

## Be a Better Researcher and Help Others at the Same Time

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We have a delightful opportunity for you as members of our group to fine tune your record searching skills and at the same time provide a great service to the genealogical world. You may have already heard about the FamilySearch Indexing project that was introduced nearly two years ago at the FGS conference in Salt Lake City. We are now part of that project.

As part of the huge undertaking initiated by the Family History Department of the LDS Church to digitize the enormous collection of microfilmed records in their vaults, they have developed a new methodology for indexing records. This system allows anyone with a computer to participate. So many old records are being transferred to digital format that at the former indexing speed, they wouldn't have been available for searching for several thousand years. So a new method has been introduced that will engage many thousands of new volunteers throughout the world in indexing these important records. The only prerequisites are that participants have a very basic level of computer skills, access to the Internet, and a commitment to spending at least half an hour or so per month doing the indexing.

The Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group has been designated as a team by the management of the FamilySearch Indexing project.

The concept of indexing may be new to you. The easiest way to explain it is to imagine sitting at an old microfilm reader and cranking through image after image for hours searching for the record of the death of your third great-grandfather, Jeremiah. The process is slow, tedious, eye wrenching, and frustrating. The print is small, faint, and at times illegible. You spend hours going through a single reel of film and don't find a single piece of useful information. Sound familiar?

Now imagine that you can enter Jeremiah's name and basic information into a search engine online, and within a second it points to a digital picture of the precise image of his death record, scanned from the microfilm where Jeremiah is listed. In a short time, you find what you are looking for. You may have already experienced that kind of discovery using the search engines at FamilySearch.org, Ancestry.com, the NEHGS web site, or other websites with indexed records. This amazing feat is only available because those organizations have arranged for a team to scan every entry in their records and transcribe the key data into a computer file that then

becomes accessible to the search engines. The key information becomes an index that is searchable by computer programs and contain pointers to the exact image where the information was extracted.

Sometimes these teams are paid for their work, making it very expensive. Often such teams are located in countries where wages are low, but where the ability to read historical records from different cultures is limited. Sometimes teams have been recruited from prisons. It is not hard to surmise that people with some genealogy experience will produce higher quality indexes.

One might wonder why they have not developed computer programs that are able to scan old documents and automatically build the indexes for searching. The reality is that many millions of dollars have been spent for many decades trying to find a method for interpreting myriad handwriting formats, in dozens of languages, and in a variety of document styles. I recall the amount of technology tried in the 1950's and 1960's to develop what was called "optical character recognition" or OCR. The most effective success that has ever been utilized for OCR is to have

a rigid set of numbers and letters that can only be created by a special printer. The numbers across the bottom of your checks are an example of an OCR font. If you have ever used the Graffiti program for entering information into a handheld computer, you will understand the challenge of computer recognition of free style handwriting. The census enumerators in the last century were not expected to fill out their census forms so that a computer would be able to scan them, nor were parish priests in the 1700s and 1800s planning to have their registers digitized and searched.

What is this new methodology for indexing? Record extraction has been going on for decades by members of the LDS Church. How is this different? And how will this improve your searching? How much time will it take?

The new method is very similar to the record extraction system now in use within the LDS Church, but with a few essential differences. First, a new software program must be downloaded onto your computer, with features that make it easier to use and make it more effective for participants, who will not be as closely supervised as LDS extractors have been. The program is written in the programming language JAVA, which makes it more versatile for different types of computers.

*(Continued on page 2)*

### What's Inside

Of Interest	2	Software of Interest	6
Ask the Doc	3	Recently Published	7
Spider Webs	4	Stranger than Fiction	7
Guardianship, Apprenticeship, Adoptions . . .	5	Information/Classes for February 2007	back

## Be a Better Researcher

(Continued from page )

For the time being, they are focusing on PC computers, but those with Macs and Unix computers will soon be invited to participate.

Second, the program allows the FamilySearch Indexing project server to give each volunteer one small segment of a document at a time, so that it will not take more than about 30 minutes to index each batch.

Finally, the entire process is handled over the Internet, so that you can request a single batch at any time of the day or night; once you have completed indexing the batch, you can return it to the project server at any time. All of these features add up to a powerful means for engaging enough volunteers to reduce significantly the time needed to make the vast collection of digitized documents searchable via the Web.

The Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group has been designated as a team by the management of the FamilySearch Indexing project. We have been given permission to add people to the team and provide assistance for our members.

It is our goal to motivate our members to join the project and to commit to index at least one batch per month. Those of us who have been indexing for a month or so have concluded that doing indexing teaches us to use search engines more effectively for locating our family records. We become better at choosing alternate variations of spelling, and better at selecting key variables in the search criteria. When working with census records, we notice patterns of family relationships that are only apparent when working with several pages of an enumeration district. Also, you will increase your ability to read difficult-to-decipher handwriting. Some of our volunteers have called me to say how much fun they are having, and how good they feel about contributing to such a valuable project. I can assure you that you will be a better genealogist if you spend some time on the indexing project.

## Of Interest: Cutting History

President Bush has repeatedly proposed eliminating the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. It is one of the two federal programs that supports large projects that involve editing and publishing of collections of documents. Congress has saved the program by a small margin.

In addition, the National Endowment for the Humanities has altered the rules for the second major federal program, Scholarly Editions Grants that also supports such work. The NEH has largely stopped using the peer review process for the program. As a result, the grant process has become inconsistent and unreliable. Projects that had regularly receiving grants had their applications denied for no apparent reason. The NEH has also issued new guidelines at the time when scholars were completing their grant applications. The new guidelines give preference to those projects that publish all of their documents online. Most scholars who work on these projects support digitization and usually post their work online. However, they argue that the guidelines could make it unaffordable for university presses to publish these works.

The Association for Documentary Editing, a group that represents scholars, sent a letter to the NEH asking for a meeting to

Please join our team on the FamilySearch Indexing project. If you would like to find out more information, you can check out the web site at: [www.familysearchindexing.org](http://www.familysearchindexing.org)

Although you can volunteer at the web site, we hope you'll register through us instead, particularly because it may take FamilySearch Indexing considerable time to process your registration; if you join our team, I can register you immediately and get you started. By joining our team, you will help us reach our goal of 10,000 entries per month. Please email me the following information so that I can enter your registration as part of the SV-CGG team:

1. A short user name that will be your logon name. It should be something easy to remember and not too long – perhaps 5-8 characters long.
2. Your first and last name
3. Your email address
4. Your telephone number
5. Your postal address

Please send your information to me at [rrands@earthlink.net](mailto:rrands@earthlink.net). I will send you a confirmation message indicating that you have been registered, along with the instructions for downloading the program and logging on to retrieve a batch for indexing. I will also send you some hints for efficient indexing. Those of you who are able to attend the monthly meetings can attend a training class during the January 13 meeting in Santa Clara, CA. If there is sufficient demand for additional classes later, I will provide them.

We hope you will join us to make genealogy history in this worthwhile project.

discuss the issues. University press directors are also against the changes in the NEH guidelines. Leslie Rowland, an associate professor of history at the University of Maryland at College Park, directs a project to produce a nine volume collection of documents titled *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867*. Professor Rowland said, "We could be squandering years of key research, and huge investments we've all made in this work. This is just an incredible shame." Many other scholars fear that government policy may seriously hinder publication of significant scholarly work. Much of this work can benefit genealogists and family historians.

Projects for publication of large collections of historical records may require decades to complete. Professor Rowland also pointed out that any digital project needs a permanent home, like a university press, so the university publishers need to be brought into the conversation and not just told what model to adopt. So far the publishers have not been consulted.

The emancipation project which had been underway at the University of Maryland at College Park had received \$420,000 over six years from the NEH before being rejected last year. Five

of the volumes have been published, and the series has received grant applications due so soon and the complexity of the projects, praise from critics. The work combines the "official" documents of the period with documents by or about individual slaves or freed slaves. The materials gathered during the project are helping scholars redefine the historical period and elementary school teachers explain history to children.

The process of supporting the publication projects with grant money has disrupted many projects. Since peer review has been dropped, the projects are reviewed by individuals not familiar with the project. Like the Emancipation Project, many projects have been arbitrarily discontinued without warning. The policy favoring projects that agree to put all their work online, free also came without warning. Many of the editors who are in the midst of ongoing book editions cannot decide whether the publication will appear in electronic form. Almost none of the project directors or host institutions control the rights to these editions. In other words, the project directors who apply for the grants are being asked to publish material for which they have no copyright. With

it is an impossible task to respond to the new guidelines and get the applications in on time.

The publication of these works by the university is marginally profitable. Much of the material is available on the Internet, but often after the printed work is published. Some presses are selling site licenses to access their publications online. They need to finance the cost of publication some way. The sudden and arbitrary changes in government policy are very disruptive.

While genealogists and family historians can benefit from many of the scholarly publishing projects, especially when they are posted on the Internet and can be searched electronically, their arguments are likely to carry less weight than those of the scholars politically. Genealogy is considered a hobby. The academic circles hold a lot of political influence and in time, may resolve many of the problems. The universities also must worry about their financial stability, and will not be silent on this issue.

## Ask the Doc — "I Give No Answers Before Their Time!"

By Dr. Cornelius J. PAF

### German Special Characters

**Q** I received a GEDCOM file from a friend in Switzerland who helps me with my German family history research. When I load the GEDCOM file into my PAF database, all of the special characters, such as ä, ü, ö, á, etc., are lost. As an example, the word *Lützelñüh*, becomes *Ltzelfñh*. How can I retrieve the lost characters?



- o Citation 3167 comments note pointer 895 pointing to wrong owner type (73).

Checking Individuals: 1533 records. Individual 503 Notes note pointer 614 pointing to wrong owner (504).

Thank you for your assistance.

**A** PAF is designed to accept two universal character sets that provide for the diacritic marks in many languages, including German. The GEDCOM file must have been created using one of the two established characters sets, namely Unicode or UTF-8. The only way to retrieve the lost diacritic marks is to ask your friend in Switzerland to resend the GEDCOM file and specify one of the two character sets.

### Check/Repair Problems

**Q** I have recently run a Check/Repair report on my PAF 5.2 file containing 1533 individuals and it says I have 7 errors, even after repair. I have corrected the notes for the relevant individuals, but I continue to have the same errors. How do I find and correct the errors? Or do I need to? I have hunted through the PAF User's Guide and the online help and cannot find any relevant items.

Here are samples of the sections of the Check/Repair report that identify errors:

Checking General Names: 1032 records. Bad name tree.  
Checking Citations: 3668 records.

- o Citation 3167 comments 895 note previous pointer should be 0 but is 641.
- o Citation 3167 comments note pointer 895 pointing to wrong owner (243).

**A** The types of errors that appear in the error report are not able to be fixed by you. They are internal problems with the structure of the

database. If you ran the Check/Repair program and it did not indicate that the errors were repaired, then the problems remain. It would have told you to restore from a good backup.

The fact that your "name tree" is broken is a serious problem. It appears to have a break at the 1032nd name and you say there are 1533 individuals in your file. If you do not have a good backup that passes the check/repair, the best chance you have to recover your file is to create a full GEDCOM and then reload it into a new empty database. If the GEDCOM routine can follow the internal structure well enough to extract all your data, then you will be able to recover it all. If however, your database is so badly corrupted, you may have to reenter some of the info by hand. Do not reload the GEDCOM file into your existing database. Save it as a source for checking what your new database contains.

### Quotable Quote

Doing work with immediate result, such as splitting wood or painting a fence, helps cushion the times when work shows little gain such as teaching a new calf to drink out of a pail or discussing politics with your brother-in-law

from *Rural Wisdom* © 1998

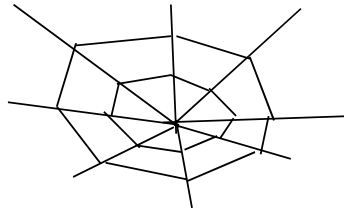
by Jerry W. Apps (1934 - )

# Spider Webs: Norwegian Resources, Irish Townland Maps, Everton Collection to Go Online

## Norwegian Resources

Immigrants from the Scandinavian countries came to the United States in the late 1800s. Those with Norwegian Ancestry find themselves looking for ancestors in the old country after tracing their ancestry back just a few generations. Finding information online about Norwegian ancestry can be difficult. However, there are some good sites for Norwegian genealogy:

- Ancestors from Norway:  
<http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~norway>
- Arne Moen's Home Page from Norway:  
<http://home.online.no/~arnm/genealogi.html>
- Digital Archives:  
<http://digitalarkivet.no/>
- Emigration from Norway - Ship lists: [www.norwayheritage.com](http://www.norwayheritage.com)
- Genealogy Society of Norway – DIS-Norge:  
[www.disnorge.no/eng/index.html](http://www.disnorge.no/eng/index.html)
- Genealogy / Slekt in Troms, Norway: [www.troms-slekt.com/](http://www.troms-slekt.com/)
- How common is your name in Norway?  
[www.ssb.no/english/subjects/00/navigation\\_en](http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/00/navigation_en)
- Kragerø Genealogical Page:  
<http://home.online.no/~kjendal/engelsk.html>
- Norway Genealogy:  
[www.rootsweb.com/~wgnorway](http://www.rootsweb.com/~wgnorway)
- Norway Roots - Norske Røtter og Slektsgransking:  
[www.geocities.com/Heartland/3856/](http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/3856/)
- Norwegian Emigration to USA 1825-2000:  
<http://digitalarkivet.uib.no/utstilling/>
- Norwegian Genealogy Sources:  
[www.borgos.nndata.no/sources.htm](http://www.borgos.nndata.no/sources.htm)
- Search Norwegian farm names:  
[www.dokpro.uio.no/rygh\\_ng/rygh\\_form.html](http://www.dokpro.uio.no/rygh_ng/rygh_form.html)
- Skien Genealogiske Side / Skien Genealogical Page: [www.slekt.org/](http://www.slekt.org/)
- Slektshistoriske Kilder 1500 - 1900:  
[www.disnorge.no/genress/index.php?todo=visKategori&kid=99999](http://www.disnorge.no/genress/index.php?todo=visKategori&kid=99999)



- Statens Kartverk - Norwegian Mapping Authority:  
<http://ngis2.statkart.no/norgesglass/et/stedsnavn/default.html>
- The County archives in Sogn & Fjordane: [www.sffarkiv.no/sffeng.htm](http://www.sffarkiv.no/sffeng.htm)
- The House of emigrants - Norwegian emigration center - Stavanger:  
[www.utvandrercenteret.no](http://www.utvandrercenteret.no)
- The Norwegian American Historical Association: [www.naha.stolaf.edu](http://www.naha.stolaf.edu)
- The Norwegian National Archives:  
[www.riksarkivet.no/english/news.html](http://www.riksarkivet.no/english/news.html)
- The Roots archives of Sogn & Fjordane:  
[www.sffarkiv.no/sffbasar/default.asp?lang=eng](http://www.sffarkiv.no/sffbasar/default.asp?lang=eng)
- Vesterheim Genealogy Center & Naeseth Library:  
[www.vesterheim.org/genealogy/](http://www.vesterheim.org/genealogy/)

## Irish Townland Maps

During the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the British Parliament decided that Ireland's local taxation system (The County Cess) was outdated. The County Cess was based on ancient land units, called townlands, which had been used for many centuries. The names and limits of the townlands were known, but the actual acreage and value of the property were questionable.

In 1824, Lt. Col. Thomas Colby was selected by the British Parliament to survey of all of Ireland at a scale of 6 inches to 1 statute mile in order to reform Ireland's taxation system. In 1825 a government boundary department was created under the direction of Richard Griffith. This department was to ascertain and sketch all townland, parish, barony and county boundaries ahead of the survey. The surveyors would follow up by surveying the boundaries and accurately measure the acreages.

The survey was done from 1829 to 1843, and all the properties were mapped. The

Irish Townland Maps are of excellent quality and complete in detail. The maps cover all of Ireland. They are the first maps to accurately show the boundaries and names of all the townlands, parishes, and baronies in Ireland.

The survey and publication of the 6-inch maps were accomplished with many technical innovations. It was the first time an entire country had been mapped at this large scale. When the maps were published between 1833 and 1846, they were said to be the most detailed, accurate, and beautiful ever produced.

They are available online and as high-resolution images. The cost includes \$5 to subscribe, which is reimbursed on the first map download purchase. A downloaded map will cost \$20 or more. PastHomes.com also sells maps on CD-ROM and as high-resolution printed maps, suitable for framing. To visit the site, go to: [www.pasthomes.com](http://www.pasthomes.com)

## Everton Collection to Go Online

The large collection of genealogy books, newsletters, and other research material formerly owned by the Everton family, publishers of *Everton's Genealogical Helper*, is now available to the public at a new genealogy library in Logan Utah. All the books are now neatly shelved and catalogued in a spare courtroom in the Logan Justice Center at 290 N. 100 West, Logan. The other material, 82,000 papers and other genealogical resources, are also available.

Soon this library will be on the Internet at a subscription Web site owned by World Vital Records. Those who are members of Library Online will be able to access the new material as it goes online. Those who are not currently members can sign up at the Web site: [www.worldvitalrecords.com/](http://www.worldvitalrecords.com/)

### Quotable Quote

When there is no will,  
there is no way for lawyers.

Austin O'Malley

1858-1932

American Writer

# Guardianship, Apprenticeship, Adoptions and Other Family Disruptions

By Allin Kingsbury

If you are doing family research before the availability of "every name" census records and before the availability of vital records or church records, it is difficult to find the names of the children. This is particularly true if the father died without a will. The scattered children are difficult to link to the parents even if they are mentioned by name in the probate records.

If there are minor children, probate law for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was a great help. Minor children were required to have a guardian until they legally became adults. This was often true if there was a living mother caring for the children. It seems that the lawmakers felt that the court had the responsibility to see that the children had adequate financial support until they were adults. A mother caring for young children was not expected to work to provide financial support. A guardian appointed by the court, who often was a male relative, was to post a bond guaranteeing support of the child and preservation of the child's inheritance until the child was old enough to receive the inheritance.

In cases where there was a will, there was usually a more significant estate, and a guardian was even more important to see that the child eventually received his or her share of the estate. The guardian was responsible to see that the property did not go to a step-parent or other relative if there should be a death or remarriage affecting the status of the minor child.

## The Problem of Orphans

The problem that researchers have is the family may have been broken up and the minor children placed with several guardians if both parents were deceased. Children were not required to live with the guardian otherwise. If there was little wealth to support a child, the child may have been placed in a situation of servitude. The male children were often required by the court to serve as an apprentice to learn a trade. An agreement was made at the insistence of the court where in return for room and board, the child would be taught a trade by the guardian before he became an adult. The child was expected to work for the master in return for food, clothing, and the skills of a trade.

Female children were usually not taught trades, but were placed as servants in the homes of guardians where they worked as household servants. They usually would prepare and serve food, do laundry, or do general housekeeping. It was a hard life for a child, especially when there were other children in the home who did not have to work.

The legal document used for servitude or apprenticeship is called an indenture. This document required court approval and was recorded in the court records.

When a guardian could not be found, the court could have sent minor children to an orphanage, almshouse, work house, or poor house. Many orphanages were operated and subsidized by religious or philanthropic organizations. Many others were public

institutions, usually operated by the county. A child was considered an orphan because there were not enough resources to support the child, even though the mother was still living. The courts assumed that a widowed mother raising young children could not provide financial support. Therefore the courts took steps to see that the children were able to have sufficient resources until they became adults.

Orphanages and poor houses kept records of the inmates, and these records were often kept with the county tax records. Private institutions may have records still in existence if the orphanage has not ceased operation. In a few cases, the records may have been saved and stored by a parent organization.

Occasionally a child would be adopted by a family, but adoption of older minor children by someone who is not part of the family was not common. Adoptions in the twentieth century are often sealed, and a court order is required to open the case file. This was not the case in earlier times. Adoption records were public if the adoption was approved by a court. However, many early adoptions were done informally and there may not be a court record for the adoption. For example, my great aunt Ida became an orphan while an infant and my great grandparents took her in and raised her as their own child. No court records of a legal adoption exist.

A guardian for a child was also appointed even though the father was living when the mother inherited property which was for her use the remainder of her life and then be passed on to her children. The guardian was appointed to see that the children actually received the property. Even in this case with a living father, the court may refer to the child as an orphan. As in other cases, orphan meant a child needing financial guidance.

## Finding the Court with Jurisdiction

Probate, guardianship, apprenticeship, and other matters dealing with inheritance and minor children were handled by a county court. This court was different from the courts that heard criminal and civil cases. For example, in Pennsylvania, the cases dealing with probate and minor children (if not a criminal matter) went to the Orphans Court or Probate Court in the county where the child resided. For many states, the counties had only one court when they began operation. For example, Ohio began Probate Courts in 1851. Before 1851, the matters of probate and guardianship were heard in the Court of Common Pleas. One needs to know the development of the court system in the county where court record research is being done.

If the county is not known, it is usually possible to find the county of residence by searching for the family using tax or census records. Once the county of residence is found, the court records can be searched. Many probate courts will have the records indexed. There are usually separate indices for probate, apprenticeship and for guardianship. If there is no index, the records are entered chronologically, and the microfilm description will have the years covered by each reel of film. If the records are not available on microfilm, a visit to the courthouse may be necessary.

## Know the Laws that Apply

Court records do not explain why decisions were made and actions taken. It is assumed that the reader understands the law. To understand what was happening at the time, it is necessary to learn the laws that applied.

Each state makes laws governing inheritance, adoption, guardianship and other family matters. There are almost no Federal laws concerning these topics. One of the few exceptions was a Federal law against primogeniture, or the passing of all the family real estate to the eldest son. A movement against the practice swept the British Empire and former British colonies in the early 1800s, and the United States passed a law banning the practice in 1818.

The law not only varies significantly from state to state, but the law has changed over time. Many of the changes were made to provide equal rights for women. In colonial times, women had few legal rights and were not allowed to make financial and business decisions in most states. A guardian or conservator was often appointed to manage any money or property if a woman inherited any wealth.

### What Information Can Be Found?

Guardianship records often provide birth dates of the minor children because they were needed to verify the ages of the children. Age fourteen was very important because it was the minimum age in most states for a child to be allowed by the court to choose a guardian. Age 21 was also very important because upon reaching this age, a person no longer needed a guardian. If the birth date is not entered in the court record, the age almost always is recorded. Once the age is known, the court records should be checked for entries regarding each child until that child has reached the age of 21.

In many cases, the guardian is a relative of the minor child and the relationship may be stated in the court records. Occasionally, a child or another relative would request a change of guardian. Each time a change was made it had to be approved by the court. In addition, the guardian usually reported expenses and any action on his part to the court each year.

In cases where there is a widow, she may have a guardian appointed. A guardian or conservator was often appointed by the court. Women were considered unable to manage financial affairs on their own. Many women did not have the opportunity to attend school and were illiterate. In such cases, there may be a court record to indicate that the widow had remarried. Without the marriage information, her married name is unknown, which makes it almost impossible to find a death record or cemetery inscription for her.

### Conclusion

Court Records are an underutilized resource for family history research. The records pertaining to minor children, probate and inheritance are a rich source of genealogical data. These records are particularly important from times before vital records and census data could be used to determine age or birth dates. Most court records are not available on microfilm, nor are they completely indexed. A search of court records should cover the time until the youngest child comes of age or until the widow dies or remarries.

The court records regarding children are a very valuable source of genealogy data. They are well worth the time it takes to find these records. Often they are the only source of data that will reveal the identity of the children in a family.

## Software of Interest: Firefox 2.0, Internet Explorer Version 7, Osk for Macintosh and Windows

### Firefox 2.0

Two years after the Web browser, Firefox 1.0, was introduced by the Mozilla Foundation, the creators of the program have improved the browser in the introduction of Firefox 2.0. Version 1.0 has been rated as better than the Internet Explorer and Netscape browsers.

Some of the improvements that come with Firefox 2.0 include:

- Improvements in tabbed window management
- Built in spell checking
- Integrated search aids
- Protections against phishing Web sites
- Better management of RSS feeds
- Live Titles
- A drop-down list of suggested search terms
- The ability to restore previous browsing sessions after a crash

The new version of Firefox allows users to subscribe to a Google-based service that checks each Web site against a known list of phishing sites. It can also use a periodically updated list that is downloaded to the browser. When a phishing site is detected, a

warning message is displayed.

### Internet Explorer Version 7

It has been a long time since Microsoft has improved its Web browser. Internet Explorer has been stuck at version 6 for many years. There has been good reason to introduce a new version for a long time. First of all, Internet Explorer has had some security problems. A good hacker could get into your computer files from the Internet using the flaws in Internet Explorer. Second, the newer Web browsers like Firefox, Opera, and others have added features making them better than the Microsoft Browser. One of these features is the ability to open several Web sites at once.

Version 7 of Windows Explorer comes with the security issues fixed, and with some of the new features that the Microsoft Competitors have had for some time. Tabbed browsing is one of these features. However there is a downside to the security fixes. Some of the Web sites that could be viewed with Internet Explorer 6 cannot be seen with version 7 because they are blocked by the security fixes. The sites can be seen with the latest versions of Opera and Firefox which do not have any of the security problems fixed by Microsoft.

Microsoft seems to be repeating earlier problems that have plagued the company, in which newly released software usually has a long list of serious bugs. It is rumored that Microsoft employees have learned to wait until the next release after a major software release or update. The next release usually fixes most of the bugs.

Internet Explorer version 7 is available only for Windows XP with Service Pack 2, Windows XP 64-bit Edition, and Windows Server 2003 with Service Pack 1. The pirated operating systems are not supposed to work with version 7. Those using Windows 98, Windows ME, or Windows 2000 are told by Microsoft that the company will never update Internet Explorer for those operating systems. Those users can live with the bugs and security problems version 6 (or switch to a browser like Firefox or Opera).

Those who have the latest Windows operating system and have the automatic software updates turned on should have received an automatic update. Windows Explorer can be manually downloaded and installed from:

[www.microsoft.com/windows/ie/downloads/default.msp](http://www.microsoft.com/windows/ie/downloads/default.msp)

Anyone installing version 7 may want to keep version 6 for a while, just in case.

The Mozilla Foundation has greatly boosted the usability of Firefox, but some configuration options have been removed from the main settings interface. Advanced users must rely more on extensions to the browser, or on complicated changes through "about:config." Also, Firefox 2.0 can't add a search engine from any site, as Opera does very well. If a site has a search engine that

uses OpenSearch technology, the users does have the option to add that site to their integrated search engine list with Firefox 2.0.

Firefox 2.0 runs on most versions of Windows as well as the Linux, Unix and Mac OS X platforms. The most popular competing program, Internet Explorer 7, which was recently released, will only run only on Windows XP Service Pack 2 and the upcoming Vista.

Firefox 2.0 is free and can be downloaded at: [www.mozilla.com](http://www.mozilla.com)  
**Osk for Macintosh and Windows**

The word "Osk" means "wish" in Icelandic. Studlar Software has updated Osk, a genealogy application for Mac OS X and Windows XP, to version 4.0. The program runs in native language on both Mac and PC. It's available in English, Icelandic, German, Russian, Portuguese, Norwegian and Swedish.

The update has better overall performance, more and better text reports, an improved GEDCOM 5.5 import, and helps for tracing of relatives. You can enter detailed information about family, friends and celebrities, with birthday, connected media, places of residence, sources for your information and other data. You can plot family trees, ancestor charts and descendant charts. Family trees can be exported as JPEG or PNG pictures, and displayed on a Web site.

Osk 4.0 runs on Mac OS X 10.3 and greater, and on Windows XP. It is available as a fully functional demo that can be used for 30 days. Registration is priced at \$39.

For more information, go to: [www.studlar.net/en/software/](http://www.studlar.net/en/software/)

## Recently Published: **Biographical History of North Carolina from Colonial Times to the Present**



*Biographical History of North Carolina from Colonial Times to the Present*, written in 1905 by C.L. Van Noppen, is a great book for anyone with North Carolina ancestry. This book is available online and it is free. All one has to do is to download it and read it. It will be downloaded as a PDF file to your hard drive. The book could then be printed or read on the computer screen.

This book is a collection of biographical sketches of prominent citizens who lived from colonial times to 1905 when the book was published. The common people of North Carolina are not included. An index lists the names found in the book. Since the

book is not formatted in computer text, there is no way to search the text.

This book is part of the large library of books scanned by Google and made available online. The copyright has expired long ago, so the text is now considered public domain. To download the book, go to: [http://books.google.com/books?vid=OCLC04243114&id=BwSE32uCFNkC&pg=PR5&ipg=PA1&dq=Biographical+History+of+North+Carolina+from+Colonial+Time+to+the+Present&as\\_brr=1](http://books.google.com/books?vid=OCLC04243114&id=BwSE32uCFNkC&pg=PR5&ipg=PA1&dq=Biographical+History+of+North+Carolina+from+Colonial+Time+to+the+Present&as_brr=1)

or search for the title on Google Books to avoid typing this humongous URL.

## Stranger than Fiction: **Maria Esther de Capovilla**

Maria Esther de Capovilla, believed to be the world's oldest person, recently died at the age of 116. Three of Maria Capovilla's five children are still alive, along with 12 grandchildren, 20 great-grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren. She was born on Sept. 14, 1889, which is the same year as Charlie Chaplin and Adolf Hitler. She was married in 1917 and widowed in 1949. Maria Esther de Capovilla was confirmed as the oldest living person on Dec. 9, 2005, after details of her birth and marriage certificates were sent by her family to the British-based publisher, Guinness World Records.

Maria Esther de Capovilla always ate three meals a day and never smoked or drank hard liquor, according to her granddaughter. That may have aided her longevity.

Elizabeth Bolden of Memphis, Tenn., now appears to be the oldest living person at age 116. She was born 11 months after Maria Esther de Capovilla.

Emiliano Mercado Del Toro, of Puerto Rico, retains the title from Guinness World Records as the oldest living man at age 114.

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## Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group

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

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Please send inquiries, address changes, new memberships, and membership renewals to:  
SV-CGG, P.O. Box 23670, San Jose, CA 95153-3670 or Leslyk@earthlink.net

SV-CGG meets monthly, except December, on the second Saturday of the month from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints building, 875 Quince Avenue, Santa Clara, CA. We offer classes and sponsor guest speakers at meetings to help family historians with computer technology and research techniques. Membership dues are US\$15 per year (US\$20 for Canada and US\$25 for other international). Members are offered classes at meetings, mentor help, *Silicon Valley PastFinder* (a monthly newsletter published each month there is a meeting).

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*Silicon Valley PastFinder* is the official publication of the Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group, a nonprofit organization. Published monthly except December, *Silicon Valley PastFinder* is distributed at the door to all members attending the meeting, and mailed to others after the meeting. Members may elect to receive the newsletter by e-mail and get the PastFinder Bulletin too.

Articles contributed by readers are welcome. Articles may be submitted as a text file on PC-compatible disk, CD-ROM, or as an e-mail attachment. The editors reserve the right to accept, reject, and edit articles. Articles are not returned.

The following can be ordered from [www.FamilySearch.org](http://www.FamilySearch.org) or at 1-800-537 5950:

Personal Ancestral File 2.3.1 Macintosh (diskette or CD version)	US\$6
Personal Ancestral File 4.04	US\$6
Personal Ancestral File 5.2.18 and 4 (Windows), PAF 3, and 2.31 (DOS), lessons and user guide, Personal Ancestral File Companion 5.2 Windows (2 CDs)	US\$8.25
Personal Ancestral File 4.04.18 and 5.2.18, PAF Companion (evaluation) or PAF User's Guide (English, Spanish, French, German, or Portuguese) downloaded at: <a href="http://www.FamilySearch.org">www.FamilySearch.org</a>	free

The following can be ordered from [www.svcomputergenealogy.org](http://www.svcomputergenealogy.org) or the group address (see above):

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New Internet Resources for Genealogy  
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For more details, go to: [www.svcomputergenealogy.org](http://www.svcomputergenealogy.org)



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