Internet Genealogy

First completed by Michael Denis: 7/23/2013

General Suggestions

ALWAYS use your common sense. I have seen ALL these examples, and more.

An ancestor with 5 children born a year apart, with numbers 1, 3 and 5 born in Virginia and 2 and 4 born in England make no sense.

An ancestor born in 1730 is unlikely to have children born after 1800, nor are her children likely to have been born before 1740.

Find an old US History textbook at a yard sale or flea market. Using it will show you that your Irish ancestor probably was NOT born in North Dakota in 1643.

Just because YOU spell a name a certain way does not mean your ancestor or other people then spelled it that way – use metaphone or phonetic searches when possible. "SOUNDEX" does not work as well.

It's unlikely for an ancestor to have two or even three children with the exact same name unless earlier ones died. I found one family that had four girls, same name, same birth and same death dates.

The date you have may not be correct. When searching, always use a range (+/- 2 years, 5 years) unless you are SURE, and even then, a range might yield better results.

The earlier the record, the more likely it will be accurate – birth records are better than death records for knowing when the person was born.

There ARE errors in official records; if dates are different, record BOTH unless you are sure one is wrong.

Don't necessarily believe "family traditions" -- grandma was the grand-daughter of a Cherokee princess. She probably wasn't.

Don't accept someone else's family tree as being accurate – stick to historical records as much as you can. Many researchers don't use common sense. Using other people's family trees for information will show you very quickly how wrong information can be propagated WIDELY and WILDLY.

Keep track of siblings of ancestors; you may find a breakthrough by way of a brother or sister.

DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT – you don't want to go back years later to find where you learned the information. Been there, done that.

Free Websites

www.familysearch.net is probably the best free site. It is owned and operated by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but may be used by anyone.

www.rootsweb.ancestry.com is also free and has many resources. In terms of actual records, it is not as complete as FamilySearch or Ancestry. However, its family trees and message boards are useful.

www.ancestry.org is a free website affiliated with Ancestry.com that has numerous genealogy lessons and "how to" articles.

www.cyndislist.com is the Internet's most complete list of websites – every topic imaginable.

www.findagrave.com is a collection of user-submitted "memorials" for cemeteries world-wide. Even with 80+ million memorials, they estimate they only have 1/10 of the stones recorded that exist; however, it IS well worth a try and it's free.

Using Familysearch.org

Log on to https://familysearch.org/.

NOTE this is "**https**" not "**http**". Using "http" yields a different, but less useful, website.

Some records are searchable, others are images to browse.

Their records are worldwide with strong concentrations in the US, Canada and northern and western Europe.

Clicking "Learn" at the top gets you into free articles and courses to help you.

Using Rootsweb

Go to http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi

Type in SURNAME

In drop-down box, select "metaphone" – that way you'll get all names that "sound like" the surname you typed

Type in GIVEN NAME

Enter a birth, death, or marriage year and use "+-5 years" to narrow down unless you KNOW the exact year.

For PLACE, start general (Kentucky), then move to specific if needed (Danville)

Enter "Father," "Mother," "Spouse" if known.

Check "Has Descendants," "Has Notes," and "Has Sources" for the most complete results.

ONCE AGAIN, these are user-submitted family trees. Use them ONLY as a guide, not as a Gospel.

The Rootsweb discussion boards can yield much information. It is organized geographically, topically and by surname. The Boyle County board had 1045 threads with 2459 messages as of June 18. http://boards.rootsweb.com/?o_iid=33216&o_lid=33216&o_sch=Web+Property

Using Genealogy.Com

Also an Ancestry.com website, but free to use many of their services.

http://genforum.genealogy.com/index.html, their message boards, are FREE and are very useful.

Their family trees have the same issues that Ancestry.com's trees have – lack of accuracy – so use with great caution.

Other Websites of Interest?

Salt River Genealogy (families of western Boyle Co) at http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~kyboyle2/Index.htm

Boyle County Genealogical Association at http://boylekygenealogy.org/

Kentucky Historical Society at http://history.ky.gov/ and Kentucky Historical Society digital collections at http://www.kyhistory.com/cdm/ includes newspapers and other historic artifacts

Kentuckiana Digital Library at http://kdl.kyvl.org/ has historic newspapers, photographs, Sanborn fire insurance maps