

Genealogy Article for 22 May 2010

I love to travel. My husband and I can use any excuse to go somewhere. And can use any trip to “stop by” a location to do some family history research. Of course the “stopping by” might be 3 states away – but that doesn’t stop us! One time we stopped by Arkansas on our way home from Florida.

This is the time of year that makes traveling easy. Weather is usually dependably warm and sometimes dry enough to venture into a cemetery without needing boots.

Here are a few hints to plan a **genealogy side-trip**:

1. Find two or three places to research in the area; just in case you find that one is unexpectedly closed. Libraries have the best hours and are open most every day. Historical society libraries probably have more genealogy sources, but are not open daily and have limited hours.
2. Call ahead or check the website. Make sure to know current open times and directions. Sometimes websites are not kept up to date.
3. Be sure and cash money available. Credit cards and debit cards are not taken at some libraries for copies. I always like to give a donation to historical societies and cash is always accepted.
4. Have your family information easily accessible in your car. Only take the particular family data that you are planning to use. Don’t ever take original documents or photography with you.
5. Make a list of the information you need to find. Don’t get sidetracked. If you only have a limited amount of time, stay focused. Make a list for your travel companion (husband) too. Even if he isn’t into genealogy – he might not mind to look for obituaries on microfilm or find locations of cemeteries. Don’t get mad if he would rather take a nap in the car.
6. Ask for help. You might want to walk around the library to get oriented, but ask the librarian or volunteer for specific information. No one knows the collection better than those who work in it every day. Also ask the librarian or volunteer what sources they have in their collection that are exclusive to their facility.
7. Check the library or historical society for cemetery records before you walk the cemetery. Many genealogy departments have cemetery records in their collection, along with directions and maps of grave locations. Many researchers spend many hours looking for their

ancestor's grave and when not found, later find they were looking in the wrong section – or even the wrong cemetery. Again, if you only have a few hours to do research at a particular location try to use the available resources.

Genealogy is an interesting hobby that has many facets. If you have the time to take a few hours on your vacations, do it. You might be surprised and astounded the information you can find in a short amount of time. On the other hand, if you don't find anything, you can appreciate the fact that your ancestors lived and worked in the area.