



Anchorage Genealogical Society

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October Meeting: The monthly meeting will be on Wednesday 01 October 2003 at 7 pm in the lower level conference room of the Z.J. Loussac Library at 36th and Denali. Topics for discussion: The September Seminar, examples of extraction for the Quarterly and report from the nominating committee. Refreshments will be provided by those who have signed up for this month. Anyone interested in serving on the Executive Board of the Society, please contact Llana and let her know where you would like to serve.

September Meeting: This was replaced by the annual seminar on the 6th of September 2003 in the Wilda Marston theatre of the Z. J. Loussac Library, Shirley J. Hodges gave the presentation.

Family Tree Maker: Don Alspach will be giving a two hour class on Family Tree Maker at the Senior Center on October the 11th from 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM. There are only 12 spots available so call Kathy Roberts at 243-1757 if you are interested. There is a \$2.00 charge for the class.

Family Tree Maker's Newest Twig: If you're one of the millions who use Family Tree Maker (FTM), the world's most popular genealogy software, you may have been perplexed by FTM's lack of seemingly basic usability features common to other genealogy programs. You'll be pleased to learn that FTM's most recent upgrade addresses some of those issues.

FTM 11 lets you keep two family files open at the same time and copy and paste individuals, branches or trees between them. A print preview feature prevents headaches when printing your family book. A streamlined merging process simplifies blending information from two files.

Other improvements focus on family books. Instead of copying and pasting notes as a text item, you can just click and drag to add writing. Sharing your book is easier, too: Export it as a PDF file, which embeds the fonts and images so relatives who don't have FTM can view it.

The FTM software-and-database-subscription deals haven't changed since Ancestry.com's parent company, MyFamily.com, bought FTM producer Genealogy.com (<http://www.genealogy.com>) in April. Packages range from \$69.99 (Basic) to \$199.99 (Gold). Upgrades, which don't include the online subscriptions, are \$19.99 from FTM 10 and \$29.99 from older versions. You can still get the software alone for \$29.99.

FTM 11 is PC-only, requiring Windows 98 or better. Look for a full review of FTM 11 in the February 2004 Family Tree Magazine.

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News from Other Societies: The Seattle Genealogical Society is celebrating their 80th anniversary on the 17th of October with a banquet at the Lake City Elks Club in Lake Forest Park, WA and on Saturday the 18th they will be presenting a seminar at the Magnolia Lutheran Church in Seattle. There are 18 subjects available, they may be contacted at <http://rootsweb.com/~waseags>.

The Abbotsford (BC) Genealogical Society is presenting a seminar on the 25th of October at the Rick Hansen Secondary School in Abbotsford. The Seminar is entitled "Roots Around the World" with 19 subjects available.

They can be contacted at <http://roostweb.com/~bcags> or fdjh@shaw.ca

The Genealogical Forum of Oregon is presenting a seminar on October 25th 2003 featuring Leland Meitzler owner and editor of "Heritage Quest" magazine. This will be held in the Portland Service Center Auditorium. www.gfo.org

Dates for Old Family Letters: If you have undated letters in your collection of family papers, don't discard the envelopes in which they were mailed. You might be able to date them by the amount of postage charged. Prior to 1847, stamps were not used on letters carried in the U. S. Postal service. Later the first class postage rates, per ounce, as of the following dates:

July 1, 1882 - 2 cents November 3, 1819 - 3 cents July 1, 1919 - 2 cents

July 6, 1932 - 3 cents August 1, 1958 - 4 cents January 7, 1968 - 6 cents

May 16, 1971 - 8 cents March 2, 1974 -10 cents December 31, 1975 - 13 cents

May 19, 1975 - 15 cents March 22, 1981 - 18 cents November 1, 1981 - 20 cents

April 3, 1988 - 25 cents February 3, 1991 - 29 cents January 1, 1995 - 32 cents
January 10, 1999 - 33 cents January 7, 2001 - 34 cents June 30, 2002 - 37 cents
The stamps that do not have a value printed on them have the following values:

“A” 15 cents, “B” 18 cents, “C” 20 cents, “D” 22 cents, “E” 25 cents, “F” 29 cents, and “G” 32 cents.

Seattle Genealogical Society Bulletin, Summer 2003, page 123 from The Green County Quarterly, P.O. Box 1244, Broken Arrow, OK 74013-1244. via The Family Tree, Odom Library, Moultrie, GA, February/March 2003 Issue (Vol. XII, No. 1).

Digital Archives: Washington State has broken ground in the Spokane area for a 24,000-foot concrete-and-computer storehouse for millions of government documents. The Spokane area was chosen for this \$14 million facility because it is thought to be safe from earthquakes. This is primarily for the storage of Washington state governmental records for the eleven counties of Eastern Washington. Designers think the facility will be able to store about 800 terabytes of electronic text by 2020. that’s roughly 200 billion pages of documents.

Tax Records: Tax records are not an ideal source of genealogical information, but may provide clues to other more genealogically rich records, such as land deeds. Tax records establish the time and place an individual bought or sold land in a certain place, and thereby can designate an approximate time period of his arrival in a certain area and/or his departure from it; sometimes the name of his destination is recorded. Delinquent taxes may be a sign that a person moved on, and taxes which appear in another person’s name, perhaps his widow, oldest son or an executor, may indicate that the individual has died. Tax records, which show the number of acres owned, or the value of a home, and sometime list number of livestock, indicate the wealth of the family.

Through the centuries many things have been taxed. Although most taxes have been levied on land, livestock and slaves. Crops. Especially tobacco and cotton in the South, have been taxed. Personal property, including furniture and jewelry, has also been taxed. Poll taxes or “head taxes” for each man were required to be able to vote. Chimneys, closets, fireplaces were among the items taxed.

Parish/county courthouses are repositories for local tax records, but in New England the records are kept in the town. Old tax records are sometimes found in state archives: some of these have been published. Currently many courthouses are microfilming their tax documents or putting them online. Check the Family History Center Catalog at www.familysearch.org to see if the tax records for your area of interest have been microfilmed; if so, they can be borrowed and read at the Family History Center near you.

“Kinfolk”, Southwest Louisiana Genealogical Society, Inc. Vol. 2, No. 3, September 2003, page 131.

Tater People: Some people never seem motivated to participate, but are just content to watch while others do the work. They are the *Speck Taters*. Some people never do anything to help, but are gifted at finding fault with the way others do the work. They are the *Comment Taters*. Some people are very bossy and like to tell others what to do, but don’t want to soil their own hands. They are the *Dick Taters*. Some people are always looking to cause problems by asking others to agree with them. It is too hot or too cold, too sour or too sweet. They are the *Agie Taters*. There are those who say they will help, but somehow just never get around to it. They are called *Hezzie Taters*. Some people can put up a front and pretend to be someone they are not. They are called *Emma Taters*. Then there are those who are always prepared to stop whatever they are doing and lend a helping hand. They bring sunshine into the lives of others. They are called *Sweet Taters*. Are you a *Sweet tater*?

Ibid page 157, from The Journal, Vol. .XV #1 (2003), Friends of Genealogy, Shreveport, LA.

Helpful Hint: Be sure to copy information from a Bible, tombstone, census, legal document, letter or other record **exactly** as it is written. Any other information or comments should be enclosed in brackets or included in footnotes or endnotes. Do not use parentheses for these purposes, as the original often includes parenthetical information. There should be no doubt as to what information was contained in the original record.

Ibid page 162



ong Those Lines"

Plight of the Genealogy Reference Librarian

– George G. Morgan Many of you know that my seminar company focuses a great deal of its work on providing continuing education to library personnel. As an educator, a genealogist, and an activist working on behalf of libraries, I have found myself in a unique position to see what happens in libraries' genealogy departments from both sides of the reference desk. Sometimes it’s a sight of excitement and mutual discovery, and at other times it can be an exercise in mutual frustration.

I’ve just developed a new seminar titled "The Art of the Reference Interview," which I will have debuted this week

by the time you read this column. It addresses the methods by which librarians can, through asking open-ended questions of their patrons, more accurately determine what it is that a library patron really wants to know. In "Along Those Lines..." this week, I'd like to share with you the perspective of the genealogy reference librarian, and I hope these insights will help you become a better researcher in the process.

What Was the Real Question?

It happens every day in every library around the world. Patrons present themselves at the reference desk to ask for help without being able to ask the right question. This isn't a source of concern to them; they're used to it. But these unsung heroes of the "information revolution" often have a very difficult time eliciting the right question from their patrons. And without knowing the real question, it is much less likely that the patron's need will be met. There are several reasons for the problem:

1. We as patrons aren't really sure what it is we are looking for, much less whether it actually exists.
2. We know what we want but have trouble describing or articulating it to the librarian.
3. The librarian doesn't have or isn't using good interviewing skills or techniques.
4. There is a communication gap between the patron and the librarian.
5. The librarian has an inadequate knowledge of all the resources to which he or she has access, or has not been given the training to use some of them. (Online databases immediately come to my mind here.)
6. Either the librarian or the patron (or both) do not understand how to develop and put to use good search strategies to uncover the needed information among the available resources.

That is not to say that either the patron or the librarian is to blame, or that either is stupid, incompetent, or ineffectual. What I'm saying is that there is a communication breach that needs to be addressed.

The Reference Interview

A tool which librarians are taught to use is the reference interview. Its name comes from the fact that the patron (you and me) asks for information or assistance from the reference librarian. The librarian then conducts an interview with us to help clarify what we really want. I call the reference interview a form of "polite interrogation."

Let's say that I approach the reference desk and ask the question, "Do you have any books about Swedish people?" The librarian needs to know more than that in order to help me, so he or she plays something like the role of a journalist. He or she asks me open-ended questions to learn the "who," "what," "when," "where," and "why" of my question.

Open-ended questions are those that require more than a "yes" or "no" answer, more than a one- or two-word reply. The librarian might ask me:

- "Is there a specific person or group you're researching?"
- "What kind of information are you looking for?"
- "Do you want information about history, geography, Swedish society, or some other facet of Swedish life?"
- "How do you plan to use the information?"
- "What do you already know about the subject?"
- "What materials have you already researched?"

Wow! By the time the librarian has finished with me, we will have together articulated the fact that it is my hope today to learn more about an ancestor who emigrated from Sweden to the United States in the 1920s, and who possibly arrived at Ellis Island. The librarian may or may not be skilled in genealogy, but he or she should have the expertise in research to help me learn what resources may exist. In that way, the librarian becomes my guide to a variety of resources: books, magazines, microfilm, databases, websites, interlibrary loan requests, and referrals to other library collections or historical and genealogical resources.

What the Librarian Doesn't Need to Know

The librarian has a limited amount of time to spend with each patron. That means that they don't want to hear your entire family history or see the 1922 photograph of your Great-Aunt Penelope McCorkindale in her swimming costume at Atlantic City.

While your librarian may be a good researcher and have an excellent knowledge of the resources available for many subjects, don't ask him or her to do your research for you. That takes the fun out of your own accomplishment. Feel free to return for guidance and pointers on how to locate other materials and get the most from them. However, please don't ask the librarian to photocopy an entire book for you, hand-copy entries from a city directory, or "pull all the microfilmed ships' passenger lists for ships coming from Sweden to New York or Philadelphia between 1920 and 1925." Not even a five-pound box of Godiva chocolates is going to get you that kind of service!

Make the Most of Your Library Time

While the reference librarian is there to help you, his or her role is to get you started and to consult with you, as you need additional guidance. The librarian can provide you some incidental training on the use of the library, its collection, its computers, its microfilm readers, the databases, and other resources. However, you must become self-reliant and spend your time wisely.

An important way of helping yourself work smarter is to plan your research goals in advance of arriving at the library. Determine whom you want to research, where they were located and when, and what you want or need to learn. That means reviewing what you already know and then preparing a list of questions you would like to answer. If you arrive at the reference librarian's desk with your goals clearly defined, you will be better able to articulate your questions and the librarian can more effectively help you find the best resources for your search.

The Librarians' Anecdotes

There is a story told by genealogy librarians about the woman who came up to the reference desk and asked, "Where is the book about my family's genealogy? And how long will it take you to photocopy it for me? My husband is waiting outside in the car with the motor running." You can laugh, but this is a true story. The patron had no idea what she wanted or what expectations to have. As a result, this real life woman's request has become a legendary anecdote that genealogy librarians share everywhere they gather.

Try looking at yourself from the research librarian's perspective. Organize yourself and your goals before starting your research trip. Formulate your questions in some logical way. Then, when you get to the reference desk, you can more effectively use the expert services of the reference librarian to guide you to resources.

Ask the right questions and you can greatly improve the possibilities of locating the right answers.

Happy Hunting!

George

George G. Morgan would like to hear from you at "atl @ ahaseminars.com", but due to the volume of e-mail received, he is unable to answer every message. Please note that he cannot assist you with your individual research. Visit George's website at ahaseminars.com/atl for information about speaking engagements. Copyright 2003, MyFamily.com. Reprinted by permission.

See you at the Meeting!