

## Genealogy Giants - Part 4

Hi there; welcome to another session of Family Digging. I'm here with Paul Handee and I'm Carolyn Lancaster. We will discuss Genealogy Giants for the last time - Part 4 - where we're going to talk about FindMyPast.com and do a wrap up of the series. Findmypast is probably the smallest of the four Genealogical Giants, in part because it specializes. In addition to records for the USA and Canada, the company has the most complete British and Irish primary records available among the Genealogy Giants. They have at least twice as many Irish records as any other site, the largest online archive of British and Irish newspapers, and more. They have especially strong military and passenger list records.

They partner with the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the National Archives of the United Kingdom, the British Library, the National Archives of Ireland, and FamilySearch.org, among others. Sometimes there are perks being affiliated with other websites. If you are a member of some organizations, such as the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society in New York City, you can receive a 60% discount towards World Search on Findmypast. It's not free, but it looks pretty good. So search the website for genealogical societies to find their partners and see what membership benefits may be found for you.

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For a very large percentage of people from the United States and even more from Canada, at least some of our roots are in the United Kingdom and FindMyPast is the place to go for primary source records. We say that with the following caveat. Go to FindMyPast after you have exhausted all the records you could find of the many free resources that contain records from the British Isles and Ireland. A podcast in the near future is going to review the free resources available. But FindMyPast has a number of records that are found nowhere else, and so it's worth the money. We at FamilyDigging.com always want to exhaust freely available records before we start paying for anything; that is just a given. Absolutely!

Their vital records cover about 90% of the United States and Canada. With BMD records (that is birth, marriage and death records) starting from the early 1700s, parish records for England and for Wales go back as far as 1538. This is particularly useful for anyone researching to find their immigrant ancestors in the early Colonial American Era. They also have a rapidly growing collection of local English, Welsh, Irish and Scottish records going back to 1700, and some records going back as far as 858 a.d. Many of these are exclusive to FindMyPast.

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The Company has a unique and very flexible subscription system, both as to the types of records you want to access, as well as the duration of the subscription you want, starting with as little as a month at a time. And the cost is relatively low compared with many other sites. They also have a wide variety of vital, census and immigration records available for **free**. To see what all is included, go to their main page and at the bottom left click on “free records”. It is a very generous list.

FindMyPast owns a company called Twile, acquired a couple of years ago, that creates a visual timeline of your family history made up of milestones and photos. Way cool.

Another useful and exclusive resource that FindMyPast has is PERSI, that's the Periodical Source Index which is now available online. This vast resource provides publications and journals from the Allen County (Indiana) Public Library's Genealogy Center, one of the premier genealogy libraries in the United States. It includes publications from Allen County Public Library, the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, Tip of Texas Genealogical Society, a wide variety of organizations from Canada and from members of the British Commonwealth, as well as the United States.

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Often the best research in the country can be found in journals of various historical and genealogical societies, and many of them send copies to the Allen County Public Library, which are then added to PERSI. PERSI is compiled by the Allen County Public Library and simultaneously updated in FindMyPast. PERSI indexed articles are added every month. It is a great way to find articles written about American history and family history.

FindMyPast isn't the largest of the Genealogy Giants, but for British and Irish records, and more, is the bomb.

(Paul) And also I'd like to add that I've been a member of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, because many of my family come from New York State and I like to research in the many books that they have, and because they are affiliated with FindMyPast - a great platform. I really like them.

### **(Wrap Up)**

Here are some thoughts on how to proceed in order to make good quality choices on how to set up your family tree - just a few things to keep in mind.

Everyone who opens an account with any genealogical site that provides space for you to create your family tree, whether a genealogical giant or not, needs to become aware of how that

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company functions BEFORE signing up. Does the site use a shared tree, an entirely private space for your tree, or combination? Can you build a tree without sharing it (until and unless you choose to) or not? This is not judgment, just information. You need to decide what is best for you.

Some companies use shared trees as their only way of doing business; a significant percentage of companies are headed on this route. They will give you all kinds of reasons as to why they chose to do business one way or the other, and sometimes can make the case for building your tree faster by sharing information with others who are working on that same family line. However, shared trees are risky in that you may lose control of what information is attached to your ancestors. Anyone can come in and override what you put in, and that is a potential problem when so many people are just doing 'copy and paste' from other trees, especially without resource citations. The errors can really get out of hand and you have very little control.

Again, this is entirely up to you. I just know that I would want to be able to prove the facts and place the appropriate citations on the tree before making it public. It's hard to refute a fact that has good quality resources attached. It gives you credibility.

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Other people's trees are not sources. GEDCOMs with no author or resources attached are similarly not resources at all. They are just hints. And it is a joke to cite your fourth great grandfather's date of birth as "known from personal knowledge" or "first hand knowledge". (Oh yeah, you were there to witness it?) That is one sorry excuse for a citation.

One way or the other, you need to choose whether or not you want a shared tree or if you want to do your preliminary research privately and then decide whether, when and with whom you want to share it; and if you choose shared trees, while you are at it, you should probably find out what happens if you want to stop doing business with that company for any reason, including your death. Can you use a GEDCOM to remove your entire tree? What happens to your photos? Are they still yours to take? How about the images and transcripts of your resources? How about your DNA data?

These are all things you need to determine before you set up an account so that you aren't surprised or angry when it is too late. All this is part of the fine print that you really do need to read, no matter who you are doing business with in 'genea-world'.

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So Paul, which genealogical giant would you use? I know that you're a member of MyHeritage, but is that enough?

(Paul) Well, actually not. I really have kind of gone out and looked at a lot of different resources, some of which we haven't even discussed on our program. Yes, I like, for instance, Geneanet, which is a French-based platform and I've been doing a lot of research with them. I've tried a couple other things like Ancient Faces, which is a pictorial genealogical site and I like them. And, of course. I do like MyHeritage because they really bring it on strong for me and my family.

(Carolyn) I would use all of them, starting with FamilySearch and Ancestry. I would try to find as many domestic records as possible, in particular exhausting as many free records as possible first before going on to any paid subscriptions. I would also use the Library Edition of Ancestry to do my preliminary research until I can't find anything more, and then I'd need to start a subscription. Then I would head to FindMyPast for my British side, which is big on my father's side of the tree in particular. When I was done there, I would go to MyHeritage, check out the rest of Europe, check for accuracy for the entire tree, get photos jazzed up, and have fun with others of like mind.

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Needless to say, perhaps, but I wouldn't stop with Genealogical Giants. The first standard of genealogical research (after planning, of course), is to do exhaustive research.

Well, I guess the thing is, if you start off using as much free stuff as you can, and then move into other avenues of paid subscriptions and other avenues, that will fill out your genealogical globe.

Well folks, thanks for tuning in this week; this was really quite a good session. We appreciate your patience and hope you found it useful. Feel free to go to our website ([familydigging.com](http://familydigging.com)) to our Podcast Transcriptions to copy this session, which will have the links to the four genealogical Giants we have covered. [Note: You can just listen, or print out the transcript.] If you would like to be notified of our next podcast, please subscribe, and if you have any questions at all or comments, please feel free to email us at [familydigging@gmail.com](mailto:familydigging@gmail.com). And for now, this is Paul, and I'm Carolyn, and we at Family Digging hope to “see” you next time. Enjoy. Bye now.

## LINKS

<https://www.familysearch.org>

<https://www.ancestry.com>

<https://www.myheritage.com>

<https://www.findmypast.com>

