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TALK ON EXOTIC PLACES ON THE INTERNET

I. Introduction

A. Internet has become so important in our lives that Internet access has become a civil right more important than any rights we used to have to freedom of speech, information on what our elected officials have done, justice, due process, and a speedy trial

B. Genealogists are always on the cutting edge of information science technology; the first portable computers, scanners, and digital cameras that I saw were being used by family researchers in libraries

C. ideas for using the new technologies came along that no one could have foreseen but I believe (perhaps wrongly) that the major ideas have all arrived but that these basic things will be expanded to enormous levels

1. already more than 25 million pages of newspapers on the Internet and probably billions more in just a few years, all machine searchable

2. millions of government documents on the Internet including three million reels of microfilm from LDS; movement to place all government records on the Internet even as the records are being created; new "artificial intelligence" programs will be able to read not only text but handwriting, at least to a degree, and in any language

3. at least all books and journal articles that have expired copyrights will

be on the Internet and searchable at the speed of light

4. all maps and aerial photographs scanned on the Internet
5. ability to identify and find living people will improve
6. programs will become more available to turn oral interviews into text, even from tape recorder tapes
7. beginnings of all of the above well underway (use Alvie Davidson quote)

D. Problems arise

1. finding the information on the Internet will not be easier, only faster; and you will have vastly more information to sort through
2. no computer can think for you, it is still a matter of detective work, of knowledge, experience, persistence, and luck
3. standards remain poor for what is and is not included and for documentation; failure by search programs such as in reading newspapers and will not be better with reading handwriting; documents scanned onto the Internet will not always be readable even after being digitized by new programs; all of these problems existed in Information and Library Science long before the computer
4. genealogical societies and other hobby groups are being closed down from lack of interest and everyone relies solely on "pajama genealogy"; more and more people will not be getting the information they need to make more of resources in the real world and cyber space; fewer people will publish books and libraries will have less funds to buy them
5. our privacy will be further invaded but more incompetent and ignorant efforts will be made by hack politicians, playing on our fears since 9/11, to close records to legitimate research in a failed effort to impede the dishonest; however, the social security death index has been kept open because it is available on irretrievable CD-ROM disks

II. Basic Research

- A. Google free and spectacular; use of quotation marks
- B. free sites Genforum, Familysearch, Rootsweb, Genweb, and Cyndi's List
- C. Subscription sites Ancestry.com and Heritagequest.com
 1. problem with not finding same material twice

2. problem with records misread or omitted in indexing
3. complexities of some sites (use WPA transcripts of slave interviews; Rootsweb)
4. Ancestry.com vs. Ancestrylibrary.com

III. The Book that you need

- A. free books and journals: Making of America (Cornell and University of Michigan (mention David's engraving and Our Country; broad searches will turn up others
- B. not free but close Questia
- C. book catalogs
 - a. Library of Congress
 - b. other major and many minor libraries
 - c. Familysearch (Library function)
 - d. Amazon.com and Ebay
- D. books scanned onto Ancestry.com and HeritageQuest

IV. All the News that is Fit to print and some that isn't

- A. ability to find stories that have been reprinted
- B. free sites Brooklyn Daily Eagle and Colorado Digitalization Program
- C. Newspaperarchive.com and Ancestry.com
- D. many local newspapers have obits etc. posted on the Internet

V. Private papers and manuscripts

- A. First Search (OCLC)
- B. RLIN (Research Libraries Information Network)
- C. individual museums, archives, and libraries

D. other bonuses found at libraries; e. g. St. Louis Public Library biographical sketches; State Historical Society of Wisconsin scrapbooks; and Mystic Harbor ship lists; directions, hours, research services etc.

VI. Maps

A. Bibliographies of map sites

B. local sites for historical and modern maps

C. Library of Congress Civil War maps

D. Topozone for topographical maps; Mapquest for directions; Teraserver for aerial photographs

V. Finding the Lost

A. Switchboard

B. cyber detectives

C. contacting individual libraries for city directories