

Google and Its Genealogy Tools

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Google can be an incredibly important tool in your family history research toolbox. While most of us know about it, there may be some of its tools that you are less familiar with than others. Let's visit a few!

Google Search – what have you searched for lately?

- Photos – want pictures of your ancestors? Try images.google.com
- Family Trees – more and more people are posting on collaborative sites and their own sites
- Web sites – especially those for family tree software
- Record sets – free sites such as CanadaGenWeb and WorldGenWeb
- Historical data – look for context as to why your ancestor came to an area and the history of the place



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Google Search Tips:

- Type (or speak) the question
- Keep phrases together with “quotation marks”
- Use an asterisk * or ? to replace any unknown characters or to help with common misspellings
- Want to search just one site? Use **site:**
- Want to get rid of something? Use a - (minus sign) [Example: “Crews family -ship -boat -fire”]

Google+

- Streams
 - The old “wall” social networking part of Google+, but now more mobile friendly
 - Can find genealogical organizations/communities here (similar to Facebook)
 - Seems like it's more about business and organizations these days than individuals
 - Most who have a presence here, also do on Facebook
- Photos
 - Two storage sizes: High Quality and Original
 - High Quality is good for pictures from your phone or cameras using 1 6MP/1080p HD or less as it compresses photos when it stores it and gives you **unlimited** free storage
 - Original is good for DSLR camera photos and those for which you want them stored in their original format **AS YOU TOOK THEM** (no compression) – photos count toward your Google account storage limit
- Hangout
 - Now a separate app available in the App Store (iOS) or on Google Play (Android)
 - Like Skype, but free and can have up to 10 people on the call (voice or video)
 - No longer need Google+ account, but **DO** need a Gmail account
- More info: <http://googleplusproject.blogspot.com/2013/05/new-google-stream-hangouts-and-photos.html>



Google Drive

- Collaborative file sharing space – cloud storage similar to Dropbox.
- 15GB free space (Dropbox is 2GB) and easy to use!
- Lots of file types: word processing, spreadsheet, video files, presentations, etc.
- Share data files/documents with one or many people (or no one!)
- Less worry about version control – allows simultaneous editing of Google Drive format docs!

Google Maps / Google Earth

Why use them? They can answer a lot of questions!

- How far is it to...
 - The cemetery? Their church?
 - Their place of work? The courthouse? The county/state line? The country border?
- Why would someone go to this area?
- What's all around it? (Nearest big cities, etc.)



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What's the difference between Google Maps and Google Earth?

- Google Maps – <http://maps.google.com>
 - Website available anywhere you have Internet access and as a smartphone app
 - Can quickly find an address – Google it!
 - Use Street View to look around
- Google Earth - standalone application for desktop or mobile
 - Download Google Earth Pro here: <http://earth.google.com>
 - Includes add-in options for “places of worship,” “cemeteries,” etc.
 - Includes Wikipedia links for some places of interest
 - Overlays of "Rumsey Historical Maps" included for some time frames
 - David Rumsey's historical map website: <http://www.davidrumsey.com/>
 - Really want to unleash its power? Check out:
 - Lisa Louise Cooke's Genealogical Gems blog and available products on how to use Google Earth: <http://lisalouisecooke.com/free-google-earth-for-genealogy-video-class-by-lisa-louise-cooke/>
 - Cyndi's List on the topic: <http://www.cyndislist.com/google/google-earth/>

**Other Google tools helpful for genealogy:**Google Books

- Can search millions of books by topic, author, and title and create your own library on Google
- Contains out of copyright books downloadable in PDF format - now in Google Play

Google Translate

- Use for translation of documents (can be rudimentary or very good; results vary)

Google Blogger

- Create your own blog!

Google YouTube

- Good for education, education, education!
- Check out *Who Do You Think You Are?* US and UK versions
- Watch Ancestry.com and FamilySearch channels, plus other great genealogy content
 - Over 190,000 results for “Genealogy” alone!
- Create your own family history content and post it on your own YouTube channel