



Irving Genealogical

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Irving, Texas

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We Need to Get Serious for a moment.....

We need to get very serious about our genealogy society. It is time again to set a slate of officers for 2007 and so far no one has shown any interest in serving for the coming year. At the Monday Board Meeting, the problem was discussed. It is the same people who are willing to serve each year. We just change offices. Several of our dedicated members have passed on, moved out of town or have personal reasons they cannot serve. This leaves no one to lead the society. What this means is no officers, no society. If no one volunteers, **the society has no choice other than to disband the society.**

Then, there will be no meetings, no programs we all enjoy, no all nighters, no speakers, no newsletter, no field trips, no conferences to attend, and no one to discuss brick walls and so forth.

Please take a few minutes to consider giving your time one Monday night a month for a meeting and a second Monday night for a board meeting. That is about 5 hours a month. We need your help to keep the society operating. We have been part of the Irving community for many years and we need your help. Please come to the meeting Monday night and let us know that you will do your share.

We also need a program for November. If you have a subject that is of interest to you, let us know.

Irving Genealogy Society

*President: Mary K. Weber
Vice President: Gretchen King
Secretary: Barbara Tsirigotis
Treasurer: Erle Kellogg*

Mark your Calendars

Shirley Apley is speaking on Albion's Seed: The Four British Pathways to America on Sept 18.

Kinkade will give his presentation on Glenn Photo Management Made Easy on Oct. 16. He will introduce Picasa, an imaging program used to organize pictures/graphics.

We have no program scheduled for November. If you have a suggestion please let us know.

TSGS holds its annual conference October 27 & 28 at the Baptist Seminary in Fort Worth. IGS will have a sales table manned alternately by J.D. Bayne, Mary K. Weber, and Barb Tsirigotis. For more information contact one of the board members.

Tell the Story Behind the Photograph

This tip is courtesy of Ancestry

Scrapbookers know the value of "journaling" the story behind a photograph. Choose a photograph from your collection and write down everything you know about it. Include the five W's in questions like Who is in the photograph? When was it taken? Where was it taken? What was happening? What feelings does it evoke? Why is it significant and important to your family history? A picture's worth a thousand words, but a picture with the story behind it is priceless!

Tips from the Pros: Census Tip--The Bonus Summary
from Sherry Irvine and Ancestry

Most of us are slow to read everything on a computer monitor, so it was quite a while before I noticed three small words just above the results table of my searches in the English censuses, They are blue and underlined--*All Census Results*.

Obviously this is a link, and I discovered it leads to a table showing a list of the number of hits in any available census return matching the criteria I had specified.

During a search for William Nuttall in the 1841 census of England, the *All Census Results* link took me to a table of censuses for England. Above and to the left was another link - *All Results* - and this went to a much larger listing of results, mostly in UK databases.

The table is available whether you search with a full name, surname only, first name only, or geographic location without a name. The patterns of listings vary depending on the breadth of your initial search and where you start (e.g., a U.S. search, England/Wales search, Canada search, or global search). Working within census records, you end up viewing a demographic table that provides a good idea as to how common a name is across one country or several.

I enjoy playing with the tool and checking out the numbers. For example, a search for anyone of the surname Bird in England in 1871 and born in Canada turned up two results. Selecting the *All Census Results* link took me to a table telling me there were 146 in the United States in 1870, nine in 1891 in England, plus totals from twenty-nine other major and minor census databases within the Ancestry.com site. Why not try your luck with some of your family surnames?

12 Steps to Genealogical Fitness

by Lisa Alzo,

Is your genealogy in shape? Now you may think this is a silly question. When we hear the phrase “in shape” we automatically associate it with our physical health. So, what could these two concepts -- “fitness” and “genealogy” -- possibly have in common?

Like millions of others, one of my New Year’s resolutions for 2006 is to become more physically fit. Another is to become a more dedicated and effective genealogist.

As I approach my physical fitness and genealogical research goals, I observe many similarities. First of all, just as physical fitness is accomplished by exercising your body, success as a genealogist often requires exercising your mind. Secondly, the preparation for each activity is often parallel. You need to warm up, stretch, sometimes hit the ground running, feel the exhilaration of activity, and then, cool down.

Often you start off with a bang; you have the best of intentions that excite you and initially spur you on. With a regular physical workout, you lose a few pounds and your clothes fit better. With genealogy, you discover a detail about an ancestor. You feel great.

Then, it happens. You hit a brick wall. Your weight loss stalls. You search for further information on your ancestor, but fail to find that one record that will confirm your assumptions. (The courthouse did not have the birth or marriage record; the church your ancestor attended burned down and the records were lost in the fire, etc.). You begin to get discouraged and want to pack it in. “Is it really worth it, anyway?” Then you make excuses -- “I don’t have the time. It’s too difficult,” and so on.

Both activities require a great deal of hard work and also have similar obstacles. So I have identified twelve steps to use as a guideline for working on my personal fitness and my family’s genealogy.

1) Set Realistic Goals. When starting any new project or endeavor like a diet or exercise regimen, or a genealogical quest, it is important to set realistic goals, and develop a workable timetable. You typically would not try to run ten miles, or expect to lose fifty lbs. right away. And, whether you are a novice or a seasoned genealogist, you typically would not set out to research multiple family lines at once, or plan to write your entire family history in a month. Rather, you should aim to set shorter, more attainable goals. For example, with your fitness program you could seek to lose one-two lbs. per week, or do at least twenty minutes of exercise each day. With your genealogy, you might attempt to trace one ancestor as far back as you can before moving on to another, or thoroughly search one particular online database or microfilm reel per week.

2) Devise a Schedule and Stick To It. With our busy lives, most of us have to schedule time to exercise, and this same discipline should be applied to genealogy. Whether you use a traditional paper calendar, an online calendar software program, or personal digital assistant, blocking off time in your daily schedule for your research is often the best way to ensure that you will actually do it. This time may be in the early morning or late at night while everyone else in your house is still asleep, or maybe during the time the kids are at soccer practice. Also, take into consideration your own body's natural clock. What time of day do you feel your best to do your most efficient work? Perhaps you are a morning person, or on the other hand, a night owl. Maybe you prefer to work in the mid-afternoon. Follow your body clock and reserve some time during your "peak" periods to work on your genealogy. Some of us are "weekend genealogists," while others work on our family history on a daily basis. Either way, the important point is to devise a schedule that suits you and make an effort to keep your commitment.

3) Make Time for a Check-up. While it is important to schedule an annual appointment with your physician to evaluate or reassess your physical health, it is also a good idea to make an appointment with yourself to take a "research inventory." Set aside a day or two to just peruse over your findings to date. Then make a list of missing information and devise a strategy or "research plan."

4) Trim the Fat and Toss Out the Junk. When you begin a weight management program, you often hear that you must clean out your cupboards, toss out junk food and replace your vices with healthier food choices. Apply this approach to genealogy. Do you really need five copies of Aunt Betty's port record? What about all those miscellaneous slips of paper that contain notes from your library research? Go through your family history files and purge what you don't need. Face it, filing is the least interesting part of family history, but it is an essential component. Use binders to store printed information. File and label miscellaneous items that you might need "somewhere down the road..." Organize your work space so that you can maximize your time researching and not pushing papers from one area of your desk to another.

5) Diversify Your Tasks. Engaging in the same type of exercise day after day can often lead to boredom and frustration. In the same way, genealogical tasks can also seem tedious and even at times exasperating. Instead, strive to make your search fun and challenging throughout the year. One way to do this is to use your calendar as a genealogical research guide. Schedule your tasks around major holidays. For example, work on military records research around Veteran's Day or Memorial Day, research marriage records on Valentine's Day, and so forth. Note birthdays of relatives or ancestors and conduct your research about them on those days.

6) Count Your Steps. Fitness experts often recommend using a pedometer to measure the number of steps you take, the distance/time of the workout, or the number of calories. How do you measure your progress with your family history? If "must get organized" is a mantra that you mutter over and over again to yourself, you need to find a way to account for your steps. Try using the [free, downloadable, genealogical forms and documents](#) available at Ancestry.com to help organize your correspondence and

research data. Enter your family information into a computerized genealogy software program such as [Family Tree Maker](#).

If possible, try to do one small task toward your research every day, even if you can only spare fifteen minutes. For example, in fifteen minutes you can perform a quick search using an online database, draft a quick letter to a relative, scan an old photograph, or note five questions to ask in your next oral history interview. When you break your research tasks into smaller, more manageable pieces, the process is not as overwhelming. For ideas, see Juliana Smith's ADN articles "[In Fifteen Minutes or Less . . .](#)" and "[More Projects In Fifteen Minutes or Less](#)".

7) Pick Up the Pace. Sometimes you can become stagnant both in your exercise routine, and your genealogical research, and even the slightest increase in activity can help to yield additional results. Perhaps you are struggling with writing that letter to an overseas archive, or hesitate contacting the parish priest of the church your ancestors attended. Stop procrastinating. Follow the Nike slogan and "Just Do It!" Sometimes in both areas, you may have to work harder to for a desired result in a limited period of time.

8) Vary Your Location. When you exercise, instead of walking on your treadmill, take a walk around your neighborhood. If you always do your research at your computer or desk, find a change of scenery. Go to the library or park and take your laptop with you, or if possible, plan a research trip to your ancestor's town and include a visit a cemetery, travel to [Ellis Island](#), the [National Archives](#) in Washington, D.C. or one of NARA's regional facilities, or the [Family History Library](#) in Salt Lake City.

9) Find a Buddy. Working out and dieting with a partner provides encouragement, inspiration and support, especially during those times you want to quit. When researching your roots, try to find a family member to share the research tasks. If you do not have a family member who shares your passion for genealogy, then find an online buddy. Post to genealogy-specific message board at [Ancestry.com/RootsWeb.com](#) or [Genealogy.com](#). Join a local genealogical or historical society or ethnic-based research group, and network with other researchers at genealogy conferences and seminars.

10) Take a Break. Just as it is recommended that you rest your body in order to repair your muscles, you may also consider recharging your batteries when it comes to genealogy. Your brain is on overdrive, processing all of your family history information. Put aside the family line you have been researching and do something completely unrelated. Schedule a vacation. Watch a movie. Read a novel. When you return to your research tasks, you will have a new perspective, perhaps you will see a new lead or direction to bust that brick wall or find that elusive ancestor.

11) Add a New Twist to Your Routine. You can vary your physical workout by swimming instead of jogging, or signing up for a step aerobics or spinning class. With genealogy, try subscribing to or using a new database at [Ancestry.com](#), or signing for a class at your local community college or library. There are a variety of [online courses](#) available through MyFamily.com.

12) Persist Over the Plateau. Inevitably with your fitness program and your genealogical research you will hit a plateau. If you find yourself facing an impasse, don't give up. Ask yourself whether you have really given it your all? Then push yourself a little harder. Spend an extra fifteen minutes perusing that microfilmed baptismal certificate. Experiment with alternate spellings or use search tools such as ethnicity or year when searching in online databases. Find new and creative ways to obtain information, such as contacting libraries or historical societies, or posting queries to an online forum or print publication. Sometimes thinking "outside the box" will lead you to information on your ancestor that you never even knew existed.

Finally, remember that once you reach a half way point in your routine, take time to evaluate your progress. With fitness goals you look at how many pounds have been lost and what further effort it will take to reach a target weight. Similarly, with genealogy, you should keep a checklist of what research tasks have been accomplished and what is still unknown. This system of checks and balances gives you a perspective on how many more pounds you have left to lose and how many more ancestors you still need to find, and most importantly, it gives you a chance to look back and take pride in all you've accomplished.

Lisa Alzo, M.F.A. is the author of *Three Slovak Women, Baba's Kitchen: Slovak & Rusyn Family Recipes and Traditions* (Gateway Press), and the recently published *Finding Your Slovak Ancestors* (Heritage Productions), as well as numerous articles for genealogy magazines. She is an instructor of Eastern European, Slovak, and Great Lakes Region genealogy classes for MyFamily.com, and is a frequent speaker at national conferences, genealogical and historical societies. Lisa can be reached through her website at www.lisaalzo.com.