Power tools: adding library collections to your arsenal

At home tools for genealogical research
- Individual database & serial subscriptions, Personal book collection
  - Limited funds, room & time
- Files & documents, Family papers, Family photographs
  - Also limited funds, room & time
- Family members
  - Sometimes won't talk, have moved away, or are deceased

Library as a Power Tool - Library Tools For genealogical research
Tool #1 - a library card
- Get multiple cards
- Allows access to library materials
- Might be able to sign up online to get one
- Free to residents
- Might allow interlibrary loan
- Start at the library's website, FAQ's, etc.
- Some libraries issue cards to anyone living in the state
- Some out of "town" cards available
- Some out of state cards available – usually for a fee
- Allow varying access to library materials
- Usually allows access to physical & digital library material(s)
- May allow you access to online databases
- May only allow you to do research in the building

Houston Public Library's MyLink library card
- Free to all Texas residents
- Can sign up online to get one
- Start at http://www.houstonlibrary.org
- Allows access to printed books, e-books, & databases
  - some at home
  - some only in library

Tool #2 - database subscriptions - 3 types
- Library version of databases you could pay to get at home
  - Ancestry Library Edition
  - Fold3 - mostly military
  - My Heritage Library Edition
  - Find My Past
  - Newspapers.com Library Edition - Galveston County Library
- Databases only available for libraries to subscribe to
  - HeritageQuest Online
  - HeritageHub Online - obituaries and death notices from 1704 - Galveston County Library

- o Houston Chronicle Historical Archive 1901-2017
- o Houston Post Historical Archive 1880-1995
- Local databases - library made
  - o Clayton Library Periodical & Microprint & Funeral Home Databases
  - o Galveston County Library Archival Material Database - Galveston County Library

Other databases possibly available
- Newspapers
  - o 19th Century U.S. Newspapers Digital Archive
  - o NewspaperArchive
  - o Historical newspapers from ProQuest, EBSCO, & others
- Maps
  - o HistoryGeo, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, & others
- History
  - o Gale Primary Sources
  - o National Geographic: People, Animals, and the World

Check the library website for available databases
- Check under terms
  - o Genealogy
  - o History
  - o Newspapers

May be in house use only or available remotely

Tool #3 – library collections; books, serials, & microprint
- Library book collection
  - o Geographical books - Local, state, regional, and/or national
  - o Family histories - Direct lines & Collateral lines
  - o Social histories – search for similar experiences your relatives may have had
  - o General histories – search for the history of an event your relative participated in
- Library serials collection
  - o Access to many subscriptions
  - o Possible access to full run of serial
  - o Or at least back issues
  - o Access to out of state subscriptions
- Finding books, serials, & microprint
  - o WorldCat.org connects you to the collections and services of more than 10,000 libraries worldwide
    - Can narrow down your search by type of material, year published, author, language, topic, and even audience (adult or juvenile)
    - Can find out what library owns the material
    - Click on title and read description of information
    - Might be a link to a finding aid or a digitized copy
    - Use WorldCat to request interlibrary loans.

  - Finding Clayton Library serials
    - o Clayton Periodicals Collection database
    - o Click "Research"
    - o Click "Research Guides"
    - o Choose Clayton Periodicals Collection
  - Library microprint collection
    - o Finding Clayton Library microprint
    - o Some material is in the library catalog

- o Clayton Microprint Collection database
- o Click "Research"
- o Click "Research Guides"
- o Choose Clayton Microprint Collection
- WorldCat -- https://www.worldcat.org/
  - o WorldCat is a catalog that itemizes the collections of 17,900 libraries in 123 countries and territories that participate in the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) global cooperative. It is operated by OCLC, Inc.

Tool #4 – Donated & collected materials
- Vertical files
  - o Might be clipping files by staff or volunteers
  - o Arranged by subject, place, or family name
  - o Possibly digitized or partially digitized
- Documents
  - o Might be business papers
  - o Might be vital records
  - o Might be Bible records
  - o Could be large Pedigree Charts
  - o Possibly digitized or partially digitized
- Donated Family Papers
  - o Vertical files
  - o Binders
  - o File boxes full
  - o Research papers of professional genealogists
    - § e.g. Leonardo Andrea Collection
- Donated Family Photographs
  - o Labeled or unlabeled
  - o Loose or in albums
  - o Original paper or digitized images

Tool #5 - Trained staff
- "A second pair of eyes"
- Know their collection – "open" & "hidden"
  - o Know their equipment
- Can have research "specialties"
- Knowledge of research techniques
- Outside of your research

Finding your Power Tool Library
Finding libraries
- Public
- Special
- Academic
- Government

Libraries.org -- https://librarytechnology.org/libraries/
- Libraries.org is a directory of libraries throughout the world. Includes links to library technology also. There are 186,000+ libraries from 180 different countries represented in libraries.org.
- Library names do not always reflect where they are located

- Look at the library's website - some of those small collections might be worth discovering
- From the home page look for "research" and then see what the offerings are
- Some things are exclusive to a library, unique material is why we do "off the internet, on the ground" research.

Preparing for an on the ground research trip
- Search the library, archive, courthouse, and/or historical society's website
  - To see what records/books they have
  - To see hours and days closed
  - To see restrictions on use
  - Use online catalogs.
- Call them to double-check access and availability
  - Check food/drink policies
  - Know where the repository is, parking, photocopy procedures and scanning, etc..
- Contact the library
  - Call, write, or email before showing up, even after looking them up on the internet

Planning for your research trip
- Look at your research first - Who, What, When, Where?
- Go over your pedigree chart – bring it with you
- Update your laptop/tablet/smart phone, etc.
- Leave a backup copy at home
- Write your research questions down
- Don't bring original records, bring copies
- Plan on what to do for food, if location doesn't have a place to eat

Packing for your visit
- Bring light sweaters / dress in layers
- Bring fresh flash drives with lots of free storage space
- Bring small change and small bills or credit cards
- Bring current ID
- Bring laptop, cords, and chargers
- Bring notepads and pens/pencils
- Phone camera or hand scanner (if allowed)