Generation By Generation a Modern Approach to the Basics of Genealogy

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The author in Chapter 1" Names, Places, Dates and Events" discusses differences in surnames, given names, suffixes, prefixes and the best practices for the recording of names. He reminds the reader that our ancestors and even present-day family may be "inconsistent about how their given names appear in the records." Place names may have changed as well as the borders of the county or country they were living in. The best practice for the recording of places, the author offers, is to "use the name of the place as it was when the ancestral event occurred."

Chapter 2 introduces the pedigree chart and the family group sheet. An understanding of the relationships between people and the kinds of relationships are reviewed i.e., Step, half, great, grand, double cousins, third cousins, removed. To start your pedigree or family group sheet these relationships must be understood.

Chapter 3 introduces the reader to "The Genealogical Research Process" and the steps to be taken to have a successful outcome. Defining the goal (or research question as others have named it) is imperative. The importance of the Genealogical Proof Standard is described, we are reminded that this is considered "the best practice for doing genealogical research." Finding sources of information are next reviewed as well as the problems one may encounter with the merit of the findings. How to cite our sources, analyzing what we find, resolving contradictions and finally coming to a conclusion about a genealogical fact are discussed.

Chapter 4 "Tools and Methods to Keep Us Organized" The author reviews genealogical software programs which have been "designed specifically for keeping track of genealogical information." He lists the benefits of using genealogical software. Steps for organizing paper and digital files are discussed with hints at labeling folders. Simple suggestions for organizing bookmarks were found by this reviewer to be of help.

Chapter 5 "Looking for Previous Records" This chapter provides step by step instructions for finding print books, digital books, periodicals ("journals, magazines and newsletters"), and manuscripts. The author guides the reader through three major websites (Family Search, World Cat and My Heritage) with the use of pictorials which demonstrate how to find a particular family or book. Three useful websites for finding out of print or used books *AddALL (used.addall.com), BookFinder (bookfinder.com), viaLibri (vialibri.net) offer the reader an alternative to Amazon or Google Books. This reviewer reminds the reader that the local library has the ability, through their Interlibrary Loan program, to request a book in printed or digital form for patrons.

DNA testing is given a brief review in Chapter 6.

In Chapter 7 "Using Online Repositories" We are guided in "the best way to search for information within" previously discussed genealogical websites. The author uses examples from his family to demonstrate the process.

Chapters 8 thru 12 Outlines methods, locations, and sources in researching people according to different time periods:
- "Generations after 1950 in the U.S."
- "Generations from 1880 to 1950 in the U.S."
- "Generations from 1850 to 1880 in the U.S."
- "Generations from 1776 to 1850 in the U.S." and
- "Generations in British America before 1776"

Chapter 13 "Generations Outside the U.S. (in English)" a review of researching in Canada, United Kingdom and Ireland is presented. It is helpful to read the simple explanations for what is and is not available. Sources for further research for these countries are listed.

Chapter 14 "Generations with Records in Other Languages" Contains information on websites and applications such as Family Search, Google Translate, The Family Search Wiki. The reader will find all these sites invaluable in their research.

Finally, the author states that "this book was created with the U.S. based beginner researcher in mind," and this has been this reviewers experience. However, the seasoned researcher will find new ideas for how and where to search.