

# Doing Family Tree Research in Your Pajamas

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or

Using the Internet to find information on your  
family's history

## Who Am I?

- Computer professional
- Researching my tree for 12+ years
- Scottish, Irish, English, American, and Canadian ancestors
- Taking National Institute for Genealogical Studies courses
- Program Co-chair for the 2012 BIFHSGO Conference



I will state it up front that I am a nerd and for years have been much more comfortable dealing with computers than people. I've been involved in the computer field, at least professionally, for over 25 years.

I first started the research into my own family tree about 12 years ago. But those first several years are best forgotten since I made just about every mistake possible. I didn't record where I found the information, I took at face value everything that I found, and I trusted that what others found was always right. After getting totally confused and even having a son marrying his mother (what a mess that was to understand and untangle! James McKinlays everywhere!) I started from the beginning with three simple questions.

1. Was the story of the McKinlays coming to Scotland from Ireland true?
2. Was the family lore of the Howe line being descended from a Loyalist true and can I prove it?
3. Was the tale of the Chipman line descended from Mayflower passengers true and can I prove it?

This time I had a simple rule. I needed to see the information myself before I would include the person or details into the tree. In this iteration of my tree I was mainly looking at BMD and NDP. You know: birth, marriage, and death with name, date, and place. I was a collector of information and my tree did grow.

But one day I realized that I was missing out on who my ancestors were and what they did. Since I was looking to change the software I was using to record what I find, it seemed like a good time to re-examine all my records. This would be version 5 of my tree and hopefully

the last big change. I have a couple of simple rules now:

- Trust no one (not even myself at times);
- Verify everything, especially those pesky transcriptions (even my own);
- Even if it is written in stone it may not be true.

I'm also taking the online courses from the National Institute for Genealogical Studies. They have opened my eyes to what is really out there and also how to improve my research skills and critical thinking.

## Why Use the Internet?

- You have many other things going on in life
- It's a hobby that can be worked on before others get up or after they go to bed
- Travelling everywhere can get very expensive

So why do you want to do family history research from home and not at the places where the information is physically located?

First of all, there are so many things going on in one's life that finding 4 hours straight to just do research on your family's history can be very difficult. Why 4 hours? Well ... you have to get there and come back home and that is assuming the information you are looking for is available close to home. If you are still working or are "actively retired" that really only leaves evening and weekends to do any research. If you have children then those evenings and weekends disappear with their activities. But sneaking in an hour or two from home when everyone is tucked into bed or before people wake up (if you are a morning person) is a bit easier.

Also, as much fun as it is, travelling everywhere to visit the records in person can get very, very expensive very quickly. For example, compare spending one week in Edinburgh at the end of March. Just the flight across the pond is over \$1000 (including taxes and the fuel surcharge). The equivalent spent on ScotlandsPeople works out to be about 2500 credits or about 410 records found and viewed. I have to admit that staying in Edinburgh for a week would be fun but the last place I want to spend every waking hour is in the Scotland Peoples Centre. I would rather walk along the Royal Mile, visit Holyrood and the castle, and explore the city and countryside.

## What Do I Need?



This is a picture of where I usually do all my research.

1. Most importantly you need a place you can call your own and doesn't have to be cleared off at dinner time or before going to bed. There will be times where you will be following a single lead for a day or so and moving your research notes and papers is just out of the question.
2. A computer. I know, this is obvious but never underestimate forgetting the obvious when doing your own research. I also have an old small laptop I bring with me when I go out from my nice, comfortable den and into the big blue and sometime cold room (AKA the world) to visit a museum or archive.
3. A high-speed Internet connection. Some of the documents I find are 40+ megabytes in size. Doing that over a slow modem would drive me crazier than I am already.
4. A bookcase or at least a couple of shelves. Even when doing research over the Internet you still need to get books or magazines that aren't available electronically. Stacking them on the floor just doesn't work very well (I know, I've done that). A filing cabinet is also useful for keeping any loose documents that you will accumulate over the years.
5. A printer and scanner. In my case they are one device but you can also get them separately. Any documents I get on paper from record agents or when I visit places I scan into the computer for safe keeping.
6. A backup device. This is probably the most important purchase for your computer. Every month I backup my computer onto an external hard disk that is not normally plugged into the computer. If I do a lot of work in a day I will also back up my genealogy folders onto a USB stick.
7. A budget and MONEY. *I didn't say it was going to be cheap did I?*

## Software



It Doesn't Matter!

When it comes to selecting what software you want to use to track what you have found concerning the relatives in your family tree, well it just doesn't matter. They all can do the job.

I started off with Personal Ancestral File (PAF) from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint for one simple reason. It was free. This was my Scottish background popping up! As I wanted to go from just recording names, dates, places, births, deaths, marriages I outgrew PAF. I tried Family Tree Maker but I just didn't like the tight integration with Ancestry. But that is just me. For many others it is a wonderful way to easily find records related to the family. I still have Family Tree Maker and have upgraded it to the 2012 version that has TreeSync built in. I use it to backup my tree stored on Ancestry. I settled on Legacy Family Tree since it did what I want, wasn't complicated and I could get it to work the way I worked. I could try it out the basic version and then pay for the deluxe version to get the extra features enabled.





Ancestry is one of the best known family history research sites on the Internet. Partially because of their advertising and their support for “Who Do You Think You Are?” on television but mostly because they have a heck of a lot of records either digitized, transcribed or in index form. They make it very easy to build a family tree and that little leaf is a great indicator of information that you may never have known about.

It isn't cheap but for about \$300 a year (just less than a dollar a day) you can get access to their global collection. But if you don't want to pay for it you can get access to Ancestry from various libraries, archives and the Family History Centers. However, for some strange reason, those places frown upon you wearing your pajamas when using their computers and most aren't open very late at night.

I've found that Ancestry has been great for finding Ontario civil registration records, searching the Drouin collection for Quebec, Ontario and Acadian parishes (although the search index needs some serious work), and Canada, USA and England census records. Seeing the images can sometimes answer those questions that just can't be resolved by looking at transcriptions.

Ancestry is also a good resource when it comes to British Columbia BMD indexes, US state BMD records and indexes, England and Wales BMD quarterly indexes and the Scottish census record transcriptions.

When using the search system in Ancestry, sometimes less is better.

1. If you are searching the Drouin collection leave off the dates. The index used for that collection is many times based on the first year for that specific record set.

2. Leave off the last name sometimes when you can't find the person in a census record but you *know* they are there. The transcriptions of some of the hard to read names can be interesting, plus the enumerator of a census may have written down the name as he heard it. For example: Haughton/Houghton/Hutton. I was looking for the Haughton family and Ancestry easily found most of the census records but not for one year. The first two variations were obvious but the third one, at least to me, wasn't. It took some tricky searching to find that census record. The "Hutton" variation was most likely a phonetic spelling by the census taker.
3. Search by providing just the names of the parents. Sometimes you may come across an ancestor that no one knew about since the child died before a census could be taken and there was no birth record.
4. Look at the first page or two of the results returned in a search. I've actually come across a birth/marriage/death record for a sibling that just didn't show up in the usual places.
5. When viewing a digitized record, check the image before and after for any additional clues. Although Ancestry brings you to the primary image some of the collections also digitize the back page of the document. Unless you know about that little detail you may be missing critical information that can help create the connection you are attempting to make.

If you have a tree on Ancestry and have linked records to people in that tree then pay attention to "Recent Member Connect Activity" page under the "Collaborate" button. Here you will see who else may be using the same records in their tree. Send them a message asking what their connection is to those people. You never know ... a distant cousin may just answer you back.

In addition to all that the message boards are a wonderful place to ask questions and the Learning Centre is useful for learning how to better use Ancestry to search for those elusive relatives. Ancestry also has free Webinars available to view to help further your research skills.





FamilySearch has been around for ages as part of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints commitment to helping people connect with their ancestors. Many of us started our research using the International Genealogical Indexes (IGI) and Pedigree files provided by the LDS. But over the past couple of years FamilySearch has been adding digitized records to their huge on-line catalogue. Almost every week there is a new collection being added.

The new search system, although it may require an adjust of thinking by some long time users, is a welcome addition to their website. Much like Ancestry it is flexible enough to allow you to find people and records based on where they lived, who their spouse was, who their parents are, and by specific collection.

Much like Ancestry there are webinars to help expand your knowledge. There is also a wiki, a community written encyclopedia, to teach you more about the records and locations that you come across.

Of course, what is on the web site is only a fraction of what is available from the local Family History Center (FHC). What you can do on the web site is find and order the microfilm you want without making two trips to the FHC, one to order and the second to view.

For me, FamilySearch and Ancestry compliment each other. There is some duplication but if one doesn't have the collection I want the other just might.



For census records Ancestry, FamilySearch, and Library and Archives Canada have searchable census collections available on-line.

All of the provinces have some sort of on-line presence. However, some are much better than others.

#### Newfoundland

- The Newfoundland's Grand Banks website is the starting place for most family history research in Newfoundland. As Canada's youngest province, its history before it joined Confederation is as a separate Dominion and before that as a colony.

#### Prince Edward Island:

- The Prince Edward Island Genealogical Society has placed online a searchable copy of their Master Name Index
- The Island Register website has information land registers, family bibles and wills.
- The Public Archives and Records Office has made available the Baptismal index.

#### Nova Scotia:

- The Nova Scotia Historical Vital Statistics web site is wonderful for civil BMD registrations. However, there are some interesting gaps at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century that might cause you some grief. You can view the original records but if you want to save them to your computer it will cost you \$10 each.
- The Genealogical Association of Nova Scotia (GANS) has a number of transcriptions available on their site but they are behind a "paywall". But for \$30 a year you can join GANS and have access to those resources.

- Nova Scotia Archives also has a web site with a number of collections that have been digitized including some township books and other fairly old records.

#### New Brunswick:

- The Provincial Archives of New Brunswick (PANB) is a wonderful free source of information for those researching ancestors in New Brunswick. The civil BMD vital statistics that they have online are available for free both to view *and* save. They are slowly making all those records available online. In addition to the civil registration, the database of Daniel F Johnson's New Brunswick Newspaper Vital Statistics is available. This provides transcriptions of newspaper clippings from the early to late 1800s.
- FamilySearch also has a small but very useful collection online. They have the land deed registry record book available but not indexed. Fortunately they also scanned in the index pages so it is easy to find a family or name in the scanned index and then look up the entry in the book in the original handwriting. I've found the usual items such as deeds and mortgages but I've also found wills and separation agreements in those books.

#### Quebec:

- Most of the parishes are recorded in the Drouin collection available at Ancestry. However, the indexing of the dates associated with the names has something to be desired. When searching this collection I've found that leaving off the dates allows me to find the records I'm looking for without risking not finding the person.

#### Ontario:

- Ancestry is probably the best source for the civil registrations. It has the digitized images so you can actually read what was written rather than hoping the transcription is correct.

#### Manitoba:

- At the "Genealogy Searches for Unrestricted Records" page a searchable index is available for births, marriages and deaths. For births the mother's maiden surname is usually given. You can then order a copy of the document for \$12.

#### Saskatchewan:

- Much like Manitoba, the Genealogy Index Searches web page allows you to search for births and deaths. However searching for marriages is not yet available. You can then order a copy of the document.

#### Alberta:

- The government of Alberta seems to be behind everyone else in terms of at least making searchable indexes available.
- The Alberta Genealogical Society has a number of databases available on their web site.

#### British Columbia:

- B.C. has the Vital Events Records site where you can search for births, marriages and deaths. You can then order the document from them.

- FamilySearch has created transcriptions of a large number of the records and made them available for free. That way, before you order the document, you should be able to determine if that is the right person and registration number for the order.
- Ancestry also has an index of B.C. BMD records but FamilySearch is still a better repository of the information before you actually place an order with the Archives.



The one site many start with is GENUKI, sort of a card catalogue for English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish related web sites. It not just links to other sites but provides some historical background of the different counties, shires, cities, towns, and villages.

## England and Wales

Both Ancestry and FindMyPast.co.uk are great sites for census records and also accessing the FreeBMD indexes. Being able to view a census record is always an important step since there may be details not transcribed or a neighbour that may be connected to the family. Hmmm ... two Warrener families living next door to each other, could they be related? Many transcriptions only give one household at a time but seeing the census record may make you think about other possibilities.

On Ancestry when looking at the FreeBMD marriage index you have the opportunity to look at other names from the same page. Combine that with examining the census records after the year of the marriage and you have a good chance of guessing who the person married. Now you can order the right marriage record from the General Register Office for England and Wales.

Find My Past UK, with their focus on the England and Wales, have been adding more parish and occupation related records. Also, Find My Past UK is the place to go when searching British military records like the WO 97 (Chelsea Pensioners) and WO 96 (Militia) records.

You can't forget about FamilySearch. They have been adding parish registers over the past several months. Many of the new additions aren't in the searchable index yet. However

many times they have been broken into yearly “chunks” so you don’t have to look through 1000 images to find the one you are looking for.

There is also The National Archives of UK. Many records can be found in their Discovery Catalogue and, depending on the records, can either be downloaded for free or for just a few pounds.

Finally, many parishes and counties are posting searchable indexes. The Online Parish Clerks is one such group that have volunteers transcribing parish records and placing the information into online indexes.

## **Scotland**

ScotlandsPeople is the “go to” web site when you want to view the old parish records, civil registration and census pages. But it isn’t free. But there is some help to reduce some of the costs:

1. Make use of Ancestry or Find My Past to locate the transcription of the census records you want. Now that you know exactly where the people are in Scotland you can order the right record on ScotlandsPeople for only 6 credits ... 1 to find and 5 to view.
2. Make use of FamilySearch to locate the transcriptions of the various births and baptisms between 1564 and 1950 and marriages between 1561 and 1910. Sorry no deaths index are available. I’ve found that most of the time the birth, baptism, and marriage records end around the 1890s. But with FamilySearch you can search by the names of the parent and discover those children that were born and died between the census years. Again, once you have found the right person you can view and download the record from ScotlandsPeople for only 6 credits.

If you found that your ancestors lived in a city then looking at the Post Office Street Directories from the National Library of Scotland may be the next place to check. Did they have their name listed? Not living in the city, then visit the maps at the National Library of Scotland and zoom in to where they might have lived.

## **Ireland**

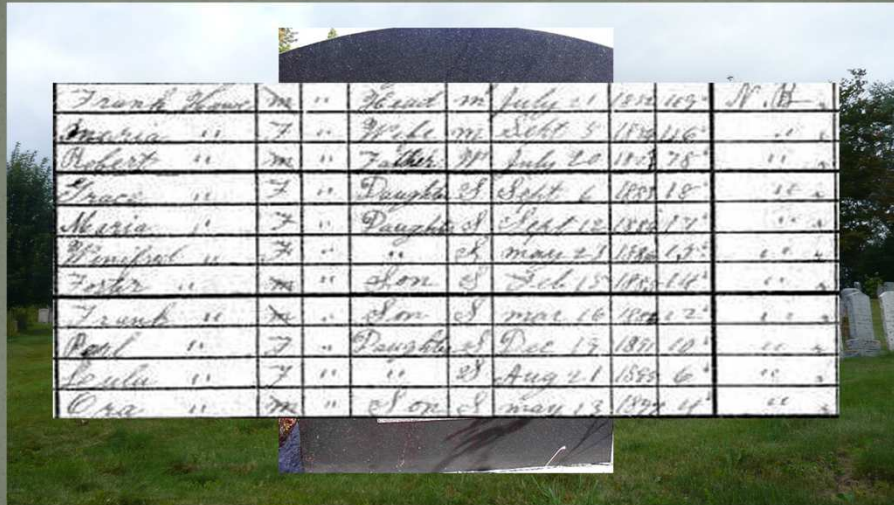
Ireland is the problem child of almost all family history researchers. So much was destroyed either on purpose by the government or accidentally by fire. But the Irish are starting to make great strides in digitizing the records they do have. Sites such as RootsIreland and the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland are slowly filling the gap.

The 1901 and 1911 original census pages that were filled out by the family members did survive and are searchable and, even better, viewable from the National Archives of Ireland web site.

The counties are also coming online. A good example of this is County Clare with their various transcriptions.



# Cemeteries



Frank Hawk	M	"	Husband	M	July 21 1852	1892	N. B.
Maria	"	F	"	Wife	M	Sept 5 1852	1892
Robert	"	M	"	Father	M	July 22 1852	78
Grace	"	F	"	Daughter	S	Sept 6 1852	18
Maria	"	F	"	Daughter	S	Sept 12 1852	17
Winifred	"	F	"	"	S	Mar 21 1852	67
John	"	M	"	Son	S	Feb 15 1852	14
Frank	"	M	"	Son	S	Mar 16 1852	12
Paul	"	F	"	Daughter	S	Dec 17 1852	10
Louisa	"	F	"	"	S	Aug 21 1852	6
Eva	"	M	"	Son	S	May 12 1852	11

One of the interesting things to happen recently in family history research is the photographing of the cemeteries in North America.

The Ontario Genealogical Society Ontario Cemetery Ancestor Search allows you to search the index that OGS branches have provided. No images are available but at least you might be able to figure out where an ancestor is buried and plan a road trip there.

Both the Canadian Gravemarker Gallery and Canadian Headstone Photo Project sites have become "go to" places when looking for images of gravemarkers in Canadian cemeteries. Every month more images are being added to the collections.

If you are researching those in the Commonwealth that have fallen during the World Wars, the Commonwealth Grave Registry is the place to look. Not only will you find where they are remembered but their service number is also listed. This little clue can open up all kinds of research avenues to find out more about the person.

Find A Grave, BillionGraves, and Interment.net have come onto the scene with grave marker pictures taken by anyone who wants to contribute to these projects. They are mainly of US cemeteries but cemeteries in Canada are slowly being added by contributors. If you have an Android or iPad/iPhone with a camera then BillionGraves makes it easy to photograph, document and upload the image all through an app.

For the UK there is Deceased Online. This site is relatively new but has been adding records by leaps and bounds.

Never forget to use your favourite search engine. I've come across transcriptions for a number of cemeteries posted by cities and genealogical societies.

Still there is nothing like exploring a graveyard on a cool, sunny spring day to say hello to relatives.

But never forget:

1. What is written on a grave marker may not be true.
2. The person might not have died in the same area they were buried.
3. They might not even be buried there.

# Obituaries

## **S.L. Doctor, 65, Dies Of Cancer**

Dr. Charles E. Parmalee, 1307-4th Ave., Salt Lake physician, died Wednesday at home of cancer. He was 65.

Dr. Parmalee was born Nov. 28, 1908, in Burlington, Vt., a son of Walter W. and Josephine H o w e Parmalee. He married Virginia Butterworth on June 28, 1943, in West Hartford, Conn.



**Dr. Parmalee**

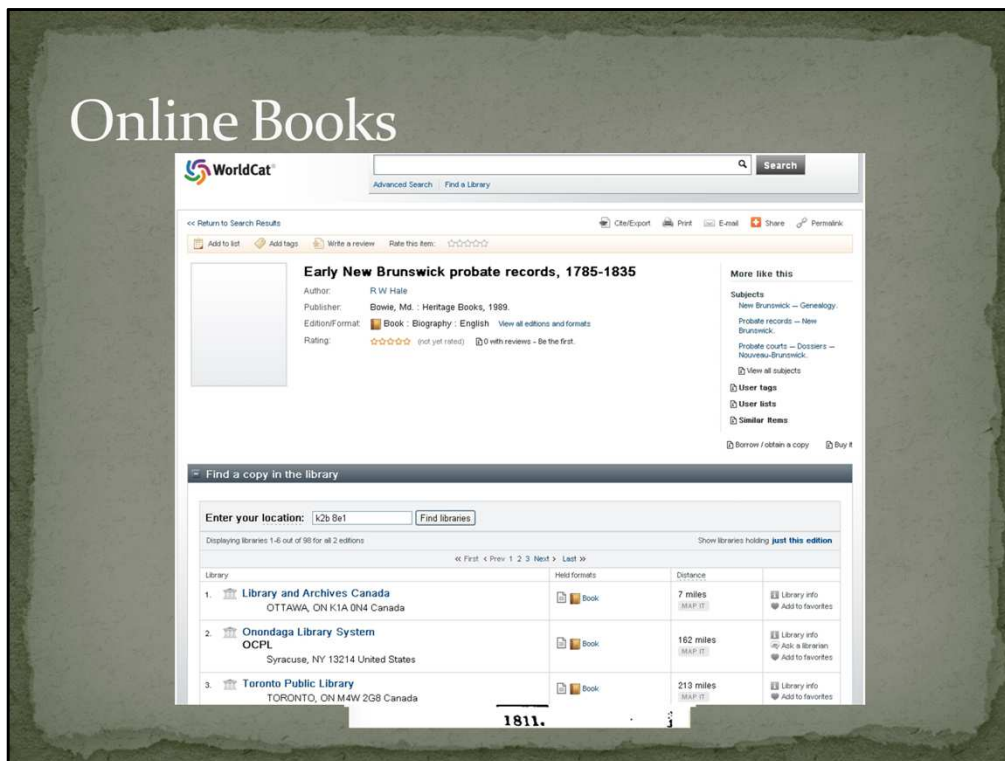
- Free Obituaries On-line
- Newspaper Archives
- Sites like Legacy.com, Inmemoriam and ObitsArchive
- Google Searches

Then there are the obituaries and death notices that can provide so much information concerning your relative's life. Just searching Google with the person's last name and the phrase "obituary" can lead to some interesting finds. Free Obituaries On-line is a great place to start looking for where you might be able to find obituaries based on location. The Obituary Daily Times is both a mailing list and a database of published obituaries. It won't have the obituary itself but will tell you what newspaper it was published in and when.

There are also the sites dedicated to publishing archiving obituaries like Legacy, Inmemoriam, ObitsArchive and Your Life Moments along with numerous other sites on the Internet. These sites are many times affiliated with newspaper companies or funeral homes.

Don't forget about the newspapers themselves. The British Newspaper Archive has just come onto the scene and is building up its collection of searchable British newspapers. If you are doing research into those relatives that travelled to Australia, the Trove is the best repository for newspaper from down under. Many newspapers are now digitizing their collections. Some are free but most are costing \$2-\$3 a page to view.

# Online Books



Glenn Wright did a great overview of online books at the November Before BIFHSGO session so I won't go into too much detail.

The Internet Archive at [archive.org](http://archive.org) is an amazing repository of out-of-copyright books that, through a number of companies, have been digitized and made available for either reading on-line or for downloading in various formats. For example, I came across the 1825 edition of the "American Preceptor" where my 6<sup>th</sup> great-grandmother Jemima Phipps Howe Tute's (she outlived all three of her husbands) story is told of her capture by the Indians in 1755. Then I came across the 1811 edition with the older long 's' writing style. Only 14 years separate the two editions but during that period the writing style changed.

From the main page of FamilySearch you can get to the beta version of "Family History Books". This is a collection of over 40,000 digitized books from several libraries including the Allen County Public Library and Brigham Young University.

Our Roots has a collection of Canadian local histories that have been contributed by publishers and authors. Some of the books are still in copyright but are hard to find outside of the county or village they were originally written for.

Maybe you are looking for a hard to find book that no one has yet digitized. Try using the WorldCat website where catalogs of various libraries are listed. As you can see the book "Early New Brunswick probate records, 1785-1835" can be found at the Library and Archives Canada and also in several other places.

And as always there is your favourite search engine. Type in the title of the book and you

just might find a nearby copy to borrow or where you can buy it.

# Searching the Internet



- Google, Bing, Yahoo are starting places
- Movaco - a genealogy search engine
- Quotes for exact words
- Minus to exclude words
- Tilde “~” for similar
- Don’t overthink the search. Keep it simple

We all have our favourite Internet search engine whether it be Google, Bing, Yahoo or something else. For efficient searching make use of the quote characters “” to surround a word or phrase that is spelled that specific way. Use the minus symbol “-” to exclude pages with certain words. With Google, use the tilde “~” character to looking for similar ideas. For example “~genealogy” looks for genealogy and other terms that mean the same thing or are similar in nature like “family history”.

Now genealogists and family history researchers have their own search engine: Mocavo. It is a new player and it pays particular attention to the blogs and genealogy web sites which are of interest to the genealogy and family history researcher.

One thing to remember is not to overthink the search terms. Keep it simple at first and then add or subtract phrases. Don’t try to think like the computer. Remember that people wrote the words on the web pages and those are the pages you are trying to find.



## Ordering Stuff

- Patch your computer
- Run antivirus software
- Use HTTPS sites only
- Use only official websites
- Use a low limit credit card
- Don't use a debit card
- Doesn't feel right ... call the company directly



Sooner or later you just want to have a copy of that document that the index refers to so that you can confirm that it is the right record and maybe even glean more information that the transcriber didn't write down. Time to break out the credit card.

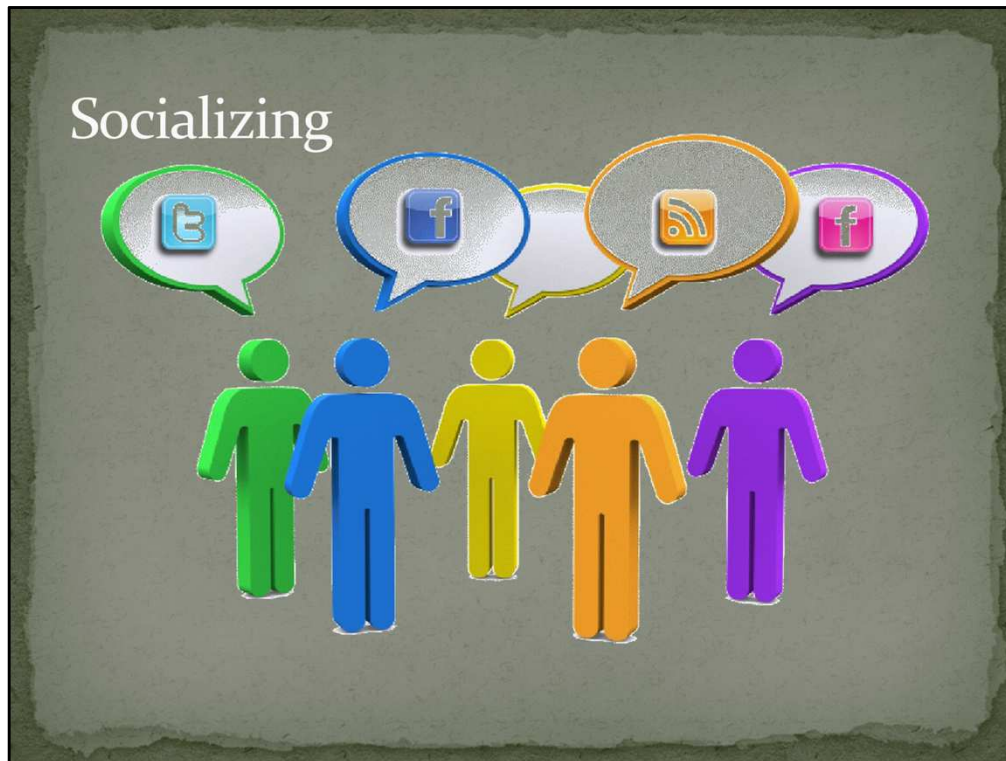
But your best friend says that the moment you use the credit card on the Internet the Russian Mafia will have the number and will be buying all kinds of things with it. To quote Douglas Adams, "DON'T PANIC"

Here are some important tips to protect your credit card and may even save some money:

1. Make sure your computer is patched with the latest software fixes and it is malware free.
2. The site you are using to make the purchase needs to have its address starting with "https:".
  1. Internet Explorer may have a lock symbol displayed to the right of the address or at the bottom of the screen.
  2. Firefox will give the name of the owner to the left of the address.
  3. Chrome will have a lock to the left of the address.
3. If the web site just doesn't look or feel right, don't do the transaction over the Internet. Instead, find the contact information and call the company to place the order.
4. Using the official sites can save money:
  1. Scottish civil records and census: [scotlandspeople.gov.uk](http://scotlandspeople.gov.uk)
  2. UK BMD: [www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates](http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates)
5. Have a credit card with a small limit on it that you use just for on-line purchases.
6. Don't use debit cards for on-line transactions. In many places, laws protect the consumer from fraud much less than with a credit card.

7. Always check your bank statements for unusual transactions and report anything strange to your bank or credit card company.

Many banks and credit card companies have something posted on their website that explains all the various ways you can protect your debit and credit cards when doing on-line shopping. Take some time to read their tips on how to safely do on-line purchases.



How many of you have experienced the rolling of the eyes, the quick check of the watch or the frantic searching for an escape route when telling a family member or friend about the research you've been doing?

Doing your family's history research is quite often a solo hobby but contact with others that don't roll their eyes at your latest find can be very important. Just having someone to check your facts or rational on why you believe something is true or not can save you hours or days in going down the wrong branch of a tree.

Genealogy blogs, Google+, Facebook, Twitter, message boards and mailing lists are all important computer based outlets that let you share what you find and ask questions.

Blogs like those of John Reid, Chris Paton and Elizabeth Lapointe (and many, many others) can let you know what is happening in the world of genealogy and family history research.

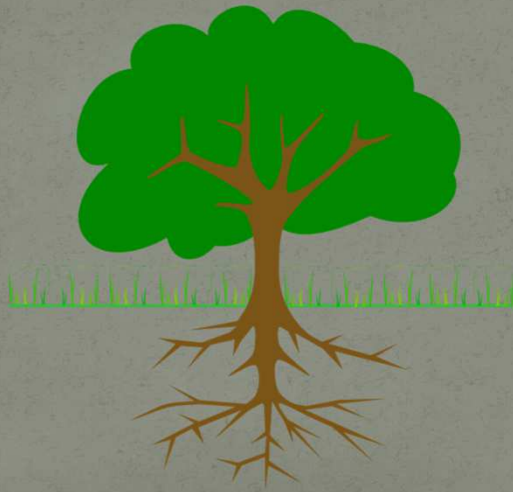
Google+ and Facebook are a little more interactive where you can post your own finds to share with either a limited group or with the world without having to have a blog. There is even a social networking site just dedicated for us called "Genealogy Wise".

With Twitter you can follow hashtags. Two common ones of interest to us are #genealogy and #familyhistory. People will post their 140 character comments on Twitter for the world to see. It is real time and can get quite interesting reading the comments when the television show "Who Do You Think You Are?" is on (#WDYTYA).

Message boards like those on Ancestry allow you to post questions and, more importantly

to others, answer the questions. You just never know who will be reading a message you posted four or five years ago until they suddenly answer your query because they are a distant relative you didn't know you had.

## Sharing What You Find

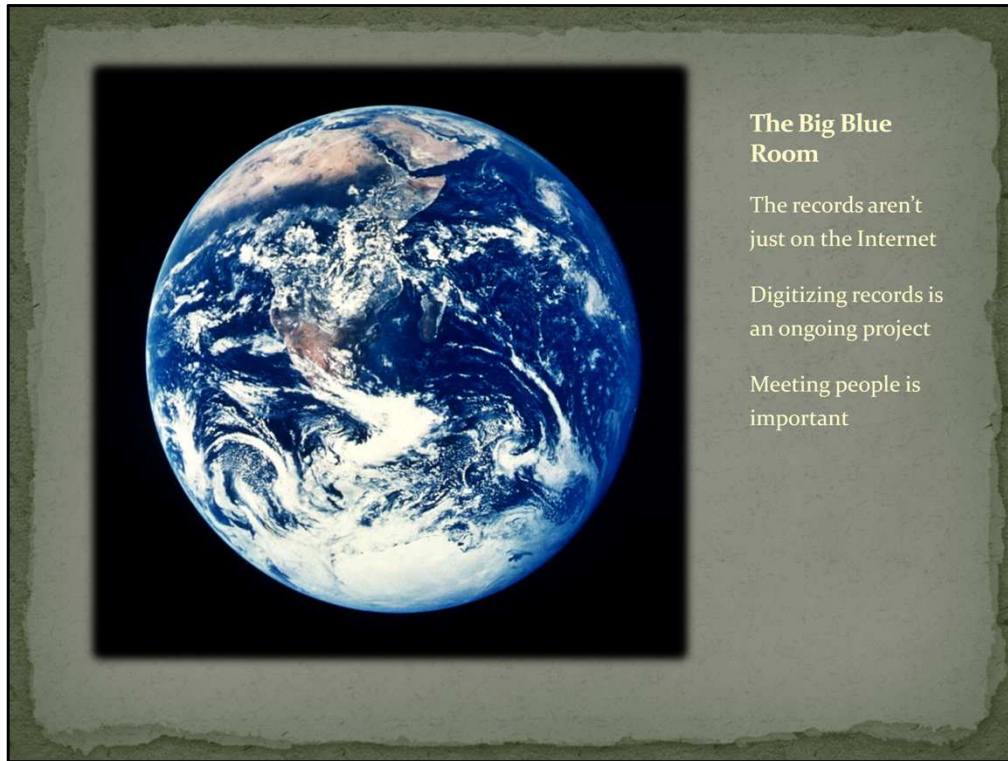


Now that you have created a glorious family tree you might want to consider sharing some of your work with others on the Internet so they can benefit from what you have found. There are a couple of different ways of doing this.

The easiest is to make use of Ancestry. You might have already created a tree there and made use of the automagic search capabilities to find records. If not and if you have been using the latest version of Family Tree Maker then you can synchronize your database to a new tree on Ancestry with just a couple of clicks with the mouse.

Otherwise you need to export your tree to what is known as a GEDCOM formatted file. This is a specially formatted text file that practically all the family tree software vendors support. You can upload this file to places like Ancestry, WorldConnect at RootsWeb, My Genealogy, Genes Reunited or MyHeritage. But before you do that you need to think about what you want to share. Do you include living people (I don't)? Or your sources (I don't)? However, when I place a tree on those sites I make sure my contact information is provided. If someone wants more information they can contact me by e-mail.

One question people ask is "Why would I want to share my years of hard work and have people poach off my tree?" The reason I give is that sooner or later someone that you didn't know was part of your family tree will contact you to say hello and maybe even share some of the treasures that they have had in their possession for all these years. You just never know!



Over the past 10 years the amount of information available for a family history research has just exploded on the Internet. Ongoing digitization projects around the world are definitely helping us in our task to find out more about where our families came from and what they were doing. However, at some point in time we have to leave our comfortable home and brave the cold of winter or the heat and humidity of summer and visit places where records are preserved.

In Ottawa we are fortunate to have the City of Ottawa Archives where the libraries of a number of genealogical and family history societies are kept. Then there is the Library and Archives Canada. A treasure trove of information just waiting to be discovered.

Remember that it took generations to get to you. Don't expect to find everything online. It will take time to get even a moderate amount of the information available placed onto the Internet.

Attending meetings of like-minded people, that is those that don't think you are crazy following a lead on a 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin 3 times removed, is important. Attending BIFHSGO, OGS and Heritage Ottawa meetings and talks expand your horizons and maybe provide the clues you need to break through that stubborn brickwall.



## A Real World Example



It started with the 1851 census record that I retrieved from Ancestry. The head of the household is Robert Howe with wife Sarah and son Edwin. Living with him is his grandmother Esther, the widow of the Loyalist Lt. Caleb Howe, his mother Hannah and his brothers and sisters including William who is listed as absent. William Howe disappeared after 1851 from the Canadian census records.

I was able to find an 1853 deed transferring land from the heirs and the widow of Charles Howe to the oldest son Robert. The deed actually listed all the names of the children including the full name of William ... "William Small" Howe. This record I originally received from a record agent in New Brunswick but it had the usual streaks from the built in microfilm scanner. When FamilySearch put the land records in their collection the quality was amazing.

Just a couple of months ago, very shortly after FamilySearch added the "New Brunswick, County Deed Registry Books, 1780-1941" images, I came across a deed from 1885 transferring land from William S. Howe to William Franklin Howe. William Franklin Howe is the son of Robert Howe in the previous deed. Here it stated that William S. Howe of "Lewiston in the State of Maine in the United States of America Doctor of Medicine and Grace E. Howe his wife." Could this be my missing William Small Howe?

Off to Ancestry to look for any William Howe with a wife named Grace living in Maine in the 1880 census. There is a William S Howe, a "homeopathic physician" that was born in New Brunswick with a wife named "Grace E", a son "Charles" E and a daughter "Josie E". This just might be him. But is "William S Howe" "William Small Howe"?

That took a bit to confirm but was found on the back page of the Ancestry “Maine Marriage Records, 1705-1922” record for Josephine E. Howe’s marriage to Walter Woodruff Parmalee. Here it clearly states “William Small Howe” and he was a physician born in New Brunswick. This is one of the record collections I was talking about. There is a back page digitized but unless I had checked I would never have been able to confirm that William S. Howe is the same person as William Small Howe.

Parmalee, at least to me, is an unusual name. So a quick Google search for “Josephine Howe Parmalee” was done and I came across a number of entries from old newspapers and even a web site dedicated to the “Parmelee” family. There I found an obituary for Charles Emery Parmalee from 1999, a contemporary record! That transcription included the names of his sisters. Could they be alive?

Yet another Google search and I came across a blog for Patty Lee Parmalee with her e-mail listed. A very polite e-mail was sent to her. Patty forwarded it on to her sister “Cricket” and Cricket contacted me. She is my 3<sup>rd</sup> cousin, twice removed.

All this was done through the use of tools on the Internet ... Ancestry, FamilySearch, Google, Google News Archive, a blog, and e-mail.

## Websites

### General Web sites:

Ancestry: [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com), [Ancestry.co.uk](http://Ancestry.co.uk), [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com)

Find My Past: [findmypast.co.uk](http://findmypast.co.uk)

FamilySearch: [familysearch.org](http://familysearch.org)

### Canadian:

Alberta Genealogical Society: [abgensoc.ca](http://abgensoc.ca)

British Columbia Vital Events Records:

[www.bcarchives.bc.ca/BC\\_Our\\_Collections/BC\\_Vital\\_Rrd\\_Collect.aspx](http://www.bcarchives.bc.ca/BC_Our_Collections/BC_Vital_Rrd_Collect.aspx)

Genealogical Association of Nova Scotia: [www.chebucto.ns.ca/Recreation/GANS](http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Recreation/GANS)

Manitoba Vital Statistics: [vitalstats.gov.mb.ca//Query.php](http://vitalstats.gov.mb.ca//Query.php)

Newfoundland's Grand Bank: [ngb.chebucto.org](http://ngb.chebucto.org)

New Brunswick Vital Statistics from Government Records:

[archives.gnb.ca/APPS/GovRecs/VISSE](http://archives.gnb.ca/APPS/GovRecs/VISSE)

Nova Scotia Archives: [ngb.chebucto.org](http://ngb.chebucto.org)

Nova Scotia Historical Vital Statistics: [www.novascotiagenealogy.com](http://www.novascotiagenealogy.com)

P.E.I. Public Archives and Records Office: <http://www.gov.pe.ca/archives/index.php3>

Prince Edward Island Genealogical Society: [www.peigs.ca](http://www.peigs.ca)

Saskatchewan Vital Statistics: [www.isc.ca/VitalStatistics/Genealogy/vsgs\\_srch.aspx](http://www.isc.ca/VitalStatistics/Genealogy/vsgs_srch.aspx)

The Island Register: [www.islandregister.com](http://www.islandregister.com)

### British Isles:

1901/1911 Irish Census: [www.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.nationalarchives.ie)

County Clare: [www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/genealogy/genealog.htm](http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/genealogy/genealog.htm)

Find My Past (IE): [findmypast.ie](http://findmypast.ie)

Find My Past (UK): [findmypast.co.uk](http://findmypast.co.uk)  
FreeBMD: [www.freebmd.org.uk](http://www.freebmd.org.uk)  
GenUKI: [www.genuki.org.uk](http://www.genuki.org.uk)  
Maps of Scotland: [maps.nls.uk](http://maps.nls.uk)  
National Archives: [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)  
Online Parish Clerks: [www.onlineparishclerks.org.uk](http://www.onlineparishclerks.org.uk)  
Post Office Street Directories (Scotland): [www.nls.uk/family-history/directories/post-office](http://www.nls.uk/family-history/directories/post-office)  
Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI): [www.proni.gov.uk](http://www.proni.gov.uk)  
RootsIreland: [www.rootsireland.ie](http://www.rootsireland.ie)  
Scottish parish, civil, and census records: [scotlandspeople.gov.uk](http://scotlandspeople.gov.uk)  
UK BMD records (General Register Office): [www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates](http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates)

#### Cemeteries:

BillionGraves: [billiongraves.com](http://billiongraves.com)  
Canadian Gravemarker Gallery: [gravemarkers.ca](http://gravemarkers.ca)  
Canadian Headstone Photo Project: [canadianheadstones.com](http://canadianheadstones.com)  
Commonwealth War Graves Commission: [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)  
DeceasedOnline: [www.deceasedonline.com](http://www.deceasedonline.com)  
Find A Grave: [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)  
Interment.net: [interment.net](http://interment.net)  
LocateGrave: [www.locategrave.org](http://www.locategrave.org)  
OGS Ontario Cemetery Ancestor Search: [ogs.andornot.com/CemeteryIndex.aspx](http://ogs.andornot.com/CemeteryIndex.aspx)  
Ontario Cemetery Finding Aid: [ocfa.islandnet.com](http://ocfa.islandnet.com)

#### Obituaries:

Free Obituaries On-line: [www3.sympatico.ca/bkinnon/obit\\_links.htm](http://www3.sympatico.ca/bkinnon/obit_links.htm)  
Inmemorian.ca: [www.inmemorian.ca](http://www.inmemorian.ca)  
Legacy: [www.legacy.com](http://www.legacy.com)  
Obits for Life: [www.obitsforlife.com](http://www.obitsforlife.com)  
ObitsArchive: [www.obitsarchive.com](http://www.obitsarchive.com)  
Obituaries Today: [obit-obits.com](http://obit-obits.com)  
Obituary Daily times (GEN-OBIT): [www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~obituary](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~obituary)  
Telegraph-Journal (New Brunswick newspaper group):  
[telegraphjournal.canadaeast.com/obituaries.php](http://telegraphjournal.canadaeast.com/obituaries.php)  
Your Life Moments: [yourlifemoments.ca](http://yourlifemoments.ca)

#### Newspapers:

British Newspaper Archive: [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk)  
Genealogy Bank: [www.genealogybank.com/gbnk](http://www.genealogybank.com/gbnk)  
Google News: [news.google.ca](http://news.google.ca)  
Our Ontario Newspaper Indexes: [www.ourontario.ca/demo/News.html](http://www.ourontario.ca/demo/News.html)  
Toronto Star: [thestar.pagesofthepast.ca](http://thestar.pagesofthepast.ca)  
Trove (Australia newspapers): [trove.nla.gov.au](http://trove.nla.gov.au)

#### Online Books:

Internet Archive: [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org)

WorldCat: [www.worldcat.org](http://www.worldcat.org)

Our Roots: [www.ourroots.ca](http://www.ourroots.ca)

#### Search Engines:

Google: [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

Microsoft Bing: [www.bing.com](http://www.bing.com)

Mocavo: [www.mocavo.com](http://www.mocavo.com)

Yahoo: [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)

#### Social Networking:

Facebook: [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

Genealogy Wise: [www.genealogywise.com](http://www.genealogywise.com)

Google+: [plus.google.com](http://plus.google.com)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)

#### Blogs:

Ancestry: [blogs.ancestry.com/ancestry](http://blogs.ancestry.com/ancestry)

Anglo-Celtic Connections (John D. Reid): [anglo-celtic-connections.blogspot.com](http://anglo-celtic-connections.blogspot.com)

British GENES (Chris Paton): [britishgenes.blogspot.com](http://britishgenes.blogspot.com)

English Research from Canada (Elizabeth Kipp): [kippeeb.blogspot.com](http://kippeeb.blogspot.com)

Family Tree Magazine Podcasts: [www.familytreemagazine.com/podcast](http://www.familytreemagazine.com/podcast)

Genea-Musings (Randy Seaver): [www.geneamusings.com](http://www.geneamusings.com)

Genealogy Canada (Elizabeth Lapointe): [genealogycanada.blogspot.com](http://genealogycanada.blogspot.com)

Irish Genealogy: Help! The Faery Folk Hid My Ancestors!: [irishfamilyresearch.blogspot.com](http://irishfamilyresearch.blogspot.com)

Marian's Roots and Rambles: [rootsandrambles.blogspot.com](http://rootsandrambles.blogspot.com)

The Ancestry Insider: [ancestryinsider.blogspot.com](http://ancestryinsider.blogspot.com)

#### Family Tree sites:

Genes Reunited: [www.genesreunited.co.uk](http://www.genesreunited.co.uk)

My Genealogy: [www.genealogy.com](http://www.genealogy.com)

My Heritage: [www.myheritage.com](http://www.myheritage.com)

WorldConnect at Rootsweb: [wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com](http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com)