

# Doors Opening Wider: Library and Archival Services to Family History\*

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**RÉSUMÉ** Dans plusieurs collections spéciales des centres d'archives et des bibliothèques, les chercheurs généalogistes constituent le plus grand groupe d'utilisateurs. La plupart des études concluent qu'en Amérique du Nord et en Europe, ils peuvent compter pour environ 50 à 90 p.c. de toute la clientèle. Ce texte considère les antécédents historiques de la généalogie dans nos salles de consultation ainsi que le domaine de l'histoire familiale par le biais des sites Web des archives et des bibliothèques, en examinant l'histoire familiale telle qu'elle est présentée sur divers sites Web des archives et des bibliothèques aux États-Unis, au Canada, en Angleterre et en Écosse. Cette analyse des sites Web vise trois cibles principales : établir l'état actuel de nos vitrines publiques telles qu'elles sont présentées aux chercheurs généalogistes, identifier les domaines de pratiques exemplaires ainsi que ceux qui requièrent de l'amélioration et créer une vision de ce que les archives pourraient offrir aux généalogistes sur leurs sites Web.

**ABSTRACT** Within many archives and library special collections, genealogical researchers make up the largest user group. Most studies show that in North America and Europe, they can account for fifty to ninety percent of all users. The paper addresses the historical background of genealogy within our reading rooms and an expanding world of family history via archival and library websites, examining family history as presented on selected websites of archives and libraries in the United States, Canada, England, and Scotland. A website analysis focused on three main objectives: to establish the current state of our most public face presented to genealogical researchers; to identify current areas of best practice and those which require improvement; and to form a vision of what archives could offer on websites to family historians.

## **Introduction**

In 1984, archival educator Richard Cox referred to genealogy as the most "public" of all history. While significant portions of any population may read history books, visit museums, become involved in preservation projects, or

\* *In Memoriam: Björn Lindh (1939-2006)*, a guide to the ICA Committee that began this work.

view exhibits in archives, almost every family has its historian, he reasoned.<sup>1</sup> Despite the fact that Cox's statement was made some twenty odd years ago, only recently have we begun to pay serious and detailed attention to genealogical researchers within our repositories.<sup>2</sup>

This paper looks at how we welcome these researchers through our websites. In these very words, "welcome these researchers," the paper addresses the gate-keeping role of archivists. Thus, in Section One, the historical relationship between archives and genealogy is introduced, along with information on the International Council on Archives' Committee on Outreach and User Services (ICA-COU) that sought to study this relationship. Here context is provided not only as background for the subsequent analysis of websites but also as evidence of the shifting opinions about, and authority over, access to records. Section Two details one small part of this gate-keeping role: entry into archives by family historians via websites, a gateway that provides access and also builds knowledge about archives. This section addresses the composition of the public face that archival websites presented to the genealogical community in the years 2004 and 2005, and offers suggestions as to how we might envision these websites in the future.

## **Section One – The Historical Relationship between Archives and Genealogy**

### ***Beginning this Study***

The impetus for addressing these topics came from several events in 2002 that signaled new ways in which the worlds of genealogy and archives have

1 Richard J. Cox, "Genealogy and Public History: New Genealogical Guides and Their Implications for Public Historians," *The Public Historian*, vol. 6, no. 2 (Spring 1984), pp. 89–96.

2 There are impressive works underway currently in Scotland by Hannah Mary Little at the University of Glasgow and Kate Friday at Robert Gordon University. See also C.A. Wood, "Toward the New Genealogy: Genealogical Research in Archives and the Saskatchewan Genealogical Society, 1969-2004" (Master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 2005); Elizabeth Yakel and Deborah A. Torres, "Genealogists as a 'Community of Records'" (Paper, Society of American Archivists Annual Meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana, 18 August 2005); Elizabeth Yakel, "Seeking Information, Seeking Connections, Seeking Meaning: Genealogists and Family Historians," *Information Research*, vol. 10, no. 1 (October 2004), available at <http://informationr.net/ir/10-1/paper205.html> (accessed 19 September 2006); Wendy M. Duff and Catherine A. Johnson, "Where is the List with All the Names? Information-Seeking Behavior of Genealogists," *American Archivist*, vol. 66, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2003), pp. 79–95; Rosemary Boyns, "Archivists and Family Historians: Local Authority Record Repositories and the Family History User Group," *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, vol. 20, no. 1 (April 1999), pp. 61–74; Public Services Quality Group of the National Council on Archives, *Survey of Visitors to British Archives*. For results from various years, see <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives/psqg/survey.htm> (accessed 16 September 2006).

become connected. The first of these events occurred on the cusp of the New Year, on 2 January, when the 1901 British census website was officially launched at the United Kingdom's National Archives site. During the next four days, more than one hundred million users attempted to gain access to this site. The crash of the server, the temporary closing of the site for several months, and eventually, a government audit, followed.<sup>3</sup>

Just after this event, in April 2002, the Committee on Outreach and User Services of the International Council on Archives (ICA-COU) met in Lund, Sweden and proposed, as one goal, to look at genealogy as a form of outreach across many cultures.<sup>4</sup> The Committee began with the example of a researcher learning on-line about land records in his search for the birthplace of his great-grandmother and then turning to a nearby repository to search for the records to his own home. Why were these latter records not on-line, whereas he could reach halfway around the world to find ones from the nineteenth century that were? Who controlled what went on-line? Who owned these records and who gave their content to commercial firms or religious groups? In these questions, we reasoned, he became perhaps a different type of citizen, perhaps a different type of family historian, but certainly a different, more informed, more nuanced researcher and supporter of archives.

Our committee then observed that family history (here used interchangeably with genealogy) had been neglected worldwide by archival studies, while at the same time, the influence of family historians, their organizations, and even their meeting places touched archives and libraries throughout our histories. Our discussions continued to weigh examples of how family historians in the past and present might be considered harbingers of changing work methods for archivists and librarians. In their microfilming projects, for example, family historians changed the way records could be shared, and created new and different work for librarians and archivists. Today, family historians who enter our repositories via the World Wide Web also change the way we will promote our holdings, and shape the education we give researchers who may become supporters.

3 National Audit Office, "Unlocking the Past: The 1901 Census Online: Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General HC 1259, Session 2002-2003: 14 November 2003," available at: [http://www.nao.gov.uk/publications/nao\\_nao\\_reports/02-03/02031259.pdf](http://www.nao.gov.uk/publications/nao_nao_reports/02-03/02031259.pdf) (accessed 5 December 2005).

4 Members of the Committee present there were Christer Bogefeldt and Bjorn Lindh of Sweden, Antonio Lechasseur of Canada, Daniela Ferrari of Italy, Olga Muzychuk of Ukraine, Coleman Chua of Singapore, and the author, Susan Tucker, from the United States. The Committee is now no longer active. Two papers from our work, including a version that discussed some of its findings, were presented at the ICA meeting in Vienna, 2004. See Daniela Ferrari, *Recherches des données anagraphiques des Italien émigrés* and Susan Tucker, *Visible Enough to Us? Identity, Archivists, and Genealogical Researchers*, available at: <http://www.wien2004.ica.org/fo/speakers.php?ctNv1=48> (accessed 10 September 2006).

From these ideas followed other observations that became the focus of this paper: that family historians form a community of critical importance to archives, that the Web is becoming the basic tool by which we serve these researchers, and that their virtual entry into our repositories deserves serious attention. This paper tests the implications of these observations by looking at family history as approached through websites of libraries and archives in Canada, England, Scotland, and the United States.<sup>5</sup>

### ***Rethinking Archival Roles in Aiding Family Historians***

ICA-COU began its discussions by noting that family historians are ubiquitous across many cultures. Within archives and special collections of libraries, genealogical researchers often make up the largest user group. Most studies show that family historians make up from fifty to ninety percent of all North American and British users. Though statistical breakdowns about the types of users are not easily come by, most archivists believe that the numbers of family history researchers are presently growing.<sup>6</sup>

We then discussed some of the ways that the lines of kinship between archival studies and genealogy connect. The study of family lineages and the foundation of archives rested first on the state, then on the elite. Archives grew in the twentieth century in response to increasing quantities of records, a process itself part of an educational and technological revolution. Family history grew also in this revolution. Both archivists and family historians responded to the volume and aging character of documents making their way out of not-

5 I am still working on many of the topics we discussed, especially Cox's idea of family history as public history. Part of my research on this project was funded through a Research Fellowship Grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. I would like to give special thanks to members of the consortium of individuals and institutions who made this possible, including representatives from the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northeastern University, Radcliffe Institute at Harvard University, and the WGBH Educational Foundation.

6 Elsie Freeman, "Education Programs: Outreach as an Administrative Function," in Maygene Daniels and Timothy Walch, eds., *A Modern Archives Reader: Basic Readings on Archival Theory and Practice* (Washington, DC, 1984), p. 284; James P. Rhoads, "Genealogists in the National Archives: Profile of Partnership," *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* 59 (June 1971), p. 84; Richard S. Lackey, "Genealogical Research: An Assessment of Potential Value," *Prologue* 7 (Winter 1975), p. 225; Bill Linder, "An Overview of Genealogical Research in the National Archives," *Library Trends* 32 (Summer 1983), pp. 27–28; Public Services Quality Group of the National Council on Archives, *Survey Of Visitors To British Archives 2002, National Report Weighted Regional & UK Report*, available at: [http://www.pro.gov.uk/archives/psqg/survey\\_summary\\_overall.htm](http://www.pro.gov.uk/archives/psqg/survey_summary_overall.htm) (accessed 10 August 2004); Anne-Marie Dorian, *National Archives of Scotland User Satisfaction Survey* (2002), unpublished; Canadian Genealogy Centre, IPSO-Reid Corporation, *Canadian Genealogy Online: Building an Innovative Model of Cooperation*, available at: [http://www.genealogy.gc.ca/01/010202\\_e.html](http://www.genealogy.gc.ca/01/010202_e.html) (accessed 15 November 2005).

always-well-funded courthouses or dusty parish offices to official repositories. During this time also, both genealogical organizations and archival professional groups worked to protect these records and to make sure they would be accessible to future generations.

Only in the final decades of the twentieth century did theories and practices concerned with both family history and archives, evolve within widening circles of people of diverse backgrounds. Until recently, this widening circle still occurred within our physical doors and within membership-based organizations. In this respect, both genealogy and archives retained some vestiges if not of elitism then of privilege. Work in both occurred in quiet and protected spaces which belonged to the government or an organization.<sup>7</sup> From the late 1990s onward, the Internet introduced new places where knowledge could be transferred, where records could be used. In numbers, genealogical researchers who work alone at home now rival in numbers those who join membership-based groups. These new types of record-users work without intermediating teachers found at meetings or within archives. More and more researchers learn from records within their homes – a placement that challenges alike both the public nature of archives and the public roles of membership-based groups especially active since the 1970s.<sup>8</sup>

Archivists and family historians also share many basic skills and tenets. They always have. After all, documents about families are one of the most enduring forms of recordkeeping throughout time. One of the first English guides for family history, Stacey Grimaldi's *Origines Genealogicae: or The Sources Whence English Genealogies May be Traced*, presented a guide to records, and thus to early archives.<sup>9</sup> Contemporary writers about archives and family history would recognize in works like this 1828 publication some of the foundations of our own definitions of documents, diplomatics, and records. A comparison of modern day definitions also yields similarities. Luciana Duranti and Heather MacNeil define archival studies of records in terms of "their documentary and functional relationships and the ways in which they are controlled and communicated."<sup>10</sup> Standards in genealogy simi-

7 Helen Wood, "The Fetish of the Document: An Exploration of Attitudes towards Archives," in Margaret Proctor and C.P. Lewis, eds., *New Directions in Archival Research* (Liverpool, 2000), pp. 20–48.

8 I am grateful to Hannah Mary Little in her dissertation proposal for ideas about the dichotomies of thought on family history as reductive and subjective but also postmodern in a focus on individual stories, and thus more democratic. See Little, "Dissertation Proposal: Archive Fever as Genealogical Fever: The Place of 'New Genealogy' in Scotland." Copy in possession of author.

9 Stacey Grimaldi, *Origines Genealogicae: or The Sources Whence English Genealogies May be Traced* (London, 1828).

10 Luciana Duranti and Heather MacNeil, "The Protection of the Integrity of Electronic Records: An Overview of the UBC-MAS Research Project," *Archivaria* 42 (Fall 1996), pp. 46–67.

larly are based on “the thorough understanding of the nature of records ...” and “skill at analyzing the credibility of data from individual records.”<sup>11</sup>

These definitions, in turn, are positioned at least in part on similar educational and professional foundations. For example, before his appointment as first archivist of les Archives nationales du Québec in 1920, Pierre-Georges Roy founded the *Bulletin des recherches historiques* in 1895 to publish documents furthering the education of genealogists.<sup>12</sup> In the United States, the modern era of genealogy and archives began alongside one another. The first rigorous educational program for genealogy in 1950 – the Institute for Genealogical Research – stood alongside American University’s Institute for the Preservation and Administration of Archives – where many of America’s first archivists began training.<sup>13</sup> And from the very first professional publications in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States, archivists reviewed books about genealogy, discussed records used by genealogists, and were cognizant of their partnership in saving records.<sup>14</sup>

The connections between archives and family history grew very strong, especially in Canada, during the time when ICA-COU first met in April 2002. At this meeting, a press release arrived at our table. It described the actions of five members of the Alberta Family Histories Societies and others who filed suit against the country’s Chief Statistician. The release of all post-1901 censuses was at stake, and petitions from family historians had for some months been pouring into Ottawa.<sup>15</sup>

11 Donn Devine, “Defining Professionalism,” in Elizabeth Shown Mills, ed., *Professional Genealogy: A Manual for Researchers, Writers, Editors, Lecturers, and Librarians* (Baltimore, 2001), p. 10.

12 Les Archives nationales du Québec, “l’évolution de la généalogie au Québec,” in *Les Archives nationales du Québec et la généalogie: Un exposé de la situation*, available at: <http://www.anq.gouv.qc.ca/Publications/Expos%E9.pdf> (accessed 1 June 2004).

13 Meredith B. Colket Jr., “The American University’s First Institute in Genealogical Research,” *American Archivist*, vol. 14, no. 2 (April 1951), pp. 141–46.

14 The early issues of journals of both the British Society of Archivists and the US Society of American Archivists contain reviews of books about family history. See also Henry A. Holmes, “Historical Societies in the United States, 1, History and Conditions,” in *Public Libraries in the United States*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC, 1876), p. 316; Willard Heiss, “Some Useful References,” *Genealogy, a Publication of the Family History Section, Indiana Historical Society* 72 (October, 1982), p. 11; Lloyd DeWitt Bockstruck, “Four Centuries of Genealogy: A Historical Overview,” *RQ*, vol. 23, no. 2 (Winter 1983), pp. 162–70; Milton Rubincam, “What the Genealogist Expects of an Archival Agency or Historical Society,” *American Archivist*, vol. 12, no. 4 (October 1949), pp. 333–38; Archibald F. Bennett, “The Record Copying Program of the Utah Genealogical Society,” *American Archivist*, vol. 16, no. 3 (July 1953), pp. 227–32; William D. McCain, “The Public Relations of Archival Depositories,” *American Archivist*, vol. 3, no. 4 (October 1940), pp. 235–44.

15 By 2005, genealogical organizations were credited with winning the long struggle. By virtue of their efforts, the 1911 census went on-line at Library and Archives Canada’s Canadian Genealogy Centre. See Alberta Family Histories Society, “Legal action against the Federal

Archivists at the Landsarkivet in Lund, Sweden (where ICA-COU was so graciously received during this time) understood well the power of groups of genealogists. On our tour of their facility, they discussed introducing night and weekend hours in different seasons in response to lobbying by these users. And, when we met at the Essex Record Office in Chelmsford, England one year later in 2003, archivists there showed us their new building, which held the offices of the Essex Society for Family History. In the small world of our Committee, then, the influence of family history on archives asserted itself very clearly.

I left the meetings seeking more information on this influence. At first, the writings I found on family history as practiced within archives did not focus on any of these similar connections. Indeed on many levels, the literature of archivists and librarians presents a very different relationship to family historians. Archivists and librarians frequently discuss family historians as problematic users – too numerous for under-funded repositories, uninformed about records, and sometimes, because of the sheer numbers consulting documents, a threat to the longevity of materials.<sup>16</sup> Some of these accounts present the development of a clear hierarchy of users in which genealogists fall low in our priorities.<sup>17</sup> Elaborating on this development, one Canadian scholar regretted the split between “*la grande histoire*” and “*la petite histoire*,” two ways of seeking out an understanding of the past that had earlier been joined. Historians and family historians were one and the same, combining work also as antiquarians and record-minders. Many of the same people also sought out and saved the early records of Quebec.<sup>18</sup> This was true throughout North America

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Government required to obtain our census records,” available at: [http://www.afhs.ab.ca/data/census/challenge/news\\_release\\_20020411.html](http://www.afhs.ab.ca/data/census/challenge/news_release_20020411.html); and “Canadian Census,” available at: <http://www.afhs.ab.ca/data/census/challenge/index.html> (both accessed 10 July 2006).

16 I wrote about this distancing in Susan Tucker, “Visible Enough to Us: Identity, Archivists, and Genealogical Researchers,” 15th International Conference on Archives, Vienna, August 2004, available at: [http://www.wien2004.ica.org/imagesUpload/pres\\_261\\_TUCKER\\_COU%2001.pdf](http://www.wien2004.ica.org/imagesUpload/pres_261_TUCKER_COU%2001.pdf) (accessed 10 September 2006).

17 The hierarchy of users, especially preferences given to “serious users” can be found in T.R. Schellenburg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (Chicago, 1956), p. 232; Robert Ellis and Peter Walne, *The Selected Writings of Sir Hilary Jenkinson* (Chicago, 2003), p. 110. See also Lester J. Cappon, “Genealogy, Handmaid of History,” *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*, vol. 45, no. 1 (March 1957), pp. 1–9; Phebe R. Jacobsen, “‘The World Turned Upside Down’: Reference Priorities and the State Archives,” *American Archivist*, vol. 44, no. 4 (Fall 1981), pp. 341–45; Elizabeth Shown Mills, “Academia vs. Genealogy: Prospects for Reconciliation and Progress,” *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* 71 (June 1983), pp. 99–106; Mills, “Critique: In Defense of Genealogy” (Paper, Society of American Archivists Annual Meeting, Seattle, 1990); Mills, “Genealogy in the ‘Information Age’: History’s New Frontier?,” *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* 91 (December 2003), pp. 260–78.

18 Les Archives nationales du Québec, “Les Archives nationales du Québec et la généalogie: Un exposé de la situation,” available at: <http://www.anq.gouv.qc.ca/Publications/Expos%E9.pdf> (accessed 10 May 2004).

and the UK, as well. Yet, the emerging historical societies and libraries of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries would privilege “*la grande histoire*.”<sup>19</sup> Genealogical researchers, those looking for “*la petite histoire*,” were not encouraged by librarians or archivists. Only those using materials as “an aid to the study of history and biography” were allowed – not those researching their own family.<sup>20</sup> Even today in an era in which the epic nature of history is often closely tied to the individual story, archivists still debate the degree to which historians and public servants remain, in some cases, preferred users.<sup>21</sup>

### *History of Genealogy*

The split between seeing family historians as problematic users and seeing them as allies is found in a history much older than that of archival studies. Prejudices against family historians date at least to the eighteenth century, called by some “the golden age of bad genealogy.”<sup>22</sup> From this era, stories abound of imposters seeking English titles that could be bought for a fee.<sup>23</sup> A favourite anecdote about this time is that of Lord Chesterfield’s commissioning portraits of Adam and Eve de Stanhope as his ancestors.<sup>24</sup>

As mentioned in the example of “*la grande histoire*” and “*la petite histoire*,” the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries brought the schism between the professional historian and the antiquarian – the latter often interested in family history as one pursuit among many.<sup>25</sup> Historians, remade into archivists and librarians, would take the side of the academics. Our own legitimacy as gatekeepers seemed to require distancing ourselves from those our founders saw as gatecrashers.<sup>26</sup>

19 Mills, “Genealogy in the ‘Information Age’: History’s New Frontier?” I would like to express special thanks to Elizabeth Mills also for many insights into the development of family history and for reading earlier versions of this paper.

20 Clarence S. Brigham, *Fifty Years of Collecting Americana for the Library of the American Antiquarian Society, 1908–1958* (Worcester, MA, 1958), pp. 66–67; Rick Ashton, “Curators, Hobbyists, and Historians: Ninety Years of Genealogy at the Newberry Library,” *Library History*, vol. 47, no. 2 (1977), pp. 149–62; Peggy Sinko and Scott Peters, “A Survey of Genealogists at the Newberry Library,” *Library Trends*, vol. 32, no. 1 (Summer 1983), pp. 97–109.

21 Ian Mortimer, “Discriminating Between Readers: The Case for a Policy of Flexibility,” *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, vol. 23, no. 1 (2002), pp. 59–67; Patrick Cadell, “Building on the Past, Investing in the Future through Genealogy and Local History Services,” *IFLA Journal*, vol. 28, no. 4 (2002), pp. 175–80.

22 Noel Currer-Briggs and Royston Gambier, *Debrett’s Family Historian: A Guide to Tracing Your Ancestry* (Exeter, 1982), p. 33.

23 Anthony Richard Wagner, *English Genealogy* (Oxford, 1950), pp. 132–33.

24 Horace Walpole, *The Letters of Horace Walpole, Fourth Earl of Oxford; Chronologically Arranged and Edited with Notes and Indices*, Paget Toynbee, ed., vol. 3 (Oxford, 1903–1905), p. 11.

25 Mills, “Genealogy in the ‘Information Age’: History’s New Frontier?”

26 Some of the reasons for this distancing are apparent in David D. Van Tassell, “From Learned

Compounding such prejudices was the growth of national feelings. In England and Scotland, family history might be called snobbish but in North America, it was perceived often enough as “anti-Canadian” or “anti-American.”<sup>27</sup> The North American preoccupation with looking forward rather than backward is illustrated in the examples of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, who even today are sometimes praised for having downplayed an interest in their genealogies.<sup>28</sup> Lincoln was said to have often declared his interest in a man’s grandson rather than his grandfather.<sup>29</sup> Ambiguity about genealogy continued too as influential people like Ralph Waldo Emerson privately kept notebooks on genealogy yet publicly denounced family history as a lackluster pursuit of uninteresting people. “When I talk with a genealogist, I seem to sit up with a corpse,” Emerson acidly noted in his diary in 1855; all the while he remained proud of knowing his own past. Historian François Weil situates this impulse between the “party of Hope and the party of Memory.”<sup>30</sup>

In North America and the United Kingdom, race- and class-based impulses would contribute further to distaste for genealogy. In the southern United

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Society to Professional Organization: The American Historical Association, 1884–1900,” *American Historical Review* 89 (October 1984), pp. 929–56, esp. p. 932; John Franklin Jameson, “The Functions of State and Local Historical Societies with Respect to Research and Publication,” *American Historical Association, Annual Report, 1897* (Washington, 1898); Jameson, *The History of Historical Writing in America* (Boston, 1891).

27 This claim needs further study, but seems to have been especially true in the period before the 1970s.

28 Washington and other revolutionary leaders considered genealogy a form of anti-egalitarianism, according to François Weil, “Of Families, Trees, and Identities: Genealogy in American Culture” (Lecture, 25 September 2003, Tulane University). Copy in possession of the author. When presented with his family history, Washington was quick to point out that he had never before paid attention to the subject. George Washington to Hannah Fairfax Washington, 24 March and 9 April 1792, in Philander D. Chase, ed., *The Papers of George Washington. Presidential Series*, vol. 10, March–August 1792 (Charlottesville, VA, 2002), pp. 152–53, 240–42; Washington to Sir Isaac Heard, 2 May 1792, in *Ibid.*, pp. 332–38. On Jefferson’s ambiguities, see Thomas Jefferson to Thomas Adams, 20 February 1771, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 1: 1760–1776 (Princeton, NJ, 1950), p. 62; Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 6 September 1789, *The Works of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 6 (New York, 1904), p. 4; and the beginning of his autobiography, in *Writings* (New York, 1984), p. 3.

29 Lincoln’s statement is said to have been “I don’t know who my grandfather was; I am much more concerned to know what his grandson will be.” See Herbert Mitgang, “Sense of Place and Glory,” *The New York Times*, 14 February 1983, xx14.

30 As quoted in Weil, “Of Families, Trees, and Identities: Genealogy in American Culture,” p. 11. Weil also has a book forthcoming with Harvard University Press, tentatively entitled *Families’ Trees: A History of Genealogy in American Culture*. See Ralph H. Orth and Alfred R. Ferguson, eds., *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Centenary Edition, vol. 1 (Boston, 1903); *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, vol. XIII, 1852–1855 (Cambridge, MA, 1977).

States, racial genealogy emerged as a justification for slavery, and in other parts of the continent, fear of certain ethnic groups was rationalized through faulty and generalized medical genealogy applied to large groups of new citizens.<sup>31</sup> Of course, some genealogists themselves sought to dispel or redirect those interested in a race- and class-based form of family history.<sup>32</sup> A new standards-based school of genealogy emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in England and North America. Two of its leaders were J. Horace Round and Donald Lines Jacobus. Although these two provided family history with meticulous principles of verification, some of the prejudices against genealogists would remain.<sup>33</sup> The two-tier grouping of genealogical researchers as professionals and hobbyists made a single, standard response to them in libraries and archives difficult to come by.

The entry of large numbers of women into the practice of genealogy, revolutionary as it was in the late nineteenth century, also muddied the waters in which archivists formed their opinions of genealogical researchers.<sup>34</sup> Though no study has ever shown that women worldwide form a majority among genealogical researchers, the presence of a slight majority of women among family historians has been documented in British Columbia, Ontario, and California.<sup>35</sup> In North America as a whole, women are most frequently evoked as the

31 See for example, Reginald Horsman, *Josiah Nott of Mobile: Southerner, Physician, and Racial Theorist* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1987); Drew Gilpin Faust, ed., *The Ideology of Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Antebellum South, 1830–1860* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1981).

32 Mills, “Genealogy in the ‘Information Age’: History’s New Frontier?” See also William Carroll Hill, *A Century of Genealogical Progress, Being a History of the New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1845–1945* (Boston, 1945).

33 Eugene A. Stratton, *Applied Genealogy* (Salt Lake City, UT, 1988), pp. 5–6; David L. Green, “Donald Lines Jacobus, the ‘Jacobus School’ and The American Genealogist,” *American Genealogist* 9 (1932–33), pp. iii–x (repr., Camden, ME, 1989); Donald Lines Jacobus, “Fraudulent Pedigrees,” *American Genealogist* 12 (October 1935), pp. 65–67.

34 No exact numbers about gender among genealogical researchers exist for this period, but see Francesca Constance Morgan, “Home and Country: Women, Nation, and the Daughters of the American Revolution, 1890–1939” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1998); Morgan, “Regions Remote from Revolutionary Scenes: Regionalism, Nationalism, and the Iowa Daughters of the American Revolution, 1890–1930,” *Annals of Iowa*, vol. 56, nos. 1–2 (1997), pp. 46–79.

35 Women form a minority in Dutch genealogical societies, a finding that may be indicative of Europe as a whole. Kees Ribbens, Gerben J. Westerhof, and Cor Van Halen, “The Meaning of the Past: The Perception and Appreciation of History Among Dutch Genealogists,” *Public History Review* 12 (2006), pp. 27–43. On the other hand, women form a slight majority among the members of the British Columbia Genealogical Society, according to Diane Rogers, editor of *The British Columbia Genealogical Society 1971–1996: The First Quarter Century* (Rogers, telephone conversation, 7 August 2006). Also, women made up sixty-three percent of the members of the Ontario Genealogical Society in 1994, and 72.2 percent of family historians who responded to a Californian study in 2001. R.D. Lambert, “A Profile of the Membership of the Ontario Genealogical Society,” *Families*, vol. 34, no. 2 (May 1995), pp. 73–80; Pamela

stereotypical user depicted and often decried by many archivists and librarians. (In England and Scotland, the family historian is stereotyped as either an older man in a baggy suit with a cane or a North American man in leisure clothing, younger but not so young as to be thin.<sup>36</sup>)

Debated by historians who argue over definitions of a published work, the first North American genealogies are generally cited to be either an addendum to *The Memoirs of Roger Clap* (1731), a broadside printed to show the records of the Bollinger family (1763), or the book of Luke Stebbins (1771).<sup>37</sup> In this latter work, Stebbins defended his and others' interest in genealogy since it "... [gave] demonstration of the power, faithfulness, and goodness of God to their ancestor; [and would] excite in their children and children's children, thankfulness, hope and dependence on the God of their forefathers." Family history might also instruct generations to follow in knowing "where their ancestors have led pious and religious lives, been exemplary in their conversation ..." He defended genealogy as a means by which compilers might "excite in their descendants a laudable ambition to imitate those things that were excellent, praiseworthy and amiable in them."<sup>38</sup>

His reasons were not that different from the impulses of the French-Canadian nationalist Joseph-Charles Taché who, as deputy minister in the Department of Agriculture and Statistics in the 1860s and 1870s, viewed genealogy as a means to link the individual to Quebec. Taché employed the genealogist Cyprien Tanguay to utilize archival records to produce a grand multi-volume *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles canadiennes*. Still known as a pio-

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J. Drake, "Findings from the Fullerton Genealogical Study," available at: <http://psych.fullerton.edu/genealogy/> (accessed 14 September 2006). A related matter concerns the fact that we know little about gender and the use of archives.

36 Chris Pickford, "Measures and Results: The Public Service Quality Group's Survey of British Records Office" (Paper, Society of American Archivists Annual meeting, Washington, DC, 2001); see also articles by Charles F. Bryan, "What Should we do About the 'Genies'?", *History News*, vol. 41, no. 1 (January 1986), pp. 31-33; Patrick Cadell, "Building on the Past, Investing in the Future through Genealogy and Local History Services," *IFLA Journal*, vol. 28, no. 4 (2002), pp. 175-80; Rhianna Helen Edwards, *Archivists' Outlook on Service to Genealogists in Selected Canadian Archives* (Master's thesis, University of British Columbia, 1987); and Allen Gardiner, "Genealogy and the Librarian: Hope and Help for the Librarian's Frayed Nerves," *Show Me Libraries* (September 1984), pp. 25-32, all cited in Susan Tucker, *Archivists and Genealogical Researchers: A Bibliography*, available at: <http://www.tulane.edu/~wclib/archivists/archivists.html> (accessed 10 September 2006).

37 Bockstruck, p. 163. The earliest Canadian printed family history that I could locate through Library and Archives Canada was Henri-Raymond Casgrain, *G.B. Faribault et la Famille de Sales Laterrière* (Montreal, 1866).

38 Stebbins as quoted in Weil, "Of Families, Trees, and Identities." See also "Report of the Librarian," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, vol. 32, no. 2 (October 1922), p. 256.

neer, Tanguay left a legacy of interest in genealogy in Quebec and linkages with archives that have yet to be fully studied.<sup>39</sup>

Nor were the reasons of Stebbins, Taché, and Tanguay so different from the impulses of African-American Alex Haley in writing his novel *Roots* in the 1970s. From the time of Haley's book and the film that would follow, scores of genealogists, archivists, and historians began promoting the study of social history, and within this, the history of the family.<sup>40</sup>

This modern era was particularly important for the growth of many genealogical societies. In the US, the Genealogical Society had been founded in 1903; in the UK, the Society of Genealogists was formed in 1911 and the Scottish Genealogical Society, in 1953; and in Canada, the Société généalogique canadienne française, in 1943. But the majority of Canadian, UK, and US societies were formed in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>41</sup> These societies contributed in countless ways to the access to records that all archival users would find. Their transcription, indexing, publishing, and microfilming projects were the products of impressive communal efforts that sometimes extended over decades. And their educational programs presented a venue from which archivists could promote the use of records.<sup>42</sup>

39 Cyprien Tanguay, *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles canadiennes depuis la fondation de la colonie jusqu'à nos jours* (Montréal, 1871–90). See also Bruce Curtis, *The Politics of Population: State Formation, Statistics, and the Census of Canada, 1840–1875* (Toronto, 2001), pp. 238–51.

40 Alex Haley, *Roots* (Garden City, NY, 1976); Zachary M. Baker, "What We Owe the Genealogists: Genealogy and the Judaica Reference Librarian," *Judaica Librarianship*, vol. 6, nos. 1–2 (Spring 1991–Winter 1992), pp. 43–48; Russell E. Bidlack, "The Awakening Genealogy As It Relates to Library Service," *RQ* 23 (Winter 1983), pp. 171–81; Bockstruck; Cadell; Rhianna Helen Edwards, "Archivists' Outlook on Service to Genealogists in Selected Canadian Archives"; James Hijjiya, "Roots: Family and Ethnicity in the 1970s," *American Quarterly*, vol. 30, no. 4 (Autumn 1978), p. 549; Thomas J. Kemp, "The Roots of Genealogy Collections," *Library Journal*, vol. 124, no. 6 (1999), pp. 57–60. For a discussion about some of the social history to grow out of this, see Gary B. Mills and Elizabeth Shown Mills, "Rootsmania in the Academic World: The (Mis?)Application of Genealogy to Social and Demographic Studies" (Paper, Louisiana Historical Association, Annual Meeting, March 1986); Patrick M. Quinn, "The Surge of Interest in Genealogy Reflects a Populist Strand of Society with Important Implications for Our Culture," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 37 (22 May 1991), p. 82; Robert M. Taylor and Ralph J. Crandall, "Historians and Genealogists: An Emerging Community of Interest," in R.M. Taylor and R.J. Crandall, eds., *Generations and Change: Genealogical Perspectives in Social History* (Macon, GA), pp. 3–27.

41 Anthony Camp, "Genealogy: The Construction of Family Histories in Human Pedigree Studies," in Robert Peel, ed., *Proceedings of a Conference organized by the Galton Institute* (London, 1999), p. 8; see also the websites of genealogical organizations. The New England Genealogical Society (1845) is the oldest of such organizations in North America.

42 Historical societies always worked communally to teach about records and to position their members to be active in the acquisition and sharing of records. The early Canadian and US societies, for example, sent envoys to England and France to bring records back to North America, as well as created centralized repositories in their cities here. This in itself was a technological response and a positioning for access, one deserving of further study.

By the 1980s, the British use of the term family history (rather than genealogy) came to predominate and to represent the new benefits of the post-Second World War network of county archives. The 1990s television series, *Tracing Your Family History*, contributed another impetus for the popularization of both genealogy and archives.<sup>43</sup> Family history in the UK was proclaimed a tool, not a branch, of history, with many courses in adult education making archives known.<sup>44</sup> Though North Americans have not made such a decided turn, for both North Americans and the British, genealogy has come to be seen as a way of preserving and often restoring the stability of kinship. The Internet has expanded this rationale, with promoters of the study of the family arguing for its ability to aid in the understanding of problems of geography, migration, cultural and economic change, social class, and race. A sense of community among practitioners also adds to any perception of benefits. Today Cyndi's List and USGenWeb, as well as countless membership-based organizations, accomplish ambitious programs such as transcribing records and listing graves, and putting these various products on-line. In these activities, these computer-savvy family history enthusiasts knit together the on-line communities of genealogical researchers and also extend resources to many others who do not actively participate in the organizations or projects. The voluntary organizations on- and off-line also work alongside commercial ventures such as *The Global Gazette* and *Ancestry.com*. The positions have not yet settled into a place where one can analyze the falling memberships or varying reinventions of other older types of genealogical societies. Indeed, no large-scale empirical work on the use of the Internet for family history has been done, though Australian and Internet Studies scholar Kylie Veale has begun such a study. One significant finding announced in her blog of 17 March 2006 was that home is the most common place from which seventy-one percent of the people she studied accessed the Internet for genealogical activities. For these people, there will be no mediating reference archivist or librarian unless we can establish a usable virtual presence. Certainly, according to Veale, the Internet has revolutionized the pursuit of family history, bringing more and more practitioners daily.<sup>45</sup>

### ***Intersections with Changes in our Profession***

Cox's call for an inclusive consideration of genealogical researchers as public historians came at a junction in our own genealogy as a profession when we

43 Katie Norgrove, conversation, National Archives, Kew, England, 27 June 2003.

44 Colin D. Rogers and John H. Smith, *Local Family History in England, 1538–1914* (Manchester, 1991), pp. 2–9.

45 Kylie Veale, *The Internet Genealogy Community Study*, available at: <http://www.veale.com.au/phd/html/journal.html> (accessed 10 August 2006); T. Willard and J. Willard, "Online Research," *Ancestry Magazine*, vol. 19, no. 5 (2001).

recognized the need for social history in our repositories. Speaking for the US in 1975, Gerald Ham delivered his message about widening the attention archivists paid to records about the urban environment and the history of minorities.<sup>46</sup> The movement in Canada for the democratization of culture was extended, too, as Canadian archivist Hugh Taylor presented one of the first calls for the redefinition of family historians as allies in arguing for scarce funding.<sup>47</sup>

Historians Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen in *The Presence of the Past* articulate these considerations in describing the task of public historians as linking fragments of individual memory, vague bits of knowledge, and the desire for community to a shared past. Rosenzweig and Thelen found that history associated with grand narratives was not of much interest to the general public. Rather, the interviewees on whom they based their work felt the pull of a more personal or familial past. “History,” to most people, signified the big, official narrative in which the individual was overlooked or lost.<sup>48</sup>

This same role of connecting the past to the desire for community is enhanced through much of the research done in our repositories. Archives and libraries are situated *within* but also *between* these two pasts – the big, official narrative and the more personal story. Our repositories hold *within* them documents of the grand *and* familial parts of history, while we also act as holders, keepers, and educators *between* the documents and users. We work between the two goals of preservation and access.

With the on-line presence of genealogical researchers – in the parlance of postmodern theory, our “other” – our place in the *in-between* has shifted.<sup>49</sup>

46 F. Gerald Ham, “The Archival Edge,” *American Archivist*, vol. 38, no. 1 (January 1975), pp. 5–13.

47 Hugh A. Taylor, “Family History: Some New Directions and Their Implications for the Archivist,” *Archivaria* 11 (Winter 1980–81), pp. 228–31. See also Gabrielle Blais and David Enns, “From Paper Archives to People Archives: Public Programming in the Management of Archives,” in Tom Nesmith, ed., *Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance* (Metuchen, NJ, 1993), pp. 443–59.

48 Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York, 1998), pp. 89–104. Katherine Ott, Patricia Buckler, and I discuss this same idea in *The Scrapbook in American Life* (Philadelphia, 2006). See also Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory* (New York, 1991); Susan Steward, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham, NC, 1993); James McConkey, ed., *The Anatomy of Memory: An Anthology* (New York, 1996); David Thelen, ed., *Memory and American History* (Bloomington, IN, 1989).

49 The concept of “other” (though different words are used) is dealt with in explorations of the origins of the profession and its identity in recent times. See Mattie U. Russell, “The Influence of Historians on the Archival Profession in the United States,” *American Archivist*, vol. 46, no. 3 (Summer 1983), pp. 277–85; Laura Millar, “Discharging our Debt: The Evolution of the Total Archives Concept in English Canada,” *Archivaria* 46 (Fall 1998), pp. 103–46; Sarah Tyacke, “Archives in a Wider World: The Culture and Politics of Archives,” *Archivaria* 52

Now many genealogical researchers will never ask for permission to walk through the doors of our actual reading rooms. These researchers will likely never consider the provenance of the documents from which information-rich databases are created. Instead they will know only the name of the commercial vendor who sells the database. They will not be overly concerned about the name of the holders of the documents – archives and libraries – who might have the same database, free of charge. Rather they will know only that if they go to one particular website, they will find an obituary index, not that this index was formed from county newspapers held in a particular repository. Rather they will know that another archives gives on-line access to English and Welsh census records from 1901, but not that this link actually takes them to the National Archives in the UK.

In on-line research, both our physical and virtual doors are often obscured. While our physical doors are now simply bypassed, our virtual doors are overshadowed by their own openness. To borrow words from another public historian, Michael Frisch, we are increasingly sharing our authority. But we should have a part in how we are sharing it.<sup>50</sup>

One way to frame ideas about what type of sharing our profession should consider is to compare public libraries at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries to genealogy and archival work one hundred years later. Writing of this earlier period, Jesse Shera noted that libraries should be understood as social agencies dependent on the objectives of society. Public libraries did not create change but were created in response to nineteenth-century reforms. Libraries in the US, for example, became tax-supported and open to all citizens because librarians could argue that their institutions satisfied the need for informed citizens able to vote in a democracy and bring innovation and wealth to a capitalist society.<sup>51</sup>

A differently informed citizenry, more and more knowledgeable about records, continues to evolve today. For many industrialized nations, the products now most valued are those of information. Both genealogy and archives enter strongly into this evolution of knowledge creation in an information-rich daily life. Coupled with this evolution is a global economy in which people often live far from their families and/or countries of origin and yet want to know more about their pasts and their connections. In turn, the manner in which we present our repositories, our collections, and ourselves to these researchers will matter more and more to us and to our funding agents.

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(Fall 2001), pp. 1–25; Andrew Abbott, *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor* (Chicago, 1988); Paul Ricoeur, *Civilization and National Cultures, History and Truth*, trans. Chas A. Kelbley (Evanston, IL, 1965), p. 278.

50 Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany, NY, 1990).

51 Jesse Shera, “On the Value of Library History,” *Library Quarterly* 22 (July 1952), pp. 240–51.

## Section Two – The Website Study

### *Overview and Literature Review*

Recall that one observation of ICA-COU was that websites are the basic tool through which family historians gain access to libraries and archives. In our discussions, websites were considered as both an entry point for genealogical researchers and a publicity mechanism for archivists. The websites of archives and libraries take on important and emerging roles not only in family history research, but also in the broad understanding all public historians form about archives and the provenance of records.

To design a simple study of websites and how they served family historians, I was cognizant of two aspects of Elizabeth Yakel and Jihyun Kim's discerning 2003 article on the websites of Midwest State Archives. In their literature review, Yakel and Kim found that the archives they studied were delivering "increasingly more content since the initial reviews of archival websites in the mid-1990s, eons ago in Internet time." They then footnoted these reviews, with the bulk of articles bearing dates between the years 1995 and 1996.<sup>52</sup> The implication was that archivists seem to have lost their enthusiasm for reporting on websites. This is important since then, over time, our outreach tool becomes more and more the creation of others, not of archivists and librarians.

This idea contributed to the motivation for the study here. Yakel and Kim also emphasize their belief that *how* websites serve users is as important as the content of websites. Design and functionality become two of the most important considerations in creating and evaluating websites. Applying principles from cognitive psychology, they urge that websites allow for consistency in access to various information points. Uniformity reduces the need to relearn how to use a website from institution to institution.

The work of Yakel and Kim was all the more important since by 2004, only two articles in North America had looked at the information-seeking behaviour of family historians in archives and libraries.<sup>53</sup> The first, by Christopher Barth, found that genealogists would be well served by more findings aids on-line and by digitization projects that brought actual databases to on-line users.<sup>54</sup> The

52 Elizabeth Yakel and Jihyun Kim, "Midwest State Archives on the Web: A Content and Impact Analysis," *Archival Issues*, vol. 28, no. 1 (2003), pp. 47, 61.

53 Two 2004 studies from New Zealand and Scotland have remained inaccessible to me, but also seem to look at information-seeking behaviour of family historians. These are: H. Kuglin, "Granny Hunting: The Information Seeking Behavior of Genealogists in Open Access Libraries – A Quantitative Study," in *Proceedings of Library & Information Association of New Zealand (LIANZA) Auckland, New Zealand* (2004); and K. Masson, "Information Behaviours, Literacies and Strategies of the Users of UK E-Genealogical Resources and the Implications for Local Studies Libraries" (Master's thesis, Robert Gordon University, 2004).

54 Christopher D. Barth, "Archivists, Genealogists, Access, and Automation: Past and Present

other, by Wendy Duff and Catherine Johnson, argued for on-line retrieval systems that allowed access not through finding aids but through names, places, types of documents, and Boolean searching. To serve the information needs of family historians, maps and even a mechanism for allowing identification of geographic areas on the map, would also be included in archival websites.<sup>55</sup>

I also looked for other sources that would stand between these two slightly different views of what would best serve on-line genealogical inquiries. In this search, the writing of Elizabeth Yakel and Deb Torres on “archival intelligence” proved helpful. Yakel and Torres encourage a plan for user education that would include teaching about archival terminology (called by them “theory, practices, and procedures”) and “strategies for reducing uncertainty and ambiguity, and intellectual skills” that would allow researchers to understand the link between the access points to (and representations of) primary sources (in finding aids and other inventories and catalogues) to actual materials.<sup>56</sup> Their definitions made user education and the visual or written descriptions of archives seem all the more important to any website.

Finally, I turned to sources outside the archival literature to learn about factors that governed recent website design. Ideas were gathered from Louis Rosenfeld and Peter Morville in their book *Information Architecture for the World Wide Web* and from editors and contributing writers of *Family Tree Magazine* and *Family Chronicle*. Rosenfeld and Morville instruct web designers to “live” in the world of researchers, to consider how people arrive at websites, how their answers are found, what they see, what they find easily, and what they find with more difficulty. David A. Fryxell of *Family Tree Magazine* notes that family historians have experienced an unabashed “tilt toward the trend of actually being able to ‘do genealogy’ – that is locate ancestors – on the Web.” The best sites, he writes, give essential tools, such as maps, gazetteers, and historical references. Before 2003, family historians were thrilled “just to know [they] weren’t alone in [their] genealogical quests ...” In those days, they looked for sites that might give a few digital shots of photographs, scrapbooks, or buildings. When “Ellis Island went on-line” and various “state and foreign archives began digitizing records and the actual census pages could be viewed from home,” everything changed.<sup>57</sup>

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Trends in Archival Access Technologies and their Implications for the Future of Genealogical Research in Archives” (1997), available at: <http://www.arcticwind.com/cdb/writings/archives1.shtml> (accessed 1 December 2003).

55 Duff and Johnson, “Where is the List with All the Names?,” pp. 80–1, 94–5.

56 Elizabeth Yakel and Deborah A. Torres, “AI: Archival Intelligence and User Expertise,” *American Archivist*, vol. 66, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2003), pp. 51–78.

57 Louis Rosenfeld and Peter Morville, *Information Architecture for the World Wide Web*, 2d ed. (Cambridge, 2002). See different issues of the on-line *Family Tree Magazine*: for example,

The website study then was meant to look at this change as seen through the on-line provision of directories, census materials, exhibitions, and other materials. Following the advice of Rosenfeld and Morville, other most important questions concerned the presence of a separate and easily accessible page for family historians. Overall, as they advised, the goal became one of gauging how well archivists and their web designers appreciated the perspective of family historians and how access is or is not facilitated through layout, actual content, and other features.

### *Objectives and Methods*

From these considerations, a checklist was compiled and the website analysis was narrowed to focus on three main objectives:

- to establish the current state of our most public face presented to genealogical researchers;
- to identify features, within that public face, of current areas of best practice; and
- to identify those areas that require improvement, and thus form a future vision of what archives could offer on websites to family historians.

An analysis was completed of sixty websites in Canada, England, Scotland, and the United States, and later, the following year, of a smaller number (twenty-four) of these original sixty. The choice of sixty websites included two archival websites devoted solely to genealogy. The first, the Family Records Centre in London, was established in 1996 as a joint venture of the Public Record Office and the Office for National Statistics. The second, the Canadian Genealogy Centre/Centre canadien de généalogie in Ottawa was established in 2003 and designed to be developed in stages, very much in concert with the needs and participation of family historians.<sup>58</sup>

Thirty-eight other websites were chosen from lists that genealogists and librarians rated “the best” repositories for family history. These lists included Thomas J. Kemp’s “Best Websites for Helping Genealogists” from NAGARA Clearinghouse; the sites of libraries and archives listed in William Dollarhide

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Fryxell, “Sites Unseen,” *Family Tree Magazine*, available at: <http://www.familytreemagazine.com/101sites/2005/index.asp> (accessed 10 September 2006); Fryxell, “The Strongest Links” *Family Tree Magazine: 101 Best Websites 2004*,” available at: <http://www.familytreemagazine.com/101sites/2004/> (accessed 10 September 2006).

58 The Scottish Family History Centre (scheduled for opening in 2006) similarly is designed for a “one-stop shop” and combines former services of the General Register Office, the Scottish National Archives, and the Court of the Lord Lyon.

and Ronald A. Bremer's *America's Best Genealogy Resource Centers*; the 2002 and 2003 choices from "The 101 Best Family History Websites" in *Family Tree Magazine's* evaluations; and the reorganization of this latter list for 2004, called "The Strongest Links."<sup>59</sup> Twenty other websites were chosen at random. These came from each of the four countries and within these countries, from representative geographic regions.

In the first phase of the study (May 2004), the checklist asked about: a home page mentioning genealogy; a separate page that gives information on genealogical resources; and a how-to or user education section for genealogy. I also noted for each website any mention of policies and information about fees, access, and privacy; staff by name; contact information in general; publications related to family history; donations; on-line databases, census, directories, and other electronic listings; research aids such as catalogues and finding aids; links; a place for user comments; a notation of user statistics; the mention of national standards for family history work; and the presence of any visual or written description of the archives. A copy of this checklist is found in Appendix A.

In the next phase of the study (January–April 2005), the checklist was revised to concentrate on ten of these areas – namely the home page mention of family history; the presence of a separate page for genealogy; the presence of how-to or user education; mention of fees; mention of privacy and access issues; on-line access to materials; on-line access to research aids; the physical description or image of the repository; contact information; and site accessibility (see Appendix B). In this phase, forms were completed by a group of eight, including myself.<sup>60</sup> Answers were compared to determine the degree of subjective or objective judgment that entered into findings, and to discuss some of the particular websites.

Both in 2004 and 2005, the primary considerations measured *manifest content*: the presence of a home page mentioning genealogy, a separate page that gives information on genealogy, and a how-to or user education section for genealogy. Here a high degree of consistency among our answers was achieved.

59 Thomas J. Kemp, "Best Websites for Helping Genealogists," NAGARA Clearinghouse, available at: [http://www.nagara.org/clearinghouse/summer\\_97/kemp.html](http://www.nagara.org/clearinghouse/summer_97/kemp.html) (accessed 5 May 2004); "The 101 Best Family History Websites 2002 and 2003 listings," available at: [http://www.familytreemagazine.com/101\\_sites/2003/libraries.html](http://www.familytreemagazine.com/101_sites/2003/libraries.html) (accessed 5 May 2004); William Dollarhide and Ronald A. Bremer, *America's Best Genealogy Resource Centers* (North Salt Lake, UT, 2000); David A. Fryxell, "The Strongest Links, Family Tree Magazine: 101 Best Websites 2004," available at: <http://www.familytreemagazine.com/101sites/2004> (accessed 10 September 2006).

60 Those participating with me were Linda K. Gill, Jeanne Farque, Armajean Declouet, and Elaine Glen from the Calcasieu Parish Library; Debby Williamson from McNeese University Library in Lake Charles, LA; Cristina Hernandez from the Vorhoff Library at the Newcomb Center for Research on Women; and Dan Pischl from Tulane University.

However, *latent content* – such as buried information remote from the opening pages – was also evaluated. Here consistency was difficult, especially for categories noting the presence of information about policies, access, and for actual descriptions of a repository. In these cases, we did not tabulate answers.<sup>61</sup> We did, however, find it helpful to learn from each other – all skilled as librarians, archivists, and library workers – that many websites made finding information very time-consuming. This difficulty also seems to indicate that, as Yakel and Kim mentioned, design should take into consideration the need for consistency in locating various information points.

We also agreed that these categories about policies, access, and physical descriptions or images are critical to an understanding of the public face of archives. For example, the beginning family historian's understanding of archives might be influenced by a visual image of old maps or photographs or a reading room with computers. These website images will ultimately influence what a researcher asks of us in archives either directly in visits and written requests or indirectly through use of on-line services.

I then repeated alone the second, more condensed survey for twenty US websites and the national archives of all four countries in November 2005. I did so in order to see what changes had taken place over the last year and a half, and to look more closely at what these changes might signal for the future of archives.

### ***Findings***

Findings from the website analysis can be most easily understood if we look again at the three areas we sought to measure – one, the public face presented to family historians; two, the best of that public face and; three, the areas needing improvement, or a vision of the future.

#### ***Public Face Presented to Family Historians***

##### **Accessible Routes to Family History on Websites**

Fifty-eight percent, that is thirty-five of sixty repositories, across all countries in the 2004 phase of the study showed recognition of genealogical researchers on their home page. A separate page devoted to genealogy was found in 2004 in eighty percent of the websites. Considering that two repositories were dedicated solely to family history, this finding still reflects the fact that libraries

61 To help with issues of consistency and inconsistency, we relied on M. Lombard, J. Snyder-Duch, and C. Bracken, "Content Analysis in Mass Communication: Assessment and Reporting of Intercoder Reliability," *Human Communication Research* 28 (2002), pp. 587–604; and K.A. Neuendorf, *The Content Analysis Guidebook* (Thousand Oaks, CA, 2002).

and archives have invested in making known genealogical resources, services, and holdings.

<b>Chart One: Review of Home Pages and Dedicated Pages<sup>62</sup> (Study of Sixty Websites in 2004)</b>	
Home page mentions genealogy	58%
Separate page dedicated to genealogy	80%
Site dedicated to genealogy	2%
Mentioned on home page <b>With</b> dedicated page	48%
Mentioned on home page <b>Without</b> dedicated page	9%
No mention on home page <b>With</b> dedicated page	34%
No mention on home page <b>Without</b> dedicated page	19%

On the other hand in the 2004 phase of the survey, only forty-eight percent were reached in one click from the home page; thirty-five percent required two clicks; and seventeen percent, three or four clicks.

<b>Chart Two: Number of Clicks from Home Page to Dedicated Page (Study of Sixty Websites in 2004)</b>	
1 click	48%
2 clicks	35%
3 clicks	13%
4 clicks	4%

In the smaller study of twenty US archives and all four national archives in November 2005, ninety-two percent showed a separate page for family history. Seventy-one percent of these mentioned family history on the opening home page. In addition, some archives allowed a number of different entry points for family historians. For example, in welcoming family historians, the Massachusetts State Archives provided two places from which to reach family history – from a box labeled “Most requested” and also from a general listing of topics.

62 For all charts, and for her collegiality in this work, I am grateful to Cristina Hernandez.

### User Education

Historically, two of the main complaints archivists and librarians have had of family historians are the amount of time needed to assist them and their lack of preparation before arriving at our doors.<sup>63</sup> For these reasons, as well as Yakel and Torres' research on archival intelligence, measuring for user education was an important component of the public face. In 2004, more than half the archives (thirty-eight, or sixty-three percent) had user education available on their websites for persons beginning family research. Of these, fifty-two percent listed family history education next to related topics such as record-keeping in the seventeenth century; paleography; or architectural, legislative, and legal history.

<b>Chart Three: User Education (Study of Sixty Websites in 2004)</b>	
User education on genealogy	63%
Additional types of user education	52%

In 2005 also, more than one-half of the websites offered user education (fourteen out of twenty-four). The state archives in the US and the national archives in Canada and the UK did an especially good job at coordinating research in family history with other types of research. Notably, the British National Archives mounted an impressive series of programs entitled *Moving Here: 200 Years of Migration to England* aimed at those people relatively new to the UK and underserved by archives. Such efforts introduced concepts of ethnicity within one nation's formation and within the process of becoming a citizen, and also attend to the problems of mobility, an historic role of family history.<sup>64</sup> These efforts also teach about archives through family history, extend the archival mission to help citizens inform themselves, and extend too the position of archivists as educators about records.<sup>65</sup>

Another example in 2005 of this sort of learning was Library and Archives

63 Edwards, "Archivists' Outlook on Service to Genealogists in Selected Canadian Archives"; Baker, "What We Owe the Genealogists"; Bidlack, "The Awakening Genealogy As It Relates to Library Service"; Anne Billeter, "Why Don't Librarians Like Genealogists? Beginning Genealogy for Librarians," *Oregon Library Association*, vol. 7, no. 4 (Winter 2001), pp. 2–6; Charles F. Bryan, "What Should We Do About the 'Genies'?" *History News*, vol. 41, no. 1 (January 1986), pp. 31–33; Cadell; Allen Gardiner, "Genealogy and the Librarian: Hope and Help for the Librarian's Frayed Nerves," *Show Me Libraries* (September 1984), pp. 25–32.

64 *Moving Here: 200 Years of Migration to England*, available at: <http://www.movinghere.org.uk> (accessed 10 September 2006); Helen Wood, National Archives, Kew, England, Personal conversation, 27 June 2003.

65 Wood.

Canada's addition of electoral maps, historical statistics, and atlases near to user education for genealogy. This further connected various types of learning about geographic and political divisions. Through family history, such archives are aiding in the gathering of disparate communities that more and more now form the whole of multicultural countries. We return then to the shift in access to our repositories, to the goals of family history, and also to changing conceptions of citizenship, our role therein, and its expanding definition.<sup>66</sup> Our websites, especially those from the National Archives in the UK and Library and Archives Canada, show an acknowledgement of these concepts.

### *The Best of our Public Face*

The best of our public face, presented to family historians, is found then in our acknowledging them on our home page, in our provision of some user education, and in our efforts to contextualize their searches for ancestors within an array of topics. Another strength of library and archival websites in their relation to family history was in manoeuvrability and accessibility within the site. All but one of the twenty-four websites in the 2005 phase had search engines on their websites. All but three had an easily reached site index or site map. All had catalogues and finding aids on-line. Scholars and consultants on Web design consistently rank this type of aid to information among the most important aspects of satisfaction with websites.<sup>67</sup>

Another admirable finding was that for most archives there were considerable revisions between 2004 and 2005. In 2004, one archives had an on-line message specifically denying service to those interested only in family history; in 2005, this statement had been removed. The second and third phases of reviewing websites also found more on-line services available. More recognition was given to the presence of family history in general in the manner that these databases, directories, and other electronic services and provisions were presented. Family history appeared on the home page of all but one of the websites in 2005. And for seventeen of these twenty-four websites, genealogy was among the top five in all listings of possible research topics or short cuts to proposed research needs.

Another important innovation in 2005 was that the National Archives in Washington added an easily located link in its user education to the standards established by professional genealogists themselves at the site of the Associa-

66 Kemp, telephone conversation, 17 May 2004, discussed his understanding that the European Union recognized this expanded definition of citizenship and of the institutions that hold and will hold vital statistics when it suggested the timely manner in which vital statistics should be delivered to those requesting them. Further study needs to be done in this area comparing expanded suffrage and other privileges of citizens with the opening of archival doors to more people.

67 Rosenfeld and Morville, *Information Architecture for the World Wide Web*, pp. 346–59.

tion of Professional Genealogists. On five other sites in 2005, such standards could also be reached indirectly through other links. For example, the Illinois State Archives contained a link to the Illinois Genealogical Society, which in turn, discussed standards. The Allen County Public Library (Indiana), in another example, noted these standards under their researcher topics section.

Another area of change for a number of websites concerns clarifying the ambiguities of the sources of records. In the 2005 study, two of the twenty-four websites announced the differences between commercially provided databases and those databases that are free to users-in-house. Four websites provided some explanation concerned with the compilation of electronic lists from archival records.

### *Areas Needing Improvement*

Areas needing improvement exist. One problem was found in how we present ourselves visually and in written descriptions.

<b>Chart Four: Review of Visual or Written Descriptions (Study of Twenty-Four Websites in 2005)</b>	
People in the archives	8%
Reading room/stacks	13%
Written description	17%
Building exterior	25%
Archival materials	38%
None	25%

If users who never visit our reading rooms are to understand what archives are, we must show more of the types of materials we hold. We must show how our public work areas and our stacks look. This would be a first step in building archival intelligence.

In our websites, we also very rarely acknowledge those skilled at family history. We provide information only for beginners. In sixty-three percent of the websites (or thirty-eight of the sixty) studied in 2004, one finds introductory guidelines only – directed at novices. More links, more cooperation with membership-based organizations, and more in-house or on-line user education and provision of standards are needed.

Another problem was the lack of standardization among websites. For example, there were a number of circuitous routes to find contact information. Some twenty-one out of sixty sites (thirty-five percent) in the first of the 2004 phase and seven of the twenty-four sites (twenty-nine percent) in the 2005 phase, had contact information that was not located on the home page, and

indeed, difficult to find. Current standards for government and business call for the location of contact information on the first page as a header or a footer. But this was not uniformly observed in archives. Rather, especially in websites from 2004, one had to use a search engine or a site map to locate postal or email addresses and phone numbers. In successful corporate websites, the placement of addresses and phone number especially is one of the first features to be standardized. Archives would be wise to follow their example.<sup>68</sup> In the smaller study in 2005, contact information was more easily found. Yet, still, ten out of twenty-four repositories provided access to contact information only through links in pull down menus.

<b>Chart Five: Accessibility of Contact Information (Study of Twenty-Four Websites in 2005)</b>		
Accessed through pull-down menus		46%
	Listed as:	
	– “Contact information” or “Contact us”	82%
	– “Locations and Hours”	9%
	– Both “contact information” and “location and hours”	9%
Centred on home page		4%
Located in page header		4%
Located in page footer		46%

Also, pages for family history were not always easy to locate from the main page. Although as noted above in Chart One, most archives and libraries led researchers in one or two easy steps to family history, seventeen percent took three or four clicks to reach this destination. On one website, even after reaching the family history page, a multiple-paragraph introduction describes the repository. Studies of web use have noted that users rarely read long passages on the screen, so lengthy statements are wasted, and might even be considered an impediment to research.<sup>69</sup>

68 Jennifer Fleming, *Web Navigation: Designing the User Experience* (Cambridge, 1998), esp. chapters 2 and 7, available at: <http://www.wvu.edu/~cartwrj/thesis/intro.html> (accessed 1 December 2005). The biweekly columns posted by Jacob Nielsen, (<http://www.useit.com/alertbox/>) (accessed 10 September 2006), are also helpful in arriving at some standards to consider. Government web pages are required to have contact information, but it is not specified where this information should be. See: <http://www.usability.gov/> (accessed 2 December 2005).

69 Patrick J. Lynch and Sarah Horton, *Web Style Guide: Basic Design Principles for Creating Websites*, 2d ed. (New Haven, CT, 2002), esp chap. 6. It is also available on-line, at: <http://www.webstyleguide.com/> (accessed 10 September 2006).

**Chart 6: Some Examples of Pathways from Home Page to Family History Page  
(Study of Sixty Websites in 2004)**

<p>Home → Genealogy  Home → Local History  Home → Your family history</p> <p>Home → Get reference help → Genealogy  Home → About the collections → Genealogy  Home → Start Your Search → Family History</p> <p>Home → Source Lists → Social History → Family Historians  Home → Subject and Course Guides → History → Genealogy Resources  Home → Services → Reference → Genealogy on the Internet</p>
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A condensed introduction is one way to get visitors directly to services. The Library of Virginia gave an opening page with a short three-part route in ten words: *Who We Are, What We Have, and What We Do*. Although this sort of shorthand has its own problems, other archival web designers might consider some sort of concise opening map or text leading to various services and departments. Following this design, researchers would know quickly where to find the databases, indices, and various lists now often buried in websites. Forty-four percent of the sites studied in 2005 required some sophistication such as the use of a site index or the ability to search a site, and even more complicated, a return to various other places in the website to find what might be a path of access. We know that many family historians are skilled at Internet searching. The events concerning the National Archives in the UK in 2002 attest to family historians' willingness to enjoy the "chase" to records. However, our websites might benefit from focus groups or other meetings with family historians to standardize various paths to particular types of information, and thus ensure not only their success and but also our more secure place in the interconnected world of knowledge. Such meetings might be one way to draw upon the expert advice of family historians and especially their membership organizations. Like archives, these groups too have lost members in the Internet age and are reshaping themselves in on-line communities. They, too, will be shifting their ways of educating and communicating with practitioners and we would be well served to work alongside them as they do so.<sup>70</sup>

Standardization will take time. Uniform practices of cataloguing records, though achieved in large part by the beginning of the twentieth century, took

<sup>70</sup> Diane Rogers, in a telephone conversation, 7 August 2006, discussed her understanding of the response of the British Columbia Genealogical Society. The society has done studies on its membership and is making efforts to reach out to family historians who belong only to Internet-based communities in their pursuit of genealogy.

at least a half a century to reach and are still not completely identical across the English-speaking world. Archivists have struggled with *Machine Readable Cataloging* (MARC) since the early 1980s, with *Encoded Archival Description* since the early 1990s, and with *Dublin Core Metadata Standards* since the mid-1990s. All of these treat the collections named within our finding aids and, thus, ultimately provide access to our website users. Yet, while these standards enhance on-line resource discovery in our indexes, catalogues, and inventories, they do not offer simple rules for content and display of the Web pages that are providing initial access to those on-line resources. Guidelines are advised in books by at least some website designers. Common sense tells us that contact information should be easy to find on a repository's website, but the website study showed this was not so. And as implied in the Yakel and Kim finding about the lack of analysis of archival websites, many archivists seem to defer to others in the design of our virtual front door, the gateway to our collections, and our point of interconnection within a shared world of knowledge.<sup>71</sup> This is a mistake.

### **A Vision of the Future**

Recall again the early 2002 overload of the UK National Archives website that occurred with the on-line release of the 1901 census and the strong advocacy of Canadian genealogical organizations for the release of census materials that began at the same time. Review of both events always ends in an acknowledgement of the importance of family historians in archival and library use. Review of both events also shows how everyday millions of people now expect a different type of archives, responsive to family history's needs while also connected to resources across the world. Each day our physical doors become less important.

The new doors visible in the website analysis could be opened much wider. Recall again that only two in sixty repositories in 2004 linked to standards of family history, or other types of rules governing rights to information. In 2005,

71 J.E. Rowley and J.F. Farrow, *Organizing Knowledge: An Introduction to Managing Access to Information*, 3d ed. (Aldershot, England, 2002); A. Taylor, *The Organization of Information*, 2d ed. (Englewood, CO, 2003). Very little is written on the standardization of websites. I could find no writing on standards of repository websites in archival or library literature. When I posed this question to the Reference, Access and Outreach Section of the Society of American Archivists, colleagues routinely noted that consistency was aimed for internally, within the parent organization, rather than with other archives. This may well be important but there is a balance in that we should consider sharing our intents and professional goals. It may well be that we give up part of our professionalism if we do exert control over our websites. For information on standardization of on-line finding aids see *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* (DACS), Rule 2.2 on name and location of repository in finding aids and other rules in *Encoded Archival Description*.

this percentage had only changed slightly. These missing pieces from our websites indicate an unwillingness to enter into the network that family history has established, and to align, however tentatively, our activities with Cox's claim that genealogy is a part of a broad public history connected with the daily lives of so many of our users. Interlocked into the vast information highway, our websites should accommodate widening audiences interested in learning about their family past. Simple standardization of our websites will make us more open to the world of the past and the future, and in the present, more visible to our funding agents. People will learn more quickly the path to topics for which they are searching, and we will act as agents in their learning.

One hopeful sign might be lessons we can learn from the centralized portals established in the last few years: the Family Records Centre in London, the Canadian Genealogy Centre in Ottawa, and the soon-to-open Scottish Family History Centre. The Family Records Centre, for example, regularly mounts a display about the genealogy of a famous person, but then links not only genealogical records but also other types of records in other archives, museums, and libraries. Recent examples of such displays direct the viewer to repositories with holdings on Florence Nightingale and Charles Dickens.<sup>72</sup> Those of us in traditional archives could well do that with many of our collections, linking, for example, a search for school records with learning about how subjects were taught in a certain period and then extending that to other types of collections.

These possibilities involve untraditional roles archivists are not used to filling. Yet, archivists in the early days of the Internet held those materials that were so often easily mounted, documents already in the public domain. Then we were ready to form a central part of the emerging network of electronically presented knowledge, to shift our positions and thoughts about access. Now that that network also includes high-priced subscription-based databases and advertising-based commercial sites, we must still continue to step forward and redefine our role in this more competitive environment. Considering the rapidity with which the Internet now acts, we should also do so quickly.

To return to the comparison with public libraries and their growth in response to social changes requiring an educated citizenry, our growth and the funding that must accompany this growth could now be greater if we secure our place in this network of family history. Librarians, at a similar juncture in the nineteenth century, gave up their role as educators; they have been working hard ever since to recapture this role.<sup>73</sup> We should learn not to take a side-step away from this role – but, instead, to promote learning by others through our expertise with documents, in standardizing electronic access to our doors,

<sup>72</sup> See various issues of *The Family Record: The Newsletter of the Family Records Centre*, especially issues from 2003.

<sup>73</sup> Abbot, *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor*, pp. 86–89.

and by recognizing the allies we have in family historians. In the changes they make, month to month, and certainly year to year, websites play a role in the learning the route to records, or as Yakel and Torres call it, archival intelligence. By seeing the changes in the websites over just one year, a widening knowledge about archives and finding documents and records is built. That is, a user returning to the same site learns more over time. We too should learn from the shifting of websites and the increasing knowledge base of our users.

Genealogy has been called the other historiography.<sup>74</sup> Its otherness in the history of libraries and archives has been both apparent and troubling. But family history's appeal – in offering both solitary and group work, and the chance to see a story without ending, a meta-narrative that is carried between generations – is something that has been a constant for our profession and is now expanding and changing.<sup>75</sup> On-line family history research now offers the chance to open our doors wider. As we do so in the coming years, the two archival roles of preservation and access will change meaning, and we would do well to think of our websites more critically as these meanings shift.

74 For use of this term I am grateful to François Menant, "L'Altra Storiografia," *Quaderni Storici*, vol. 33, no. 1 (1998), pp. 216–26.

75 Ronald Bishop, "In the Grand Scheme of Things: An Exploration of the Meaning of Genealogical Research" (paper, Mid-Atlantic Popular/American Culture Association conference, Wilmington, Delaware, 7 November 2003), copy in possession of the author; R.D. Lambert, "The Family Historian and Temporal Orientations Towards the Ancestral Past," *Time and Society*, vol. 5, no. 2 (1996), pp. 115–43; Lambert, "Reclaiming the Past: Narrative, Rhetoric and the Convict Stain," *Journal of Sociology*, vol. 38, no. 2 (2002), pp. 111–27; L. Bear, "Public Genealogies: Documents, Bodies and Nationals in Anglo-Indian Railway Family Histories," *Contributions of Indian Sociology*, vol. 35, no. 3 (2001), pp. 355–88.

### Appendix A: Checklist for Website Study, Round 1

1. Name of Library or Archives:		
2. First view of overall site mentions genealogy or family history	Yes	No
3. Separate page for genealogy or family history	Yes	No
4. How to/User Education	Yes	No
5. Fees	Yes	No
6. Access	Yes	No
7. Privacy	Yes	No
8. Publications	Yes	No
9. Chances for donations	Yes	No
10. On-line Access to Information	Yes	No
a. Directories	Yes	No
b. Census materials	Yes	No
c. Exhibitions	Yes	No
d. Others	Yes	No
11. Research aids	Yes	No
12. Physical description of place (either in words or in pictures)	Yes	No
13. Links	Yes	No
14. Place for user comments	Yes	No
15. User statistics given	Yes	No
16. National Standards provided or linked to	Yes	No
17. Contact information or form for contact	Yes	No

**Appendix B: Checklist for Website Study, Round 2****1. Basic Info**

a. Name of Institution:

b. URL:

c. Location of Library/Archives

City:

State:

d. Type of Library/Archives

Federal

State

County

University

Special/Private

**2. Home page**

a. Mentions genealogy or family history?

Yes

No

b. Describe how genealogy appears:

Note: Is there is a pull down menu listing various user services, a special department devoted to genealogy, or any other mention of genealogy? Also if genealogy is mentioned, give information about how it is listed. For example, "Appears in a listing of ten sites, as third in the list, between 'Hours and Location' and 'General Research'"

**3. Separate page for Genealogy**

a. Is there a separate page on genealogy?

Yes

No

b. Describe path to this page

**Example:** Home → Family History

c. How many clicks must one make from home page to family history page?

**4. How to/User Education**

a. Is there user education for family history research?

Yes

No

If so,

1. Is it on-line via the institution's website?

Yes

No

2. Does it link to other websites with family research tutorials?

Yes

No

3. Is it offered in house?

Yes

No

4. What other types of user education, if any, appear on the list next to user education for family history?

**Note:** Describe the placement of family history in the list (i.e., "vital statistics, family history, military records")

b. Is there user education for other topics or library use in general?

Yes

No

**5. Fees & Restrictions**

a. Does the site mention fees of any kind?	Yes	No
i. If so, please give examples.		
b. Does the site mention restrictions to access on any kind? (include here any mentions of privacy rights)	Yes	No
i. If so, please give example.		

**6. On-line access to materials**

a. Does the website offer on-line access to information so that the user would not have to leave home to use materials? <b>For example:</b> Does the site offer on-line access to a database with names, dates, and records; census materials; exhibits; city directories; obituaries and/or maps?	Yes	No
b. Please give examples of what information is available on-line?		

**7. On-line access to research aids**

a. Does the website offer on-line access to guides to collection so that the user can begin research preparation from home?	Yes	No
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**For example:** Can one derive the necessary box number, for example, from home?

b. Please give examples of what information is available online?		
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**8. Physical description of repository**

a. Does the site offer a physical description (through words or pictures) of the repository?	Yes	No
b. If so please describe (i.e., "Photo of shelves of books" or "written description")		

**9. Contacting Staff for Help**

a. Is there staff contact information?	Yes	No
b. Does the site invite users to contact staff via email for help with research?	Yes	No
c. Does the site invite users to contact staff via phone for help with research?	Yes	No
d. Is there any on-line form to contact staff with questions?	Yes	No
e. Is there live chat help available?	Yes	No

**10. Site Accessibility**

a. Can you search the website?	Yes	No
b. Is there a site map?	Yes	No
c. Is there a site index?	Yes	No
d. Is the page slow to download?	Yes	No