

# 15 Ways for Genealogists to Keep Learning

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**Genealogists are Self-Directed Learners** . . . take initiative and are comfortable with independence. Genealogists as self-directed learners are also persistent and view “brick walls” as challenges, not obstacles. They organized their time well, set an appropriate pace for learning and develop a plan for completing their work. They also tend to be goal-directed and enjoy learning new concepts, ideas, discovering new sources and technology.

**The 15 Ways for Genealogists to Keep Learning were evaluated based on the following criteria:**

- Educational content
- Frequency of occurrence
- Travel required, either locally or nationally
- Range of costs from minimum to
- Standard equipment required - computer, notebook and printer or Internet
- Special equipment required – special software or hardware, e.g. ipod, mp3 player, or earphones
- Learning curve, whether minimal, moderate, major, steep

1. **Genealogy Societies** – an organized group working together or periodically meeting because of common interests.

To locate genealogy societies in area of research, review the following:

- Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) - <http://www.fgs.org/membership/members.php> and includes a members list
- Genealogical periodical annual index available at the public library
- Society Hall (<http://www.familyhistory.com/societyhall/search.asp>) developed by Ancestry & FGS with over 500 societies with a calendar of events listed chronologically
- Society Hill (<http://www.daddezio.com/society>)
- United States Genealogical Society (<http://www.usigs.org/library.gensoc>)
- Genealogical and Historical Societies listed on Cyndi's list (<http://cyndislist.com/societies>) with over 3000 links to societies and groups, indexed alphabetically
- The Genealogist's Address Book by Elizabeth Petty Bentley (1999) includes contact information on over 25,000 libraries and repositories, including genealogical societies. Check for availability in your area using Worldcat (<http://www.worldcat.org>)

2. **Seminars and Classes** – a conference or meeting for discussion or training

Seminars are offered at the national, regional, state, county and city level, sponsored by such organizations as the National Archives and Records Administration, historical societies, genealogy societies, genealogy libraries and community college continuing education departments. Sessions are held weekly, monthly or on special all-day events.

3. **Conferences** – a formal meeting in which people gather to talk about ideas or problems related to a specific topic

- National Genealogical Society Conference, May 4-7, 2016, Ft. Lauderdale, FL
- Federation of Genealogical Societies, August 31-September 1, 2016, Springfield, IL
- RootsTech 2016, February 3-6, 2016, Salt Lake City, UT

- Northwest Genealogy Conference, August 15-17, 2016, Arlington, WA
  - Southern California Jamboree, June 3-5, 2016, Burbank, CA
  - New England Regional Genealogical Consortium, April 15-18, 2015, Providence, RI
4. **Books** – a set of printed sheets of paper held together inside a cover or a long written work read on a computer
- The variety of materials available to genealogists include reference and resources; research guides; city and county directories; maps; history, geography, biography as well as methodology, analysis and resources. Special collections also include genealogies, diaries and published histories.
5. **Libraries** – books, magazines and other material are available for people to use or borrow. Libraries are an extension of a genealogical society or an independently established library and includes specialized genealogical materials, including books, maps, microfilm, microfiche and obituaries.
6. **Wikis** – providing background information for research as well as a single location for ancestor information that anyone can add or edit information, link related material and a way to publishing tool for organizations.
- Ancestry Errors Wiki [http://ancestryerrors.wikia.com/wiki/Ancestry\\_Errors\\_Wiki](http://ancestryerrors.wikia.com/wiki/Ancestry_Errors_Wiki)
  - Ancestry Wiki <http://www.ancestry.com/wiki>
  - Encyclopedia of Genealogy <http://www.eogen.com>
  - Family History Wiki at Genealogy Today <http://wiki.genealogytoday.com>
  - FamilySearch Wiki <https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki>
  - GenealogyWiki <http://genealogywiki.org/>
  - International Society of Genetic Genealogy (ISOGG) <http://www.isogg.org/wiki/>
  - Wikis for Genealogy (Cyndi's List) <http://www.cyndislist.com/wikis>
7. **Webinars** – bring people together to share knowledge and insights and allows attendees to ask questions. Providers include:
- Ancestry.com
  - FamilySearch.org
  - Legacy Family Tree
  - Board of Certified Genealogists
  - FamilyTree DNA
  - State genealogical societies, including Illinois, Florida, North Carolina and Georgia
  - Individual genealogists, e.g. Lisa Alzo and Lisa Louise Cooke
8. **Facebook** – a form of electronic communities within communities where information, ideas, personal messages and other content is shared. Postings are made to groups, friends and family. Facebook groups specializing in genealogical topics include:
- Technology for Genealogists
  - Organized Genealogists
  - Evernote for Genealogists
  - Genealogy Do-Over
  - Genealogy Translations
  - Genealogy – Cite Your Sources

- Dead Fred's Genealogy Photo Archive
- Legacy Family Tree
- Location specific groups - help you get advice and learn more about a particular location's record groups and unique challenges

**9. Newsletters** – a short written report that tells recent activities of an organization and sent to members of the organization. Newsletters are sent by mailing paper, electronically by email, .pdf and via an app on a tablet or smartphone.

**10. Magazines and Journals** – a periodical publications containing articles and illustrations, typically covering a particular subject, e.g. researching, preserving, recording and sharing genealogy and family history. They are either printed and issued monthly or quarterly.

- Family Tree Magazine
- Your Genealogy
- Internet Genealogy
- American Ancestors
- New England Genealogical and Historical Journal
- The American Genealogist
- National Genealogical Society Quarterly
- The Genealogist
- The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record

**11. Podcasts** – a program made available in digital format for automatic download over the internet. Video podcasts are also known as videocasts, vidcasts or vodcasts and combine audio with visual media.

- Ancestry.com with Crista Cowan
- Family Tree Magazine Podcast
- Genealogy Gems with Lisa Louise Cooke
- Family History: Genealogy Made Easy with Lisa Louise Cooke
- Genealogy Guys with George P. Morgan and Drew Smith
- Fieldstone Common with Marian Pierre-Louis
- GeneaBloggers with Thomas MacEntee
- Irish Roots Café with Michael O'Laughlan

**12. Blogs** – a web site where someone writes about personal opinions, activities and experiences. Blog is a contraction of "web log". To blog is to maintain or add content to a blog; a blogger is someone who blogs. To access blogs, bookmark and visit the site often, subscribe to receive email updates or subscribe by RSS (Rich Site Summary or Really Simple Syndication) to be sent to a blog reader, i.e. Pulse, Flipboard or apps, i.e. Bloglovin'.

A few blog examples include: The Ancestry Insider, The Legal Genealogist, DNAexplained or Genetic Genealogists, The Armchair Genealogists, Genea-Musing, Genealogy Search Tip of the Day, Olive Tree Genealogy and Genealogy's Star. Search the Internet for many, many more on a variety of topics.

**13. YouTube Videos** – instructional videos on the largest video sharing site on the web. Use the videos to learn:

- Technology (Evernote, OneNote)
- Genealogy software programs (Family Tree Maker, Legacy Family Tree, Reunion, RootsMagic)
- Using genealogy sites (FamilySearch, Ancestry.com and World Vital Records)
- Video programs (Genealogy Gems)
- Using wikis (Wikitree)
- DNA (Family Tree DNA – autosomal)
- Jewish genealogy
- Read Sanborn Fire Maps
- Newspaper research
- Overseas research (Ireland, England, Germany, Wales)
- Resolving conflicting evidence
- Digital stories of family histories

**14. University Programs** – certificate programs, part of continuing education courses offered by colleges and universities.

- University of Washington Certificate Program in Genealogy and Family History
- Brigham Young University Independent Study Course
- Boston University Center for Professional Education
  - i. Foundations of Genealogical Research
  - ii. Problem-Solving Techniques and Technology
  - iii. Evidence Evaluation and Documentation
  - iv. Forensic Genealogical Research
  - v. Professional Genealogy

**15. Genealogical Institutes** – an established organization offering specific week-long courses of study on a yearly basis.

- Genealogical Research Institute of Pittsburgh (GRIP) – Pittsburgh, PA
- Institute of Genealogy and Historical Research (IGHR) – Birmingham, AL
- National Institute of Genealogical Research (NIGR) – Washington, D.C.
- Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy – Salt Lake City, UT
- International Society for British Genealogy and Family History – ISBGfH British Institute) – Salt Lake City, UT

### **The Best Form of Learning is Experience!**

- Take extra time to thoroughly examine each record found to enhance understanding
- Compare the information with what is already known
- Use all your senses – seeing, hearing, doing/touching, discussing – to gain the most knowledge.
- “If I can see it done, then do it, I learn it.”
- Share your findings and share how you found it so others can learn as well