

Family Research 2022

Course Description Family Research is a guided self-help group for members who are already working on their family tree. Sessions typically begin with report backs on 'pains and gains' over the past month accompanied by shared problem solving and lots of encouragement and ideas for next steps. Presentations by group members and guest speakers provide inspiration and suggestions of different approaches and resources. Stories are also shared each month on a topic designed to encourage deeper reflection on our research. Topics to begin 2022 include 'A Sense of Place', 'Hunch' and 'They were there when...'

Family Story Topic 2022 – remembering of course the preface – “from 150 to 400 words or thereabouts, oral presentations fine too!” Please keep in mind the time limit of 6 minutes.

February	“A sense of place”	Write about a place which was important to your forebears - why did you choose this place? How did it feature in your family story...why was it important to family members in the past? Share your reflections in 150 to 400 words, accompanied by a photograph/s, hopefully captured close to the time in which it featured in one or more of their lives.
March	“Hunch”	Sometimes when researching we find a 'black hole', however have a strong hunch about a possible resolution of the problem. We are faced with a dilemma though, as we don't want to record it as we don't think the evidence is strong enough. Describe a strong hunch you continue to have during your research. Who does it involve, why do you think it might apply, what is stopping you from including it in your family tree. (If you have resolved one, you could describe this instead).
April	‘They were there when...’ (or “He, she was there when...”	Did someone in your family tree experience a significant news, historical or cultural even first-hand? Share your understanding of what may have been their experience. (When, Where, Why, Who, etc...)
May	Eulogy/Obituary	Write a eulogy for an imagined funeral (or an obituary for a newspaper) for someone in your family tree you never, or barely met (preferably at great grandparent level or earlier) based on the research you have done and any family stories passed down about them (see How to Write a Eulogy)
June	‘Myth Busting’	It is wonderful when a family story handed down over time and assumed to be a possible myth turns out to be grounded in 'evidence based' fact. Choose and describe such a family story, highlighting how you were able to confirm it and what this meant to you and your family.
July	‘There’s No Place Like Home’	Describe a family tree related home you remember from your childhood or that you have located in your research – where was it, who lived in it, what were your childhood impressions of it if you knew it/as you look at it through a ‘family history lens? What has become of it?
August	‘Correction’	Write about a need for editing, or completed correction, which has arisen in your research. Who has it involved, why is the correction needed, what is your chief concern about it remaining

		as uncorrected? How have you, or do you plan, to deal with it. What problems came up/may come up in doing so. If completed, how do you rate the success of your efforts?
September	'Occupations'	Looking at occupations of your forebears, are there any patterns? Describe them and try to find out about the circumstances surrounding them. Do you see any links in terms of yourself and your generation?
October	'From the Bookshelves' <i>A book/books which have historical significance in terms of your family/family research...</i>	Do you have any books on your bookshelves which belong to or remind you of your ancestors; can you remember the books on your parents and grandparents' bookshelves? Browse through your bookshelves, or through your memories of bookshelves in days gone by, selecting a number of books to write a little about which are related in some way to the lives of your forebears. OR Have you read any historical fiction or non-fiction books which are relevant to your family story? (If not, perhaps you could Google to discover some). Who wrote them, and how did they relate to your family history, and what impact did they have on you?
November	'Heroes and Villains' /'Heroines and Villainesses'	Leaders, Eccentrics, Heroes and Heroines, Villains and Villainesses, Victims and Survivors.... Somewhere in our family tree is a person of some fame or infamy! They are the person often first identifiable in discussions with people also working on your family tree. Choose such a person from your family tree and share their story with the group.
December /January Break	'In Search Of...'	Have you found yourself needing to search extensively for someone who holds a fairly central place in your family tree? Begin by describing the details you had at the beginning of your search. How did you apply yourself to get a better sense of their lives and their relationship with other people? What did you find out? Choose someone you haven't written about before.
February 2023	'Time Travelling!'	Have you ever felt that you have been time travelling into the lives of your ancestors, or that you have grown very close to a particular person or family in your family tree? Share this experience with the group.

The following topic could be shared with the class if you have already had, or decide to proceed with, a DNA test.

Could be shared at any time as a substitute story.	"Now ... Where did I come from?" #1 (DNA)	Have you, or a close member of your family, had a DNA test? Was there a particular reason for the test? Describe the test chosen, the process involved, and the results received, both initially and over time. Share the story of particularly strong and significant results, any contacts made, any disappointments you may have had. What has having a DNA test meant to you and your family?
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