

## 5 Tips from Researching *Genealogy Roadshow*

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### **Tip #1 Use Digitized Books**

How can digitized books aid your genealogical research? Consider that digitized book websites contain numerous types of books that document your ancestor's life. On a digitized book website you may find an ancestor listed in:

- Family Surname Books
- Local Histories
- Community Cookbooks
- City Directories
- Membership Organization Histories
- Conference and Meeting Proceedings
- Indexes and Transcriptions of Documents

Depending on the website, books may be searchable by word or phrase like those found on Google Books or they may require some browsing to find what you need.

Let's explore two of my favorite digitized book websites and examples of what you can find.

### **Google Books**

Millions of books and periodicals from libraries and publishers are found on Google Books, < <http://books.google.com/> >. To search Google Books, you will use the search engine on the website exactly as you would when using Google. Try various keywords in your search including your ancestor's full name, surname or locality where she lived. To conduct an exact phrase search, remember to use quote marks around your keywords. So for example, if your ancestor's name is Jane Smith, type it into the search box as "Jane Smith." This tells the search engine that you want it to search on that exact phrase. You can also add a locality to that search by typing in "Jane Smith" Virginia or "Jane Smith" "Augusta County, Virginia."

Books that are no longer copyright protected, are fully digitized on Google Books. These books are available for download. Books that are newer and under copyright protection are only available as previews. Even in cases where the book is not available for download, Google

Books provides you the opportunity to search for it in a library via WorldCat or find a bookseller where the book is available for purchase.

As you start using Google Books, consider signing into the website with your Google Account. A Google Account is a free sign-in. If you use Gmail, that is your Google Account. Once you sign into Google Books, you can use the My Library feature and save what you find on virtual bookshelves.

### **Internet Archive**

While Internet Archive < <http://www.archive.org/>> includes much more than digitized books, it's their mix of books from participating repositories that will be of interest to all genealogists.

From the Internet Archive homepage, click on the link "Texts." This takes you to the Text homepage with the over 5 million texts and ebooks in the Archive's collection. At the top of this page you will see a link for "Additional Collections," click on that and then the "Genealogy" link to view the genealogy collection of books. The genealogy section of Internet Archive has over 82,000 books from the collections of the Allen County Public Library, Roberts Library at the University of Toronto, the University of Illinois Urbana Campaign Library and the Boston Public Library.

While Google Books is more of a "card catalog" of books with some of those being digitized, Internet Archive includes only digitized books, thus they are older public domain titles.

### **Digitized Book Websites and Links**

Google Books <<http://books.google.com/>>

Google Scholar <<http://scholar.google.com/>>

Internet Archive <<http://www.archive.org/>>

Project Gutenberg <[http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main_Page)>

BYU Family History Archive <<http://www.lib.byu.edu/fhc/index.php>>

Hathi Trust <<http://catalog.hathitrust.org/>>

## Genealogy Websites That Have Digitized Books

Heritage Quest <<http://www.heritagequestonline.com/hqoweb/library/do/index>>

Ancestry.com <<http://www.ancestry.com/>>

WorldVitalRecords <<http://www.worldvitalrecords.com/>>

<<http://www.worldvitalrecords.com/contentsearch.aspx?cat=gpc>>

Genealogy Bank <<http://www.genealogybank.com/gbnk/>>

Accessible Archives <<http://www.accessible-archives.com/>>

FamilySearch <<https://familysearch.org/>>

FindMyPast <<http://www.findmypast.com/>>

### Tip #2 It's Not What You Know

Association of Professional Genealogists <<http://www.apgen.org/>>

Twitter <<https://twitter.com/>>

Facebook <<https://www.facebook.com/>>

### Tip# 3 I Never Met a Tree I Liked

Geni <<http://www.geni.com/>>

WikiTree <<http://www.wikitree.com/>>

Ancestry.com <<http://ancestry.com/>>

### Tip #4 Are We Related To.....?

Most researchers have someone in their family that gained notoriety at some point in their life, whether it was for a crime or some other act they were known for. Likewise a family story or legend may tell of a family member that is connected to a famous person either by being a direct

descendent or having met the person in some capacity. Sometimes these stories are easily confirmed or denied other times it may require much more sleuthing.

So what do you do to confirm (or disprove) these family stories? I have three suggestions:

1. **Research the person in question**, your ancestor. Develop a timeline for their life. Figure out what they were doing during different time periods. Ask yourself as you research, could the story be true? Is it the right time period? Was your ancestor in the right place? Are their ways to confirm the story?

2. **Research the famous/infamous person**. The good thing about famous/infamous people is that they leave behind a paper trail. Check out books by historians and bibliographers. See if there are any archival collections with information about them whether it is their own documents, or the documents of a bibliographer, family or community member. Check out the newspapers of the day and remember that a famous person isn't just written up in their local regional paper but in newspapers all over the country. Do some genealogy on the famous person that can help to narrow information linking your family with the famous person.

Some resources to consider include:

**Newspapers**. Remember that these can usually be borrowed through interlibrary loan or may be available online through a genealogy service or a state digital newspaper project.

**Manuscript Collections**. Find by searching library and archive catalogs. These collections include unpublished materials that range from journals to business records and correspondence.

**Images**. Might be available although an online digital archive or through a museum or library.

**Correspondence**. Neighbors, ministers, community members and family members may have written about the person before, during and after they were infamous. That's where using ArchiveGrid , PERSI, or a university manuscript collection can be helpful.

**Legal Records**. Depending on the person this could include court records, jail records, etc. Don't forget that they could have been sued by people they came in contact with for a variety of reasons.

**Biographies**. Written by historians or those who knew the person. Use the library, digital book websites or an online bookseller to find even rare or out of print editions.

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**Local, state, regional and/or national histories.** These could be found microfilmed at the Family History Library or digitized through sources such as Heritage Quest, Ancestry or Google Books.

3. **Research the time period.** This can help you figure out the story and whether it is plausible. For example, I was told that one of my great-great grandfathers had been a Pony Express rider. When I started to look into that story I realized that there was no way this could be true. I looked at the who, where, when and why of the Pony Express. Who was the typical Pony Express rider? Why were they chosen to be riders? Where did they ride and most importantly when? Just answering a few of those questions led me to realize that this was simply a family legend and not a fact. Start your research by asking yourself, could this be true, does it make sense? And then go out and research it to confirm or deny its validity. Sometimes confirming or denying family stories means more than just looking up some government records like the census, military or vital records. It can mean acting as a detective and checking out the story and all those involved.

#### **Tip #5 How Did You Find That?**

WorldCat

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

ArchiveGrid

<http://beta.worldcat.org/archivegrid/>

JSTOR

<http://www.jstor.org/>

PERSI (Available currently through FindMyPast or Heritage Quest).