

# Family Organizations: Who, What, When, Where, Why?

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Family Organizations can be helpful in your search for information about your ancestors. This class focuses on three aspects of working with family organizations: How to find a family organization; How to both help and get help from a family organization; and Ideas on how a family organization can work successfully in the FamilySearch Family Tree.

## How to Find a Family Organization

Where have all the family organizations gone? Finding a current family organization can be a little difficult, but finding the records that belonged to a family organization that no longer exists is harder. For this reason alone, it's important to keep in touch with the family organizations that you are already aware of.

Books about family organizations, websites that list family organizations, and a basic search on the Internet will help you find a current or defunct family organization. The FamilySearch Wiki has a set of pages set up to document and link to websites, blogs, Facebook pages, and other sites created by family organizations. Anyone with a FamilySearch account can add an organization, or update the information for those already listed:

### Internet Searches:

- Surname + "family association"
- Surname + "family organization"
- Surname + "family society"

### Websites and Organizations:

- FamilySearch Wiki: Family Associations [www.familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Family\\_Associations](http://www.familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Family_Associations)
- CyndisList: Societies and Groups <http://www.cyndislist.com/societies/>
- CyndisList: Surnames, Family Associations, and Family Newsletters <http://www.cyndislist.com/surnames/>
- The Guild of One-Name Studies, see <http://one-name.org>, <https://www.facebook.com/guildonename/>, and [https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Guild\\_of\\_One-Name\\_Studies](https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Guild_of_One-Name_Studies) for details.

### Publications:

- Bentley, Elizabeth Petty., and Deborah Ann. Carl. *Directory of Family Associations*. 4th ed. Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Pub., 2001.
- Thomas Jay Kemp. *Virtual Roots: A guide to genealogy and local history on the World Wide Web*. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1997.
- Although out-of-print, Everton Publishers', *Genealogical Helper* included lists of family organizations in the March-April issues that may help you find family organizations that



are still functioning, or the records of those that no longer exist as a formal organization. See the FamilySearch Catalog for availability of back issues.

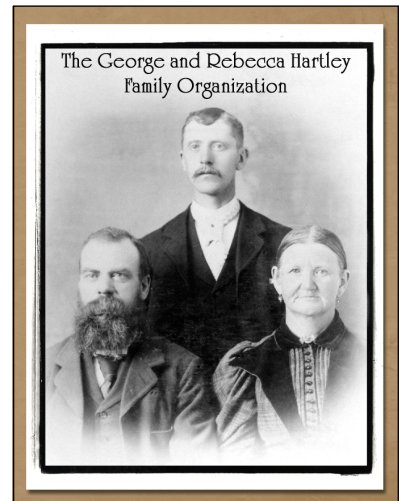
## Helpful Family Organizations

Family organizations are successful when the members are actively engaged in all aspects of the organization. Positions that need to be filled by family volunteers often include an historian, newsletter editor, reunion committee members, genealogists, a webmaster, treasurer, and also a social media committee. The organization will thrive when there are many volunteers.

- See Christine Rose's publication, *Family Associations - Organization and Management*, 3rd ed. San Jose, California: Rose Family Association, 2001, for more details about creating and maintaining a family organization.

Christine Rose estimated that there were at least 1,000-2,000 family associations in 2001 at the time of publication for her *Family Associations* book. Some have survived, but others have not. When a family organization ceases to exist, what happens to the family records that were collected by a family organization? Finding those records may be one of the most valuable projects you can accomplish. Knowing where the records were stored after the organization ended is half the battle.

- The George and Rebecca Hartley Family Organization was officially organized in 1938 and continued until the year 2010. What happened to all the genealogy records, the letters, photos, stories, histories, and the birth, marriage, death, and burial records obtained by the organization for over sixty years?
- The informal Benjamin Kingman Curtis family organization had yearly reunions, records of marriages, births of children, and records of family deaths. Plus there were journals, diaries, and photos that they kept during the early 1900's. One family member, Clifford Ulysses Brown was the family genealogist. He died in 1964 and soon after his death, all of his genealogy was packed away and forgotten.



While some organizations do not survive, there are a lot that do. Rose mentions in *Family Associations* that when members join a Family Association, they "expect services". The expectations "may be a publication, or perhaps help with data by correspondence, but in some form they want benefits for their membership. *Providing it is the key to success.*" (p. vii). Today, some family organizations are beginning to share their collections online. The options to share online are many, including a blog, a website, on the FamilySearch Family Tree, or at [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com), [findmypast.com](http://findmypast.com), [MyHeritage.com](http://MyHeritage.com), [WikiTree.com](http://WikiTree.com) or other online tree options.

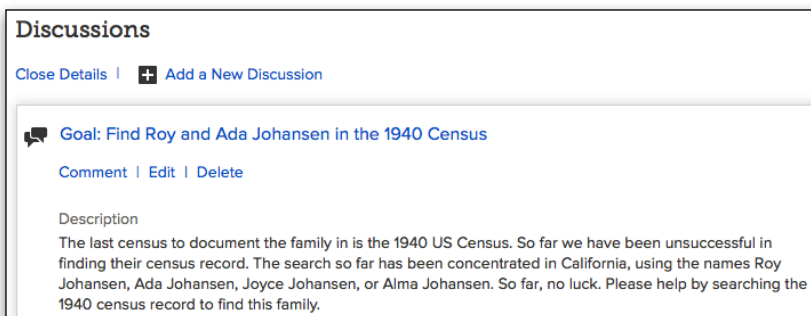
## Family Organizations Working in the Family Tree

Family organizations can successfully work together in the FamilySearch Family Tree on many aspects of their genealogical activities. When organizations share their research, the photos, stories, and genealogical analysis, every member of the organization today and in the future will benefit from the hours of dedicated research. The Tree will be healthier, more genealogically

sound as a result of sharing! Here are a few examples of how a family organization can work together with both members of the organization and the potential members:

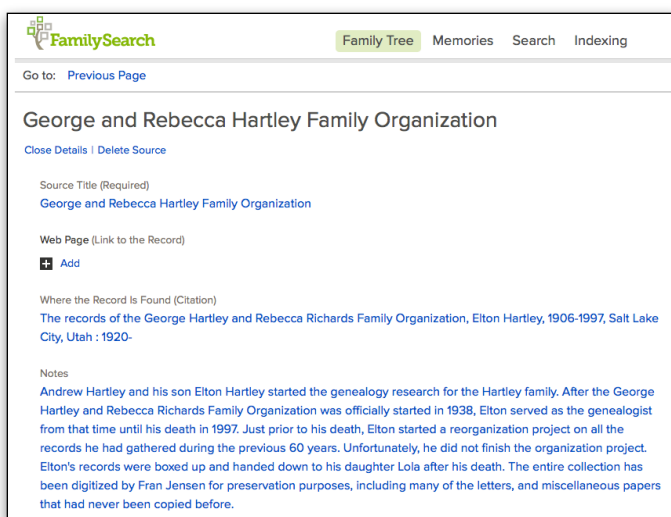
### Discussions:

- Create a Discussion item for the research tasks that need completing. This will help guide those who want to help with the research.
- The experienced researcher can mentor and help those who are getting started while they are working on a research goal identified by the organization. Use the Comments to report back and discuss what was found during the research process. Keep the discussion going while the research continues to completion and analysis.



### Sources:

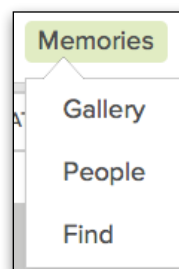
- The family organization can be added as a source of information for the individuals in the Tree. Just having the organization as a source can help new potential members find and contact the organization.
- The organization may have published a history about the family or about specific individuals in their tree. Adding a source for each of the publications produced by the organization can help communicate the volume of research that has already been completed by the members of the organization.



### The Gallery:

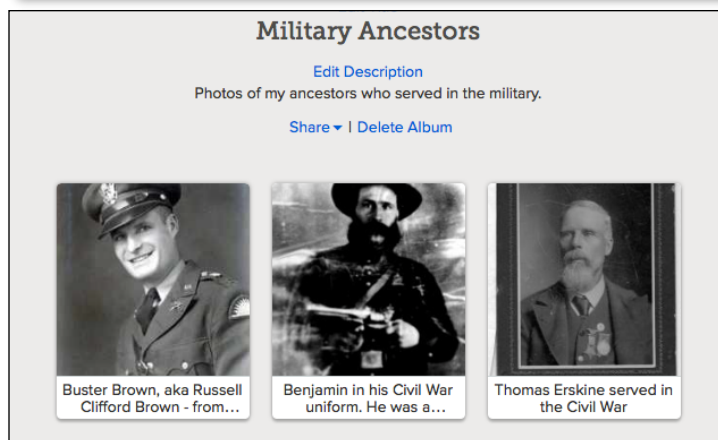
The new Memories Gallery on FamilySearch makes it easier to preserve the many documents and photos that family organizations have gathered over the decades. See the FamilySearch Blog article that introduces the Memories Gallery features, *Upload Documents from Your Family Tree in the New Memories Gallery* by Greg McMurdie <https://familysearch.org/blog/en/upload-documents-family-tree-memories-gallery/>

The key to preserving the family organization records is in the creation of the Albums. Group the photos, documents, stories, and audio based upon the history of the family and the records and photos that the organization wants to share. Here's a few examples:

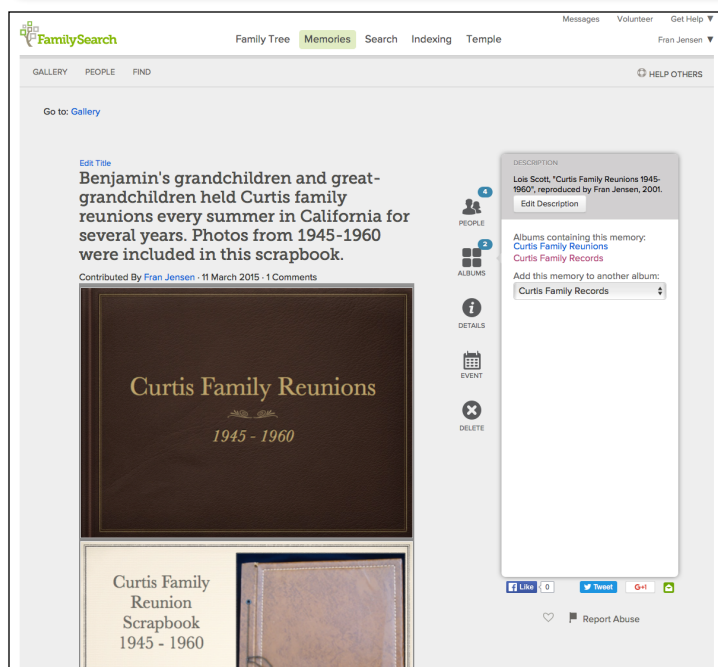




Is the history of the family organization centered in part around the homes the family lived in? Create an Album to organize an easy view into the lives of your ancestors by seeing the homes that they lived in.



The military history in your family organization might be one of the major stories to tell. Preserve that history easily by creating an Album and adding all the photos of the military ancestors from the family organization.



The history of the family and the organization may be closely tied to the family reunions. Scrapbook albums could be preserved and shared as a Document in the Tree:

- Scan each page of the album.
- Create a PowerPoint file with the image of each page on a separate slide.
- Save the file as a PDF and upload as a Document in FamilySearch Family Tree.
- Tag the Document to the ancestor who created the original album and to those who were included in the album.

Involve the younger generations in the uploading and organization of the family organization records. Involve the older generations in identifying everyone in the family photos. There's an activity for everyone to be a part of when working together as a family

organization to help preserve and share the research, photos, and stories.

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