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HOW TO FIND GENEALOGICAL COLLECTIONS, ANYWHERE AND EVERYWHERE

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- I. Are you organized?
 - a. Family Group Sheets/Pedigree Charts/Software/Applications
 - b. Have you cited your sources? Do you know where you got the information you have already? (gives validity to information) Do you know what you have found?
 - c. Create timelines (for each person and the family as a whole)
 - d. Write down questions you want answered. This list is a work in progress.
 - e. Don't make assumptions about the family!

- II. What are you looking for in general?
 - a. A record that tells you something about your ancestor.
 - b. What types of records were created at that time and place of your ancestor?
Primary or Secondary (What is the difference between information and source?)
 - i. Library and Archives catalogs (Search location and it may bring up types of records you didn't know exist.)
 - ii. Look at records on websites like Ancestry.com or FamilySearch.org. Look into their online catalogs by location.
 - iii. Ask! Contact archivists and librarians. Published materials (secondary) vs. public records (primary).
 - c. Timelines help here. Naturalization and land laws changed over time. Different records were created at different times.
 - d. Public Records vs. Private Records (access and location vary)

- III. Keep this in mind as you ask the following with each type of record.
 - a. Is it a primary information (created at the time of the event) or secondary information (reflects on the past)
 - b. Who created the record? Who was the informant of the information on the record?
 - c. Where is the record stored now? What other office could have a copy?
 - d. Is there an online copy of the record? Not a transcription or index entry!
 - e. What other types of records could also exist for this event?

- IV. Public Records
 - a. Created by the government; National or town or county offices (federal offices, county courthouses and town halls); Mostly primary documents. Informant varies and is often not listed.
 - b. Types of records: Vital records, Censuses, Passenger Lists, Naturalization Records, Land, Military, Court Records, Plat Maps
 - c. Where are the records located?
 - i. At a courthouse
 - ii. At a state or national archives or library
 - iii. Online (various sites)

- V. Private Records
 - a. Created by non-governmental organizations/people. Informant is usually the author or member of a group but not always easy to identify.
 - b. Types of records, Mixture of primary and secondary documents, City Directories, family & local histories, church, cemetery, organizations, photographs, maps
 - c. Where are these records? Libraries and archives (state and local); Headquarters/office of the organization; Online; A person's home...

- VI. Types of Repositories (some are online and some are onsite)
 - a. Public Repositories
 - i. Local (town and county)
 - 1. Public Library (Local History Room)
 - 2. Historical Society/Genealogical Society/Museum
 - 3. Town Hall, county courthouse (Clerk of Courts and Registrar)
 - ii. State
 - 1. Library
 - 2. Archives
 - 3. Special Collections (Wisconsin Veterans Museum)
 - 4. Secretary of State and other agencies
 - 5. Department of Public Instruction
 - iii. Regional
 - 1. New England Historic Genealogical Society
 - 2. University and College Campuses
 - 3. Area Research Centers (WHS)
 - iv. Federal
 - 1. National Archives
 - 2. Library of Congress
 - 3. Bureau of Land Management
 - b. Private Repositories
 - i. Ancestry.com
 - ii. FamilySearch.org
 - iii. Church, school, funeral home
 - iv. D.A.R., VFW, etc.
 - v. Cemetery (some public, some private)
 - vi. Etc.

- VII. With all of this information on records and repositories, where do you start? Have a plan. Don't just grab at straws.
- a. Censuses
 - i. Population Schedules at Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.org, Fold3.com
 - ii. Special Schedules (Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.org or WHS for all WI special schedules)
 - iii. State Censuses (FamilySearch.org, WHS has WI, Some on Ancestry.com)
 - b. Vital Records
 - i. Deathindexes.com (shows sites online to find dates, places and some digital images) Still small portion of indexes and records online.
 - ii. County Courthouse (if you can travel there)
 - iii. State Archives (check their website for details on collections/services)
 - iv. Try to get a volunteer to help locally. How? Genealogical/Historical Societies.
 - c. Newspapers
 - i. Local Public Library/History Room (online and paper/film copies)
 1. www.badgerlink.org (Newspapers.com and more)
 2. www.genealogybank.com, www.newspaperarchive.com; www.loc.gov
 - ii. www.theancestorhunt.com (lists many online collections)
 - iii. WHS (online and paper/film copies)
 - iv. WHS has collection 2nd only to the Library of Congress
 - v. UW Madison maintains lots of online subscriptions, use at WHS.
Not many newspapers online yet.
 - vi. Interlibrary Loan
 - vii. WorldCat.org (online catalog for many, many libraries and archives) and www.loc.gov list of all published newspapers.
 - viii. Find titles and then order through Interlibrary Loan.
- VIII. What other types of records exist and how do you find them?
- a. Look at the list of repositories.
 - b. Ask archivists and librarians.
 - c. Search online catalogs by location, no type of record. Don't assume it is all online.
- IX. What's online and what is not.
- a. **What is not online.** Court records, most land and military, most newspapers, manuscripts, most vital records!!
 - b. **What is online.** Digital images of records, databases/indexes, online catalogs to collections, maps, historical articles, contact information.
 - c. Critique websites!
 - i. Content included and not included (titles of collections can be misleading)
 - ii. Resources used
 - iii. Dates and locations covered
 - iv. Instructions on how to use the site
 - v. How to find originals
 - vi. Give feedback to the site to encourage improvements.

- d. 4 sites to watch frequently
 - i. Sites that add lots of content (Ancestry, Fold3 and FamilySearch)
 - ii. Site that leads you to new sites (Deathindexes.com, TheAncestorHunt.com)
 - iii. More sites to watch (FindMyPast, MyHeritage, Deadfred.com)
- e. Private organizations
 - i. Google.com for these (fraternal groups, genealogy interest groups, veterans, war re-enactors)
 - ii. www.worldcat.org for collections created by these groups)
- f. Research organizations (Google for these types of groups)
 - i. Local (historical, genealogical, public library, academic)
 - ii. State (library, archives, university)
 - iii. National (National Archives and Library of Congress)
 - iv. Bureau of Land Management (www.glorerecords.blm.gov for land records)
- g. Online catalogs
 - i. Cyndislist.com (directs you to various sites)
 - ii. Google.com
 - iii. Worldcat.org
 - iv. Wisconsinhistory.org (online catalog and phone calls)
- h. Online Books (Google, Internet Archive, HathiTrust and FamilySearch)
- i. Online Newspapers
- j. Online Tools (Google translator, CAUTION)
- k. Other researchers (USGenWeb.com, contact local historical/genealogical societies, public libraries, www.raogk.org)
- l. Online Instruction and Keeping up
 - i. WSGS webinars!
 - ii. Ancestry.com
 - iii. FamilyTreeMagazine.com
 - iv. Email newsletters (use a free web account) Dick Eastman's Blog
 - v. Classes at FamilySearch.org and LegacyFamilyTree.com
- m. Online storage of documents
 - i. Ancestry.com (includes ability to upload documents/photos)
 - ii. Dropbox (main purpose is to upload documents/photos)
 - iii. Flash drive (temporary)
 - iv. External hard drive (permanent storage)