! Who would have thought in 1995 that the world economic climate would have had such a downturn? Travel isn't out of the questions for most of genealogists, but advance planning and careful fiscal management is essential.

In addition to turning in your Delta Sky Miles, consider using comparison shopping travel websites as:

- www.Priceline.com
- www.Travelocity.com
- www.Expedia.com

Using Travelocity this past week, I was able to find a 90-minute non-stop Frontier flight for a dear friend who must leave the 2009 NGS National Genealogical Society Conference on Friday night to attend his nephew's college graduation on Saturday. Since my friend has Southwest and Delta frequent flyer cards, we would never have considered Frontier without Travelocity's comparison of all known flights between the two cities in question. SW & Delta offered more expensive flights with 2 to 3 stops, and the lowest flight time was over six hours. Arrgh.

Since the price of gasoline in March 2009 is significantly lower than the \$4.89 per gallon we were paying last summer, you might consider a vacation by car. The web now offers a variety of online map and direction services.

- www.MapQuest.com
- <http://maps.Google.com>

Be sure to click to change to the street view or satellite view whenever possible.

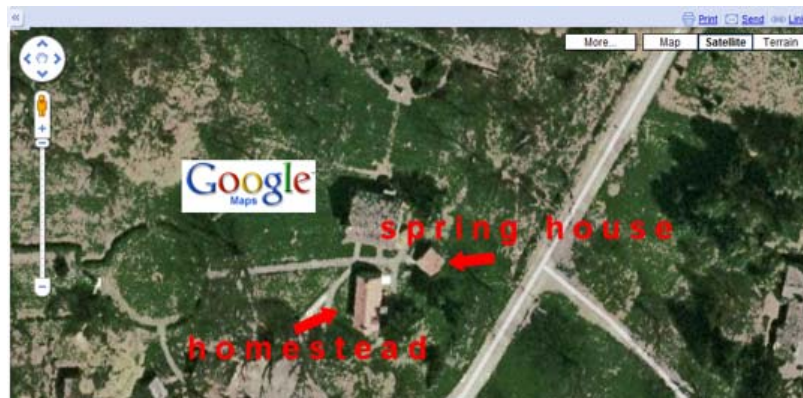


Figure 1 - Conrad Weiser Homestead, Womelsdorf, Pennsylvania from Google Maps. Conrad was Ol' Myrt's ancestor who served as a colonel during the French and Indian War. You'll also find from reading the Pennsylvania Archives (scanned and searchable for free at www.Footnote.com) that Conrad served as an interpreter between the Provincial government and the Native Americans.

Would a train trip west emulate the migration pattern of your ancestors? You can still rent a sleeping car and eat in the dining car. Those days haven't completely gone to the wayside in the US. In Europe, train travel is preferred.

Regardless of the way you chose to travel, print a map of the ancestral events (birth, marriage, death, burial) in the region you'll be visiting, using software that works with your genealogy database:

- [Family Atlas](#)
- [Map My Family Tree](#)

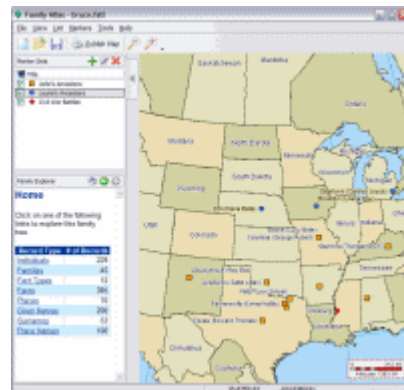


Figure 2 Family Atlas screen shot



BRIGHT IDEA

Since you don't have to worry about the high cost of film developing (a la 1995), be sure to use your digital camera to take all the pictures you need of tombstones, the ancient oak outside the courthouse, and documents too large to be photocopied at

the courthouse. Heavens, even the cheapest cell phones on the market take pics, albeit in poorer quality 1.2 mega pixels.

Even if the focus of your upcoming trip is not genealogy, you will learn much about the lay of the land. For instance, in Ol' Myrt's 1995 trip to Germany, I noticed a striking similarity between Johannes Conrad WEISER's ancestral place of origin on the Neckar River valley, east of the Rhein River, and the Tupelhocken Valley of Pennsylvania where his son Conrad WEISER eventually settled. The impact of that familiarity still brings tears to my eyes as I think about it now, fourteen years later.



WEEK FOUR: 22-28 March 2009



Begin to learn all you can about effective use of your local LDS Family History Center (FHC). Neither you nor your ancestor has to be Mormon to use these marvelous reference centers. These 4,500+ branches of Salt Lake City's Family History Library are typically located in LDS Chapels throughout the world. To locate one near you visit www.FamilySearch.org. Most microfilm and microfiche of the FHL's collection of original court, church and archives from over 120 countries throughout

the world are available via a small rental fee at your local FHC.

Ol' Myrt here is constantly amazed during our Second Life genealogy voice chats how there are still researchers who expect to contact a courthouse or archive personally. They simply don't realize that microform of many important records are part of the collection at the Family History Library.

These wonderful FHC volunteers assist with microform orders, and the use of the equipment in the center. They are not there to do your research for you. It is incumbent upon each of us to be responsible for our own family history research. Wish as much as you like, but FHC workers aren't there to hand us our documented lineages on a silver platter.

Remember that not all volunteers at a FHC are as experienced in research as perhaps you might be, but it doesn't matter if what you seek is to rent microfilm of an ancestor's distant courthouse records of probate. Some FHCs are most fortunate to have well-trained, experienced genealogists as staffers. Other centers are lucky if the janitor unlocks the door for you.

WEEK FIVE: 29-31 March 2009



Clarise Beaumont avatar.

Since we have an extra half week this month, I'd like you to really go out on a limb and join Second Life to participate in genealogy voice chats. This is an extension of the concept of joining your local genealogy society.

- Go to www.SecondLife.com and sign up for a free account. Below, see the picture of Krag Mariner (Real life Craig Scott, owner of www.HeritageBooks.com and my



Basically, the steps for getting into Second Life are easy-to-follow screen prompts that run something like this:

- Choose an avatar. (This is a character, male or female, with modifyable hair and clothing.)
- Choose a unique name. You can choose the given name, but must select from a list of preset surnames. Ol' Myrt's avatars are named:
 - Clarise Beaumont
 - DearMYRTLE Writer
- Sign up for the free service.
- Follow the brief tutorial to learn how to move your avatar around, to sit, to walk, to fly.
- Search for genealogy places to visit. Click the "search" button on the middle bottom of the Second Life screen, and typing in "Genealogy" (without quote marks). In this case, as show below you will find a variety of places to visit, groups to join and people to meet who have specified "genealogy" in their profiles.

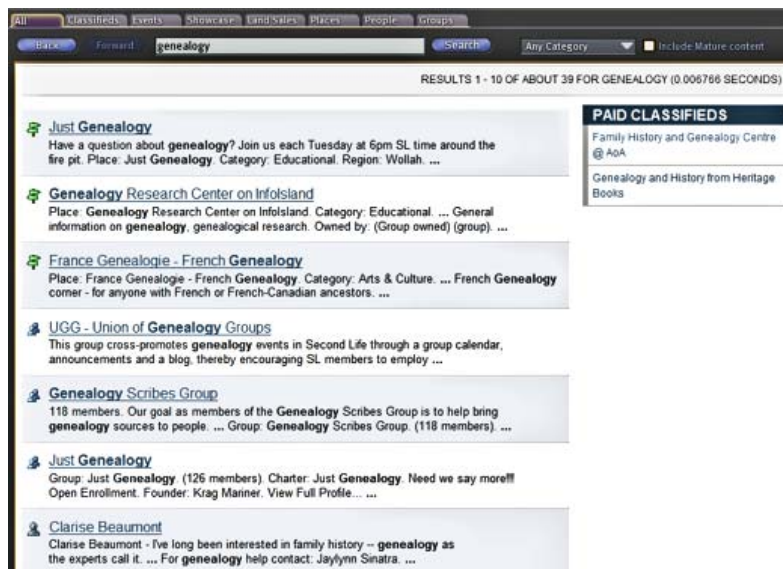


Figure 3 Second Life screen shot showing results of a search for genealogy. Places to visit, groups to join and people to meet are listed.

If you were in Second Life and clicked on my name on this sort of search results list, you could view my profile, offer friendship, and send an instant message. If Ol' Myrt here is not online at the time, I'll receive your message the next time I log in to Second Life.

Here are several blog entries that point to recent genealogical research work being shared among participants:

- [READER'S FEEDBACK: Google Patent Search](#)
- [READER'S FEEDBACK: GenesReunited maps in city areas](#)
- [Central Florida Memory Comes to Second Life](#)
- [Get a Second Life, Genealogists](#)
- [Second Life: A new type of genealogy society](#)
- [Giving Maps a Second Life with Digital Technologies](#) linked at [David Rumsey Map Collection](#).

Here's the note card I share with everyone who stops by the two voice chats I attend whenever possible each week. Times listed as the same as Pacific US time, daylight when applicable.

WELCOME to Second Life's Union of Genealogy Groups (UGG).

Our goal is to cross-promote family history events, maintain a joint calendar, and produce a newsletter -- all designed to help people see genealogy as "doable." The UGG Calendar is located on a bulletin board at the union headquarters and at UGG participating sites throughout Second Life.

If you have a family history group and would like to join UGG, just drop an IM to the UGG coordinator, Clarise Beaumont. If you need a place to meet, there are several alternatives, including the fire pit area at Just Genealogy.

CURRENT UGG MEMBERS include:

AUSSIE ROOTS

Research assistance from a resident of Australia.

MEETINGS: 10pm 2nd Saturday beginning August 2008 at the fire pit in Just Genealogy.

CONTACT: Angelica Herrington

CALEDON GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

A comfortable place, stocked with lots of ideas to help you get in the hunt.

DISPLAY: Caledon Genealogical Society

CONTACT: Mavromichali Szondi

BUILDER: Mavromichali Szondi

FAMILY HISTORY CENTRE

MEETINGS: 5:15pm Sundays on the front porch, voice chat mode

GROUP: LDS Friends of Second Life, though all are welcome.

CONTACT: Clarise Beaumont

BUILDER: Mavromichali Szondi

FRENCH GENEALOGY – France Genealogie

French-Canadian & early French genealogy links and assistance

MEETINGS: by appointment

GROUP: Genealogie Francophone, though all are welcome.

CONTACT: Savard Horchier

GENERAL GENEALOGY**Genealogy Research Center on Info Island**

Genealogy displays, links and monthly chats.

MEETINGS: Usually the 3rd Wednesday, 6pm

GROUP: Genealogy Scribes, though all are welcome.

CONTACT: Kilandra Yeuxdoux, Abbey Zenith or Cindy Elkhart

BUILDER: varies, depending on the display.

GENERAL GENEALOGY**Just Genealogy**

Displayed tartans provide clickable links to useful general genealogy sites, blogs, podcasts, classes, and maps in addition to an inventory of links to purchase essential genealogy how-to book for RL libraries.

MEETINGS:

TUES: Lots of general genealogy links voice chats 6pm SL time.

THURS: UK-Ireland 11am SL time - drop in hour.

GROUP: Just Genealogy

CONTACT: Krag Mariner or Clarise Beaumont

BUILDER: Clarise Beaumont

IRELAND The Genealogy Source, West of Ireland

Irish research assistance by appointment and links to important sources on the net.

MEETINGS: Monthly chats 4th Monday 7pm held in the ☐

GROUP: TheGenealogySource

CONTACT: Jaylynn Sinatra

BUILDER: Jaylynn Sinatra

DENMARK ROOTS

Wonderful Denmark – Historiens

Developed by a Danish history, genealogy & folklore specialist, with experience in Norwegian & Swedish records. Multi-lingual.

DISPLAY: Historiens Hus – House of History

MEETINGS: By appointment

CONTACT: Charlotta Jenkins

BUILDER: Charlotta Jenkins

NORWEGIAN ROOTS

Research assistance from a US resident with experience in Norwegian records research. See the display at the brown house with lots of links for Norwegian ancestral research.

DISPLAY: Norway Resources – Just Genealogy

CONTACT: Barbara Collazo

BUILDER: Barbara Collazo

BUILDER: Clarise Beaumont

SWEDISH ROOTS

Research assistance from a resident of Sweden who also speaks Norwegian. See the display at the red house with lots of links for Swedish ancestral research.

MEETINGS: By appointment at the fire pit in JUST GENEALOGY.

DISPLAY: Just Genealogy

CONTACT: AnnaKarin Landau

BUILDER: Clarise Beaumont

If there is anything I can do to assist in the development of your research center, scheduling group meetings and cross-posting information about your genealogy or history group meeting, do let me know.

Clarise Beaumont,

UGG Coordinator

Just Genealogy Owner

SUMMARY – March 2009



This month, FINALLY GET ORGANIZED participants are encouraged to keep going with citing sources in the genealogy software program chosen after exploring alternatives last month. Planning that upcoming vacation trip is a great way to break out of the winter doldrums.

And Ol' Myrt here is asking you to venture out and connect with other genealogists using a variety of methods. You know you've been meaning to do this, so no more dragging your feet! What have you got to lose? On the plus side, you are sure to find someone out there who can help you make progress getting around that genealogical brick wall.