

Okay the American Genealogical Association may not like this, but I feel it needs to be said.

Okay, I know I will be stepping on some toes here....

Regarding some "old school genealogists" (not all); these are the folks that research and hoard information and never share it with anyone. These folks really get my goat....sorry, let me regress and explain why.

Most of these folks I run into have spent years researching, collecting ORIGINAL source information such as pictures, notes, birth certificate, death certificates, etc. They feel like since they put all this time and money and effort into research and that it is theirs. Add into this the scare that the big genealogy companies may get a hold of their research and sell it, compounds the fear. This is public information in the public domain with the exception of pictures.

I had one family member give me a handwritten family group sheet and told me that this was copy written and I could not use it publicly. No problem, I graciously took her list then took ten minutes researching the line myself. Thank you to census images and public directories that can be found at most libraries and even for free online.

Now, I know somewhat of copyright law. You cannot copyright a list of names in the public domain. This is not an original work that is attached to an original idea. These names are easily found in the public domain through census images, directories, as well as just asking another family member who their ancestors were.

She got this information from somewhere and most likely from a free source. This is not an original work. Sadly she did not even source her information.

When I run across folks like this I just shake my head. It is an elitist way of thinking which clouds true research and hoards it away in which will be lost for future generations. This is not what research is about.

Research is about discovering "the truth". Yes we should list our sources and make sure we give credit to those who did the research and where we found our information. This is just doing sound research. To not do so would be plagiarism.

There are certain things which can be copy written and this can be further explained on the US copyright office's website. I have plenty of stuff that is copy written on my website such as pictures of me and my family, even this text that you are reading now is copy written because it is my original work and idea. The website as a whole is copy written.

Things such as genealogical information in the genealogy section are mostly public domain and gathered from public resources with the exception of pictures that have known authors and are produced within the past 100 years. If this is the case and you use these pictures please source your information. \*\*\*Remember it is okay to use parts of copy written works as long as it does not take away from anyone's profit of such works or if permission was granted to use these works. People that are submitting pictures and written works to this site hold exclusive copyright to their works and have agreed to allow us to use their work in a private manner in order to further our understanding and research of our family line(s).

I can truly understand why someone would be upset about spending time researching and someone steals their work without giving them credit. I do personally attempt to give everyone credit for their research. This is why sources are so important to me. Research is only as valid as its source.

Anyways, with the scenario above, what happens is that when this researcher dies usually all their research gets boxed up and is either hauled off and thrown away in a landfill, or is sitting in a relative's garage rotting away.

Now there are some smart folks out there who are glad to share their family research even going so far to donate their personal documents and pictures to various libraries. This is the best way to keep our family histories alive. Most libraries are beginning to accept this type of material understanding the historical importance of genealogical material in respect to the whole community in which a family lived.

I guess this site is sort of like a library in which information is gathered through contribution and provide free for all. I am not making a profit off of this site. This is a labor of love. I will never charge anyone for any information as it is not mine to charge a fee for. It is all public domain information. The only time I may charge someone a fee is if someone wants like a hard copy of a photo or document. I will then charge the cost for making the copy and mailing it to them.

One last statement then I'm climbing down off my soapbox

If you are one of these folks that I am speaking of above then I beg you to please share any documents or pictures you may have with the rest of us. If not this information will most likely die with you as you cannot trust that your children may

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take up the same love of genealogy as you have. More often than naught the documents you hold will be boxed up and rot away with time, eaten by rodents, or just get thrown out after you pass.

Thanks for reading my rant.

Joe

Post edited by: admin, at: 2007/08/08 05:36

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### Re:Joe\'s Soapbox

Posted by lannie - 2007/07/26 05:42

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I certainly agree with Joe.  
SHARE !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Please.

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### Re:Joe\'s Soapbox

Posted by allmybranches - 2007/08/06 16:02

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Joe -  
You are absolutely correct! I don't have much of the Mullis line on my website but everyone is more than welcome to go take a look  
<http://wendylittrell.tripod.com/allmybranches.html>

At the bottom, I do have a copyright - but that's only for the "design" of the webpage - not the info & I put a statement on their expressing my belief that all genealogy stuff should continue to be Free and not sold for profit or personal gain.

I am mainly search the Wilkes County, NC (moved to Centre Twp, Rush County, Indiana) Mullis line. Thank you so much for your valuable contribution!

(that's my soapbox!)  
Thanks again,  
Wendy

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