

Google: the Genealogist's Best Friend: Handout- James Baker

Introduction. Importance of Google as a special tool to help genealogists

- Google is often overlooked as an incredibly useful genealogy tool
- Google has a sizable array of tools and features, several of which are useful for genealogy research.
- Today, we will discuss a few of these tools, but be aware there may be even other significant Google possibilities.
- Some of the Google tools are practically hidden from view, so it might be useful to take a look at the variety of Google features and apps.

Google Images.

- It is possible to find great pictures for many of our ancestors.
- Sometimes, there is useful text that goes along with the pictures.

Google Books.

- Google has scanned over 30 million books, including many books with great genealogy content.
- Google has a user-friendly way for us to find pertinent books that contain data on specific ancestors.
- Examples were provided with historical books dealing with early county settlements, and also for a 1920s musician who was in the public eye.

Bloggng.

- Google has an app that helps a person set up a blogging site. This might be a highly useful activity for a genealogist.

Google Alerts.

- A special Google app is set up so that a person can submit a request to be “alerted” whenever new data may appear for a particular item, such as an individual.
- This capability helps with our efficiency because we don't need to continue checking and re-checking to see if new data has been added --- instead, Google alerts us to anything new on our requested topic.

Google Translate.

- This is a particularly useful app for a genealogist, because translations are often required in the genealogy world.
- Over 100 languages can be translated, in a user-friendly format.

Google Maps, Earth, and Street View.

- Genealogists often need to view maps to see where their ancestors lived.
- An example was provided showing the address of a London ancestor from over 150 years ago.
- Google's map array includes a neat combination of capabilities.

You Tube.

- Google sponsors an enormous array of You Tube presentations, including several hundred that deal specifically with genealogy topics – these are free

Wikipedia.

- While Wikipedia is not actually a part of Google, it is typically used in combination with the use of Google as a finding search engine, so we have included Wikipedia in this group.
- Wikipedia is especially useful in genealogy because its crowd-sourcing feature ensures that the data on any given topic is likely to be current.
- An example was provided where Stephen Hopkins, a Mayflower passenger, was featured. It was known that key new genealogy data had been uncovered in recent years. Upon examination, it turned out that the Wikipedia article on Hopkins was indeed current, and included the most recent updates by genealogy researchers.

Obituaries.

- Because of their close association with using Google as a finding tool, we included Obituaries in this Google group.
- Obituary data is regularly used to provide key vital data for people. It has also proven useful in recent years as we try to “place” our DNA matches.

Google Search

- As with all other data, the Google Search capability is probably the most useful of all the Google features.
- In an example, it was demonstrated that Google can find key genealogy data that has been posted on the internet but was not posted on the typical genealogy sites.
- Examples showed the major payoff for finding this type of data; literally, thousands of new relatives were found through finding these special postings.

Google Advanced Search

- Once again, there is an excellent feature that is almost hidden from view for the typical user
- Go to the opening page’s right-hand bottom area to find “Settings.” Click on Settings to find a feature labeled Advanced Search. Click on that.
- This will open a new box that has fill-in-the-blank choices to help you with selective searches
- Also, as an alternate, go to the Randy Majors site that helps with searching.
- An example was offered: Mary Lovett, Witch, to show the power of Advanced Search.