

The Genealogy Box



A supplemental newsletter for genealogy and family history research in Harrison County, Kentucky.

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“Free at Last, Free at Last, Genealogy is Free at Last!”

The census, certificates, and cemeteries. These are three things with which many genealogists like to spend a lot of their time. All start with a “c” and an “e” and so does “cents,” as in “dollars and cents,” which are two things genealogists don’t like to spend! Many of us love the joys of genealogy and the priceless discoveries to be found, however, like the people in the credit card commercials, genealogists usually have to spend a good bit to get that that level of “priceless” appreciation . . . but not always.

This article is written to help you save a few of those cents as you start digging around for your roots in Harrison County and elsewhere. This isn’t a comprehensive list of freebies, but it does offer examples of offerings to get you going. Most of these featured items aren’t intended to do your work for you,

but to make it a little easier and to save you money you might have spent had you not known about them. There is a basic cost, however, and that is you have to make the effort to “get free,” which will require that you have some kind of computer and internet access, whether in your home, a friend’s, or at a local library. Software from [Adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com) may be a required download to view and print many of the following suggestions . . . but don’t worry, the software is free!

Free Publications!: U.S. Census records are the preeminent record source used in reconstructing family relationships, and a good understanding of how and why the records were gathered is vital to getting the most information out of them. The U.S. Commerce Department comes to the rescue with a free book all about the U.S. Census entitled *Measuring America: The Decennial Censuses from 1790 to 2000*, a 149-page book (PDF) which can be downloaded in full or in parts. Just go to www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/ma.html.

One of the first sad lessons learned in researching a genealogy is the fact that so many small family cemeteries have been destroyed in Kentucky. Many centuries-old cemeteries which were documented just after World War II are no longer to be seen or found because of neglect or development. If you want to develop a sense of how and why conditions are so bad with some Kentucky cemeteries, or why you can’t find the graves of your ancestors you might want to read the December, 2001 final report of the Task Force on the Preservation of Kentucky Cemeteries. Just visit the website of Kentucky’s Attorney

General and click on “Task Force’s final report (<http://ag.ky.gov/consumer/cemetery.htm>)

The Kentucky Historical Society offers a 174-page “Table of Contents for the Full Run of *Kentucky Ancestors*” at http://history.ky.gov/pdf/Publications/Ky_Ancestors_Contents100507.pdf. You can search the document by county of interest or surname, but of course, the content runs deeper than these tables, so don’t give up on this magazine too quickly.

Free Research Guides and Indexes!: The Fort Wayne-Allen County Public Library (www.acpl.lib.in.us) in Fort Wayne, Indiana is the second largest repository of genealogical research materials to be found in the United States, after the Genealogical Library in Salt Lake City and is a wonderful place to go on a genealogy trek. To help you find your way, they have published a series of research guides called “Pathfinders” on topics such as the U.S. Census, newspaper research, adoptions, as well as with several guides to help with ethnic research. Just go to the library’s home page, click on genealogy, and a list of publications appears to the left of the library’s “Genealogy Center” online.

A 43-page “Research Outline” for genealogy research in Kentucky is provided by the LDS’ Family History Library in Salt Lake City and is available online from FamilyResearch.org. Go to www.familysearch.org/Eng/Search/rg/images/31054_Kentucky.pdf to download and print the guide. Several such “research outlines” are available for other states as well at FamilyResearch.org.

Websites of federal agencies, such as the National Archives, are logical sources of guides to help the genealogist or local historian in his quest. Other agencies which aren't necessarily the first to come to mind to the genealogist have interesting offerings as well. For instance, if your grandfather was a postman, like mine, you be interested to know that the U.S. Postal Service offers a guide (Publication 119) entitled *Sources of Historical Information on Post Offices, Postal Employees, Mail Routes, and Mail Contractors* (www.usps.com/cpim/ftp/pubs/pub119.pdf).

Free Maps!: You don't have to spend a lot on gas to get to a rest stop in Kentucky for a free road map, or any other kind of map of Kentucky, for that matter. The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, Division of Planning website (www.planning.kytc.ky.gov/maps.asp) has a comprehensive selection of current maps online, including some of the most up-to-date roadmaps available for each of the 120 individual counties of Kentucky. The county maps are also available from the University of Kentucky at <http://ukcc.uky.edu/maps/>.

Two more sites for Kentucky maps which are must-sees are the Kentucky Geographic Network (<http://kygeonet.ky.gov/>) and the Digital Ortho Image Download Center (<http://kymartian.ky.gov/doqq/>).

Many a local library, such as the Kenton County Public Library, has developed an online "Digital Library" (www.kenton.lib.ky.us/gen/diglib/). The Kenton County library offers historic 19th and 20th century atlases and maps for Northern Kentucky, among other types of

documents, that you can print out at home.

Instead of purchasing detailed topographical maps from the U.S. Geological Service, you can go to TopoZone.com and access all parts of the United States from your desk.

If you can't find your way around Kentucky after visiting these sites, you are lost in more ways than one!

Free Forms and Charts!: Several genealogy websites such as Ancestry.com, Genealogy.com, www.FamilyTreeMagazine.com, FamilySearch.org and many other online companies too numerous to mention offer many types of forms for you to use as you make progress with your family research: ancestral charts, research calendars, research extracts, correspondence records, family group sheets, U.S. Census forms, and many other types of forms are available from their websites. All you have to do is to select and download a PDF file of the form you need, and either print as many as you need from your computer or print a single copy to use as a template to photocopy from later.

CyndisList.com offers many links to freebie forms offered online. Just go to www.cyndislist.com/supplies.htm and scroll down to "Online Charts & Forms to Print or Download."

Many of the offerings are from Ancestry.com; to access them directly go to their home page, click on the "Learning Center" tab, then click on "Get Started" on the next page you will find "Starter Tools" under which is the heading "Charts & Forms." Pick and click and you are on your way to "free."

HeritageQuestOnline.com, an invaluable resource especially for accessing old histories and

genealogies now out of copyright protection which have been scanned, digitized, and indexed at their site. I was once on the verge of mailing a \$60 check for a copy of the 608-page Garr genealogy (*Genealogy of the descendants of John Gar, or more particularly his son, Andreas Gaar, who emigrated from Bavaria to America in 1732*), but discovered in the nick of time that it was available through Heritage Quest's online service. One can copy portions or complete volumes from the site, but of course, you ultimately have to pay for the ink to have them printed up at your library or at home.

Genealogy News in the News!

Kentucky Genealogical Society Installs New Officers: At the last meeting of the Kentucky Genealogical Society in Frankfort on January 12, the newly elected officers of the KGS were installed, including Harrison County native, Oddville High and U.K. graduate, genealogy enthusiast, and retired Air Force officer, Col. Doug Harper. Elected as one of three a "Members at Large" his first assignment is to arrange for the program of the KGS's annual seminar in August.

The Rebirth of *Kentucky Ancestors*: Anne Rogers, KHS Director of Public Relations & Marketing, reports that "the next issue of *Kentucky Ancestors* is currently in pre-press production with an anticipated publication date in March." She also notes that the KHS "is committed to provide each member who chose *Kentucky Ancestors* as a benefit at least four issues of the quarterly publication, even if it means extending the term of their annual membership."