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Family Members Have Stories to Tell

Now is an excellent time to begin researching your family's history. Why, you ask? Well I'll tell you!

1. You and your family members won't be getting any younger! Your parents and grandparents, who are among the living, are still able to talk with you and reminisce. The most common thing that I hear from genealogists is, "I wish my grandmother was still alive – so I could ask her."
2. Perhaps you are the only person left that knows about some of your family members. If you don't share it with a younger member of your family, who will? It will be lost forever.
3. The Internet has changed the way we research our family. It is readily accessible and affordable. If you do not have access to the Internet in your home, most libraries have computers with Internet access for public use.
4. Ancestry and many free websites, like Google, have an incredible amount of records available to you.
5. Google Books project is scanning books from libraries all over the United States. This means that the words in the books are searchable. The books, depending on copyright, can be printed from your home computer. This also means that when I say "books" - that includes family histories. Let's say for example that you know there is one family history book that contains information about your particular family line that is located in the New York City Public Library, you now can search for it, search it's contents and print it.
6. Various websites offer free genealogy programs on-line to organize your family history data. You can share it with others researching your family surnames and also they can share their information with you.
7. You will find surprising information about your ancestors, some good and some not so good – but interesting just the same.

Why wouldn't you want to search for your family history? Here are a few excuses I've heard.

1. I'm too busy.
2. I am bored with it.
3. Why would anyone want to know that?
4. I'm afraid of what I might find out about my ancestors.
5. I don't care.

My response:

Genealogists shape a unique group. Everyone doesn't fit into that group. Maybe that's a good thing? As Charlene from the television show *Designing Women* described herself, "I thirst for knowledge – it's a sickness!" Maybe that sums up a genealogist's life – We are thirsty to know everything about our ancestors, good and bad, happy and sad.

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