

Happy New Year

2017

Explorer



Family History Newsletter  
Issue 11: January 1, 2017

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anyway), and we can take the good with the bad when we see the whole picture.

So now the question becomes this: are we truly curious about the past? It takes some effort, but it's high on reward. As you get better acquainted with your ancestors, you come to know yourself and your own story that much better. Stories, journals, public and private records—all of these can help you put the pieces together as your curiosity drives you forward in your quest to discover your past.

### 2017: Are You Curious?

Are you the curious type? If you could look ahead into 2017 and see what's in store, would you take the chance?

While looking into the future doesn't seem to be a practical option, looking into the past holds a lot more promise—it's done, it's recorded (most of it,



Here are some of the benefits of becoming truly curious about your past and your ancestors:

- Better understanding of history, culture, and geography
- Appreciation for sacrifices and contributions made by those who went before



- A deeper connection to the unusual and inspirational events in your ancestors' lives

I recently read a story about how my third-great grandfather, John Butler, had a premonition to move his family in the middle of the night to a friend's home two miles away. The next morning, a group of 30 armed men showed up at his door, ready to do the worst—and the house was empty. Without that event, my family tree would have certainly taken a different shape.

### Next Steps

So what's to do next? You may be fortunate enough to already have online stories, documents, or photos of your ancestors that you've never seen; and it's as simple as checking out FamilySearch, Ancestry, Findmypast, or MyHeritage ... or just plain Googling. You may be pleasantly surprised, as I was, at the intriguing mementos that have already been catalogued and posted.



And if some research is in order, you'll find some great tips and guidance in The Family History Guide. It's ideal for helping you break down your tasks and efforts into manageable pieces of time. Choose a Project, decide on a Goal, and explore a Choice. You'll find that with as little as 15-20 minutes at a time, you can keep your ancestral curiosity piqued and primed for new discoveries.

## Inside the Guide: Asking the Right Research Questions

Continuing our theme of curiosity, let's take a look at the art of asking questions. A premature or vague question may lead you down the wrong path, while well-thought-out questions can open the doors to discovery.



### Identifying a Research Line

In Project 4: Discover of The Family History Guide, let's take a look at [Goal 2: Identify a Line to Do Research On](#). Choice A is the warm-up; it discusses how to find ancestors with missing information, such as dates, places, unknown parents, etc. The article in Step 3 has some good tips on deciding where to start, and the FamilySearch video emphasizes choosing an ancestor with a name and date and location of a life event (birth, marriage, or death). This will make it easier to find records for that individual.

### Sample Questions to Ask

In Choice B, think about Step 1 for a moment: "Ask the questions you're most interested in: Why did an ancestor move? Are there missing children in a gap on a family group record?" Choosing a question you are interested in will help you drive your research and keep trying alternatives if you get stuck.

Step 2 points you to a helpful [video](#) from Ancestry that helps you formulate good, specific questions for research. You can also post these questions to genealogy forums and user groups for extra help if needed.

Step 3 links to an [article](#) from the Brick Wall Genealogist. It explains how to take an overall



question and break it down into smaller questions that can guide your research.

Finally, the Vault has a number of interesting articles and videos to help with your basic research. The article "[How to Guess Where to Start](#)" can give you some additional ideas on crafting questions for your research efforts.

## Update on England

Recently, we created pages for the Canadian provinces of Quebec, Nova Scotia, & New Brunswick. Then it was time to turn



our attention to pages for English counties - and we were off and running!

The following pages have been added to The Family History Guide:

- [Bedfordshire](#)
- [Berkshire](#)
- [Buckinghamshire](#)
- [Cambridgeshire](#)
- [Cheshire](#)
- [Cornwall](#)
- [Cumberland](#)
- [Derbyshire](#)
- [Devon](#)
- [Dorset](#)
- [Durham](#)
- [Essex](#)

- [Gloucestershire](#)
- [Hampshire](#)
- [Herefordshire](#)
- [Kent](#)
- [Lancashire](#)
- [Leicestershire](#)
- [Lincolnshire](#)
- [London \(city\)](#)
- [Middlesex](#)
- [Norfolk](#)
- [Northamptonshire](#)
- [Northumberland](#)
- [Nottinghamshire](#)
- [Shropshire](#)
- [Somerset](#)
- [Staffordshire](#)
- [Suffolk](#)
- [Surrey](#)
- [Sussex](#)
- [Warwickshire](#)
- [Westmorland](#)
- [Wiltshire](#)
- [Worcestershire](#)
- [Yorkshire](#)

These pages follow the same basic format, with Goals, Choices, and Steps. The following websites provide major information sources for the pages:

- FamilySearch Wiki
- Gen UKI
- FreeBMD
- County Councils & Archives

We hope you enjoy these England county pages. They will be updated with even more information as time goes on.



## An Unexpected Christmas Gift

Just over a week ago, I was unwrapping presents in my jammies (yes, that's my favorite apparel) with our family. The gifts were thoughtful and enjoyable. And then one of my daughters handed me a small box. It was very light, so my first thought was maybe a gift card or certificate. I opened it and discovered it was mostly wrapping tissue inside (another hint of a gift card, perhaps).



When I got to the bottom of the box, it was just a few pieces of paper—but what surprises they were! My daughter had been diligently working on a branch of our family tree that was stuck in Kentucky and had found two more generations. There in the box was an updated pedigree chart and some cards with ancestor names and data. Plus, she had already updated our tree in FamilySearch and Ancestry.

One extra touch in all of this—the bow on the package, if you will—was the fact that she documented her work well but still left a few obvious clues for me to follow, for the next round of work.

That was a Christmas present to remember, and a reminder that collaborating on family history can bring extra joy, no matter the time of year.

## FamilySearch and The Family History Guide

James Tanner recently posted a blog about using The Family History Guide ([read the blog article here](#)), with some helpful tips and insights. What's unusual about this article is what it mentions about FamilySearch and LDS.org—that now The Family History Guide is being linked to as an official resource for FamilySearch.org users.



The recent [article on LDS.org](#) explains how to use FamilySearch effectively. (Although it's on the LDS.org site, it applies to all FamilySearch users; non-LDS can skip over the last few links at the bottom of the page.) And as James points out, there are links in multiple places in the article to The Family History Guide, such as "For more information visit: ["The Family History Guide,"](#) Project 1, Goal 5."

This highlights the increasing level of partnership between FamilySearch and The Family History Guide, which is welcome news. And speaking of that, stay tuned to our newsletter and Facebook page - *there may be more announcements in the near future!*

## On the Horizon

We will be at all Family History Fairs and events listed below. For details, see the Events link on the website for details ([www.thefhguide.com/events.html](http://www.thefhguide.com/events.html)).

**RootsTech Conference** - is on Feb. 8-11, 2017 in Salt Lake City, UT.



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