

## Genealogy Workshop 2018 - Part 1 - Rebecca Knight

Okay, I think we're gonna get started.

First of all thank you so much for coming. It's always nice to find people who are interested and something I'm interested in. My name is Rebecca Knight. I'm of the Reference and Instructional Services department here at the University of Delaware.

The library has for a long time offered workshops featuring the UD resources that sort of thing. And at some point we started subscribing to Ancestry - Library Edition so I thought it would be great idea to do something on genealogy & family history. So we're very glad to have all of you.

The purpose of what we're going to do today, as we saw from the name, was Genealogy for Beginners, but really a better name would be Beginners and Basics. Because they're just so many things - two people have said it already this morning - that you need a grounding. And so beginners, and people just needing basics, are the perfect audience for this workshop.

Today's topics, obviously, let me tell you why we picked these. Obviously Beginners and Basics. Secondly the US Federal Census, which is a well-known source. Many people have looked at it and I thought we would take a look at it in more detail. And then we're doing the topic of city directories - which is a lesser-known resource but one that is highly valuable and I wanted to make sure to bring it to your attention.

I am going to start by taking you to our Library homepage where you can see a path to what I am following. So right here on our library web page, you will see (sorry) Research Guides, Databases and Workshops. Very convenient. And when you're looking here you can see, of these options, this particular one is highlighted. That's DELCAT Discovery which is our library catalog. But here the Research Guides - see it turns blue - here the Databases, the research guides are what I want to start with. And that is that we have a research guide for genealogy.

And on your handout there is the URL, but I happen to be a person who would rather click than type, so I go over here to Advanced, I go to the topic listing Genealogy and Biography and pick Genealogy. And if you don't already, you should have this bookmarked! Because this is our list of information we have about genealogy, specifically focusing on different types of resources.

What you're seeing here are not just lists of resources, but often topics of workshops that we've given before. So we want to make sure that you have this, and we can use it as your starting place. So (inaudible audience question) Yes, I'm very sorry I forgot to say that. Anything that has "Live udel" or "udel" in the URL line is a resource that we created and therefore it's free to the public.

One of the things that I want to stress before we get started is people are always asking this would be like "common questions", not just to me, but things I see out on Internet and chat boards and such, and that is: "Can I do all my family history by typing a name in a search box?" And you know the answer - you're here! - the answer is, no! Because not everything is online and despite what people are forecasting it never will be. And not everything that is online is searchable. And that's actually something that most people haven't thought of. Like they may have taken a book and digitized each of the pages, but it's not searchable.

Okay so...It's also true that names can be very tricky so typing a name into a search box has all sorts of more

sophisticated, nuanced things attached to it. Now on your handout you have this list. These are what I call the major players. These are the names I'm going to be mentioning through the presentation, and I don't want to just leave you in the lurch. So I'm giving you a list here. First off on the list I have [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com), which basically everyone's heard of. Am I right? Everyone's heard of - okay. Then I have Ancestry - Library Edition these are two different databases from the same producer Ancestry has individual subscriptions and they do not allow that group of resources to be purchased or licensed by libraries, museums or other institutions. So they make available a little bit smaller group of resources, which they call Ancestry - Library Edition. For the most part during this presentation I might just say "Ancestry" in the sense that it's going to be available in both.

So next one I have major player "Delaware Public Archives". Which of course is in Dover. And it's important to know that they have a lot of the original sources, manuscripts, that sort of thing, and they have it for the whole state so it literally is a Delaware archive. And it's a public archive. Not a state archive in the sense that most people use the phrase in other states. State archive - because what they do is they take records from municipalities and even from schools, all sorts of things that are not, or churches, are things that are donated and are not necessarily in the purview of a state archive. So they emphasize that by their name. There are also the Delaware Libraries and the Delaware Library Catalog. Are there any of you who have public library cards? Excellent! That's a good resource and they don't have some things that we have, but we don't have some things that they have!

There are also - the website FamilySearch. That's produced by the Mormons, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and they also have a catalog so the family search and the catalog of their resources. Then there's the National Archives the US government. That's where a lot of this information comes from even though it might be held in other places. Then there's "Cindy's List of Genealogy Sites on the Internet". Cindy has been collecting web resources for years and putting them in logical arrangements and making them findable and that's an excellent kind of thing when you want to say, "Ok, if I wanted military records and if I want things about the state of Arkansas", that has wonderful web resources. And then there's one that I have not previously had on my list but I'm adding it now, and that's called [findmypast.com](http://findmypast.com). The dollar sign indicates that it's a for-fee service. But the "F" - yes I added that - the "F" is for a service that has a considerable amount of free resources. So you may wish to subscribe to "findmypast", but if you don't there are still resources that you can take advantage of. And you should have this list on your handout - and this will give us a background for talking about the resources.

First thing is - where to start? And where to start as they say, starts in your house. But more fully it starts in everybody's houses! All the grandparents and aunts and uncles and such. So the first thing is to gather materials. You have materials, and then what you're looking for is everybody's collections of things. You are going to be starting with yourself. I know that it's really tempting to go through and say well we're descendants of Charlotte Brontë, or you know, Napoleon or something. But that's not a good idea because there are a lot of twists and turns as you're going backwards and it's better to start with yourself, with your generation. Anything that you know. Working from the known to the unknown is the procedure here. When you gather all of those materials - here's something that's important - you need to sort them. In particular you need to sort them into some kind of logical order but don't forget the step of sorting them by what type of media they are. Because photographs don't mix well with anything. Newspaper clippings REALLY don't mix well with other things and they will destroy other materials if they're kept piled right on top of each other. When you go to family reunions or if you organize birthday party, anniversary party, whatever, talk to your relatives, talk to everyone. Be that person at the gathering who really wants to know family stories. And as you record yourself and your families keep in mind that you really may not have as much time as you think. Ask your relatives if they have any letters, newspaper clippings - hopefully separated -, obituaries, photo albums, medals, make a detailed list of who owns what and request copies or photographs of the the items. The next piece is to document the sources

of the information. You are going to run into conflicting information - it's just going to happen. And you will want to know whether you got that information from a tombstone, or an official document, or any other, or family lore, or any other method.

You will need to weigh the relative trustworthiness of those sources. I can give you a hint tombstones are not really very reliable. So that's where to start and how to get started.

Now we're going to talk about the getting organized part. Meaning: "How do you record this information?" All but all the information that you have and even information that you're going to be looking for. This is where you make your decisions. The decisions include: Are you going to be using paper as your main? Are you going to be using electronic programs, in other words for your main source? And if you're doing a paper, are you going to be using file folders? Are you going to be using notebooks? And those kinds of questions are things you really need to think about now. I do find however that often people will use some kind of combination of those so, it also depends upon what is useful and what's doable. Because if the system won't work for you, or if you aren't going to work the system, then it's no good.

I am going to go to the Genealogy Research Guide, under the Beginners on Basics tab which is the one for this class today. And as you scroll down, you will see some information - mostly web pages - that you can go to to get some ideas about organization pros and cons, what people have say works for them, that sort of thing. Some of these are really good resources. I found a lot of interesting information that I wish I had known back when I was starting some of this. So this is your chance to go through and think of your system from scratch.

Notice that one of the resources that I put in is called "Why Bother: The Value of Documentation" and that's very important. That's the kind of thing that I'm referring to when I say, "What were the sources of your information?", because you'll need to go back and look at them again. So that's a really good article talking about techniques on how to do that. Keeping the information goes to all kinds of different things. On the first page of your white handout I have a copy of something called a Research Journal, where reasonably, obviously, you should go through and keep track of what you've searched, and where are you've gone, and who you've contacted, the sources, the repositories, libraries, courthouses, databases, or whatever. Obviously keep it short. A lot of people with a form like this will simply adapt it. Some people make a spreadsheet, some people do a Word document, that sort of thing. But the form itself is yours and you can use it. And even if you decide you don't want to use paper as your primary resource - certainly possible - there are times when the paper is important as how to do it sort of thing.

So here's the Research Journal page that you have, and your second page is a blank copy of the Census Form that was used for the 1930 census. It has the columns and the lines and what the head of the columns say -which is very important because when you're looking at a census page, when you get down to the bottom you're not going to be able to see the heading at the top.

The next page of your handout is a copy of an actual census form. And most of these census forms are ledger size - not letter size - and you can see how important a blank form (recording form) may be to you as you're pursuing your research. Just to make that point over there on the counter, there are free forms. The white notebook is full of forms for different kinds of situations.

Any time during the session or after feel free to walk over there. If you see something just take a copy. Remember I was talking about separating out the resources and making sure you preserve them, here I'm pointing to a page from the National Archives about caring for your records. and you may find that interesting and I hope helpful. I also have some other information packed in here I apologize it's a lot of dense information.

But this other section is on resources that you can learn from, a lot more than we can accomplish today. One of the things that I keep reading is you can join a Genealogy Society. So what if I live here in Delaware, I do not have any relatives in Delaware, and yet they have had that Delaware Genealogical Society have had meetings and among the speakers would be somebody from National Archives, or familysearch or something like that. So that not everything the society discusses is Delaware related. So I think you would find similar information if your research happens to be in other areas. So I'm going to start with some things that I consider extremely important. I'm going to start with the one at the top the one called: "The Source". "The Source".

I have to tell you that when someone comes to me and they are asking a question which is totally outside of my experience, rather than running to Wikipedia, I go to "The Source". There has only been one time it disappointed me so that's that's pretty good. When you look at the table of contents you will be able to see how nicely they divided it into like: church records, business and organization records, special groups of people, and a lot, a lot, a lot, of appendices which lists various resources. There's also another book - same publisher called "The Red Book" and this covers (subtitle) American, state, county and town resources. I've opened it up randomly and it open to Nebraska. So you can find out what kinds of resources, what kinds of land holding -like the Midwest is a very different land holding indeed system from the east coast.

Remember the West/Midwestern counties little nice little grids, everything. I used to live in Kansas. At any rate this goes by tells you basic information about when it was founded, what kinds of records they keep, and where you might find these records.

Now fortunately for us even though this book was published a while ago and lots of it is dated, if I wanted to find I found out from here that records are not consolidated at the state level -Delaware records for the most part are consolidated at the state level - which is nice. But in other states you have to contact the individual counties. And so if this tells me that it's done at the county level, gives me a list of all the counties, when they were created... You have to keep in mind that the county boundaries that exist today are quite likely not going to be the ones that existed you know way back. So there's a lot of good information here. If you find out something about the county and the records you can Google it. Because the phone numbers and such won't be of any use anymore. There are various books on organizing your information, and then here are some more books.

Just ones that looked good to me. (No I haven't read all of these.) This one for example, "Genealogy for the First Time", is a book that is not held here at the UD library. But it's still a good book. And this book happens to be available in the Public Library System. So for those of you who don't have your public library cards at this point consider that these kinds of materials "Genealogy for the First Time", is a good example of what a public library would have and we wouldn't have as much of. You know we're going more for the academic or official sources, and they're going more for popular publications, which is what a lot of these are. What Familysearch does is it puts together information so that you can better be informed about your choices and about the resources. So they have a guide for all of the states and that's a good example, very good example, of a resource that you might need or you might find useful. So you can see a lot of these have good titles: "Research Cornerstones", "Top 10 Genealogy Mistakes to Avoid". Yes, these are pretty good. So there's a lot of information. Genealogy has so benefited by the internet.

The only other group that benefited more by the internet are people who do funny videos of cats! But genealogy, in my opinion, way outranks those. Though not as many videos! The resources are amazing and they keep growing which is wonderful but it also makes it hard to keep up with. Most of the YouTube channels are done well, a lot of the YouTube channels, and the ones that I'm listing here, are done by the various companies or organizations. That's important because what I'm trying to do is present for you a look at all of

the different resources and I'm not going just to one company. So I guess I would say that's the value that you would have here. But it's very interesting to go to YouTube and just do a search for genealogy or genealogy research. You'll find a lot of things. Then if you're really interested in pursuing things and you're still running into brick walls and such, there are organizations that offer courses for a fee.

Ancestry has an "Academy". FamilySearch has a lot of free ones. Family Tree, in the dollar sign of course, meaning subscription, Family Tree University has a lot of courses, and I've taken one of them. I thought it was really good you know you watch the videos whenever you can and you read through the required materials and I learned a lot from that. So if you're having difficulty or want that extra deep information just remember that enrolling in courses is a good idea or can be a good idea. Now what do you do with all of this? I would recommend a strategy. A strategy of setting a goal. One person, one family branch, one event, one record type. Like go through and do a lot of census searching on a day that you have access to Ancestry Library Edition. That sort of thing, and when you're doing this think about what kinds of sources. You have resources here that tell you how to approach research. Research - what are the sources that might be useful to you and where are you going to find them?

Then you should copy or abstract, in other words make meaningful short notes, from that source and I like to always make a copy of the original record. Like I have a copy of this census form which in print isn't really legible. But online is really legible. But I'll have this copy in case I need to refer back to it at one time. Then you need to file your information or record your information whatever system you've picked out to do it, this is when you work the system, to make it work for you. Abstract that information, put it into the family tree or whatever software you might be using, and then you set another goal and you repeat as necessary. When I'm talking about setting a goal it's important that you set a goal: "one person", "one family", etc. That's important for you to keep focus, but it's also important for you if you need assistance. I can tell you one of the very worst things you might do in a general library such as ours - academic library - is to walk in and say, (and I'm not making this up) "I want all of the information that you have about the Smith family who might have lived in Sussex County in this certain time period." [Whispers] Don't do that... First of all you'll freak out the person behind the desk! But it's really hard to help in "all the resources kind-of-thing". If you have an idea of what you're doing that's the best thing to go with.

But it doesn't mean that you won't run into things that you didn't expect. Then once you've done that, you've done a lot of research, you've pursued it - think about doing something with that research. Not just keeping it in a box or a whole bunch of notebooks. Think about doing something with that. Publish it. Pass it on to somebody. You can self publish so easily these days. You could go to such and such and take pages you printed and they all turn it into, you know, an informal self-published book. We even have some of those here in our library collection. It's important to know that the taking of the Federal Census is directed in the US Constitution and that has been in the news recently. The census is taken every 10 years since 1790. 10 years decennial. For genealogy, the most important part of the census is the census schedule. Sometimes called the "Enumeration Sheet". That is the part of the census that contains people's names. The rest of the census, (for) everybody else but you, is looking at the census from a point of view of statistics. How many people lived in this town, that sort of thing. So what we're looking at is essentially the raw data upon which these statistics are compiled.

It's very interesting to look at the censuses for example 1940 is the most recent census available. Okay you've noticed 1940, and you may ask why...? Thank you for asking that! The census is taken under condition of privacy of the individuals signing the form. If that information was immediately released that would not be private. So the privacy consideration is extremely important and the date of 72 years - 72 years from the point the census was taken - was established...mmm...quite a long time ago when 72 years was the expected lifespan. So that all of those people you would consider dead. However (to protect their privacy) however the life expectancy has changed quite a bit and I know for example when the 1930 census was released I was invited to go down to Seaford and give a presentation to the Genealogical Society down there. There were people in that very room who were up on the screen! So from the genealogist's point of view we hope they never figure out that they should change the date. It would be very bad. There are also times, unfortunately, when the schedules are not available. Destruction by fire being one of the major ones. On the research guide on going to "Census Schedules" the tab for "Census Schedules". You will see there's also "Census Questions", and then examples from 1790 and 1930. So for the "Census Schedules", this for example is something from the 1790 census. Now there are several striking things about this census, and you were saying earlier, (that) you don't know the people and you don't know their relationship. It's just a list of names of the heads of household and everybody else in that household is a tick mark. It seems to us to be short-sighted and misguided and all of those kinds of things, but the purpose of taking the census was to see who was going to pay taxes, and to see who could be drafted for war.

So they want to know males older and younger than 18. So not perfect for genealogy. And as you can see in this census not only is the information handwritten the form itself is handwritten. Good to have those blank senses recording forms! But it's important to know that every census asked different questions. So on your handout, your white handout, you have a page: "Population Census Questions". So that you can get a sense of what was asked or not asked in particular censuses from 1790 to 2000. Which, since it hasn't been released we're not really interested in. And when you're looking at the census availability there are schedules that are not available. In Delaware one of the more important ones is that 1790 is not available. It was destroyed. The other colonies, former colonies, are available just not Delaware. People here have done diligent work and tried to recreate who might have given information on the census from tax rolls. You know, it's a great job, but still you're dealing with limited information. One of the big, big deficiencies is 1890. Almost all of the country is destroyed. And here I have a link to an article talking more about that. "Fire, water and ice destroy the 1890 census". It's a sad thing from many points of view, but in tracing your ancestors you're going to hit this big gap where there's nothing. And it would have been I think very good census because you can tell by 1900 and 1910 all of the different kinds of questions that they added. So you know would have been good thing. An oddity is that there was a list of African-Americans (listed as "Negroes" at that time) that was almost accidentally saved.

It's just one of those little historical coincidences that somebody challenged the information, and so another agency made a copy of the schedule so that they could see whether or not the challenge was valid. And so here we have information from the 1890 census. That's available in several different formats and most importantly in Ancestry Library Edition. You just never know. In fact when I was looking through this book "The Census Book", I came to the conclusion that it's not at all remarkable that so many records were lost. It's actually remarkable that any of them survived because those schedules were not considered important. They were the thing you send to Washington and you keep a copy of in your state and you might be using it for scrap paper. So different ideas...