

The USGenWeb Project

NEWS

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MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL COORDINATOR

Isaiah Harrison, National Coordinator

Welcome to the USGenWeb Project Newsletter! The newsletter exists to bring useful information about USGenWeb and practical ideas to help with websites and mailing lists to all the members of The USGenWeb Project. Your feedback is important. Please write with your comments and suggestions for topics to be featured in future issues.

USGENWEB AT GENTECH 2004

Shari Handley, Advisory Board Representative-at-Large

The USGenWeb Project's booth at GenTech 2004 was a resounding success. Thanks to the many people who contributed to the effort by sending money or providing materials or giving of their time. Special thanks to D. Joshua Taylor, Genealogy Boy Wonder), and Robert Hartman for their help planning, setting up and staffing the booth, and to Judy Milan for her time staffing the booth. Thanks also to those who sent brochures - they went like hotcakes!

Our booth was one of the most popular and busy ones. I was a little shocked at the number of people who hadn't heard of us before. Well, they have now! There were also very many people who HAD heard of us and who went out of their way to say, "Thank you" and "Keep up the good work!". That was very gratifying, and so I pass on these kudos to all of you.

Josh's teaching session on The USGenWeb Project was extremely well attended. As a matter of fact, I believe it was one of the best-attended sessions of the entire convention. It was held in one of the larger meeting rooms, and there were very few empty seats. Thanks, Josh, for presenting this talk.

I took a few pictures at the conference so that you could all see what our booth looked like and some of the scenery we enjoyed in St. Louis. Ours was one of the nicest and most professional-looking booths there, if I do say so myself. Thumbnails of these photographs are below - just click on them to see the full-sized image. I hope you enjoy them!

(The Project thanks Shari and all who participated in this important effort to promote The USGenWeb Project. You will find a list of donors and some photos to view at <http://www.usgenweb.org/GenTech/>)

CHEAP OR FREE WEB HOSTING SERVICES

Jana McPherson Black

Looking for a home for your USGW County site? Then you will be interested in knowing what resources are out there for free or cheap web space!

If free web hosting is what you want, you have to be prepared to accept the trade offs like pop-up windows or ads on your site. Often such sites require you to use their tools to upload your pages, but they are definitely a good place to begin and offer great intros to the fundamentals of websites. Once you "outgrow" them, you can always move on taking the skills you have learned with you! I suspect we all know about RootsWeb, Geocities, Angelfire and Yahoo, but here are a few of other sites worth looking into

FreeWebspace.net <http://www.freewebspace.net/>- calls itself “the largest searchable guide to free web space providers.” Clicking on “the complete list” offers 15 pages of links! Using the “advanced power search” you can select the features you want then let their engine find suitable hosts! Here are some samples:

<http://www.doteasy.com/> - 20 MB, no ads or banners, ftp, free email and a free comparison chart of themselves and other free hosts. They will host a domain name, but that costs \$25:

<http://www.freeservers.com/> - 12 MB, and you get banners and ads, but they give you a “site builder tool” so there is no ftp.

<http://www.fortunecity.com> - 25 MB. ftp access, with ads, free sub-domain

<http://www.netfirms.com/hostingbasic> - 25 MB, free web mail account, ftp, free sub-domain

<http://free.prohosting.com/> - 50 MB, ftp, email and a “site creation utility.” no banner ads

Using a free host means take time to compare the trade-offs and decide if you can live with limits on how much space you have available to you, how much data you can upload in given periods of time, how much activity to the site is allowed, accepting ad email from them to you, etc. If you decide you cannot live with any of this, the next step is to explore low cost hosting.....

The good news is that there are many sites that review a variety of web hosts by looking at various “points of sale” attractive to different clients. These sites then offer ratings for the potential hosts based upon comparisons and they let you view the results so you can make informed choices. The bad news is that in looking at these sites, you will see that your choices are many, so it is important to develop a bit of the “techie” vocabulary that will help you choose what you need and no more.

Some good places to start are:

CNET— <http://reviews.cnet.com/2001-6028-0.html> —I used this link mainly so you can see that CNET offers much more than just info on web hosting – it is a good site in general to bookmark for “web stuff.” If you click on “basic/budget plans” you will get a chart of 15 initial sites, with info on what they offer, plus a rating. At the bottom of the page, you can revise the list by filtering details according to your platform, desired disk space and data transfer needs. Note that some suppliers charge a set-up fee and some do not, some even offer free domain names and free domain setup - but monthly charges seem to range from \$5.95 to \$99 per month, depending on what you choose... a nice thing about CNET is their “comparison” option, where you can select up to five different services and CNET will compare them for you across the board.

Hosting Review— <http://hosting-review.net/?SID=101858> —These folks review what they call “Major Web Hosting Vendors.” I refer you to them as their articles are very informative and offer points that could come in handy to know as you make your decisions. And, prices start at \$11.95 per month which is not too steep!

ZD Net— <http://webservices.zdnet.com/zdnet/?tag=ont-is> —is an all-time favorite of mine because “back in the old days of early 90s” they offered online classes in genealogical methodology that included chat for the students and other cool toys that were excellent in helping folks get started on their research! If you put genealogy in the search box now, you will get links to free software, etc. But, for web hosting, click on “managed hosting” and you will see a screen similar to the CNET screen that lists numerous sites, allows you to compare them or to filter them according to the needs you have established for your site.

After using this process you may want to go back and take another look at things like how big your site is and how much traffic you actually get on a monthly basis as these are cost factors when you host a web site. If nothing else, checking this out and determining what it would cost for you to

host your own site will give you a better understanding of what RootsWeb or the host provided by your state project provides for you!

PROJECT VOTING CHANGES

Ellen Pack, Elections Committee Chair

Effective in 2004, all members wishing to vote in national or regional elections/polls must be Registered with the USGenWeb Election Committee. If you were a USGenWeb member on 1 February 2004, and your SC turned your name in to the EC, you are automatically Registered. Members arriving after that date must register themselves. Also, if your Email address changes, you must inform the EC. Visit the EC Website for more information. Feel free to contact your EC representative if you have questions or concerns. <http://www.rootsweb.com/~usgwelections/>

ALERT! GLOBAL-SUBMIT SPAM

You may have received repeated notices from Global-Submit that "someone" has submitted one of your pages to their company to be made available to their search engines. The message reads "This e-mail has been sent to inform you that your web site URL has been submitted to our search engine database. This is the URL that will be added."

Global-Search is persistent spammer, trying to get our \$\$ going their way. It is not really free search engine submitter. This is marketing spam. Send it to the trash.

TIPS FOR DISPLAYING CENSUS RECORDS

John Schunk

Census records appear prominently on many USGenWeb county sites. An example of a group effort to index a large census (73,262 names!) is the 1910 Sedgwick County Census Index <http://skyways.lib.ks.us/genweb/sedgwick/census/1910/index.html>

Inter-Project Cooperation This project illustrates how different parts of The USGenWeb Project can work cooperatively together for the benefit of the researcher. The Enumeration District number and page number which appear after each name of the 1910 Sedgwick County index are linked to the appropriate census image in the USGenWeb Archives. These links were generated automatically by insertion of a formula in the appropriate column of the Excel file in which the Index was created. (Anyone interested in using such a tool for their own county site can write to john@skpub.com for a copy of the formula.)

Another example of this same type of cooperative arrangement (index on county webpage; transcript of actual document in Archives) can be found at the Madison County MSGenWeb site by Sue Skay Abruscato and Mary Abruscato Hara (in this case for county wills and probate records) <http://www.rootsweb.com/~msmadiso/abstract/index.htm>

Browsable Files One of the strengths of The USGenWeb Project is that webpages and files are typically open for browsing, rather than being "hidden" in a database behind a search engine. We genealogists often make some of our best discoveries by browsing an index or a file, rather than having to create all of the possible ways our ancestors' names might have been spelled (or misspelled) for entry into a search engine. As an example, years ago I made a major breakthrough in my wife's Lowder line when I stumbled upon some Lowe entries in the AIS 1830 Census Index for Indiana. These entries had first names suspiciously like the Lowders I was looking for. Sure enough, the census microfilm revealed that the handwriting said Lowder, not Lowe, for all of them. Those same AIS-generated indexes are still being used for commercial on-line census searches, and it would never have occurred to me to type in "Lowe" when looking for "Lowders."

Enlarging On-Line Census Images Researchers who want to enlarge on-line census images for viewing might consider temporarily enlarging their screen resolution size, especially if their display is normally set at 1024 x 768 resolution. Changing to 800 x 600 resolution significantly enhances readability, and going all the way to 640 x 480 makes handwriting even larger. To make such a change in Windows, go to My Computer, then Control Panel, then Appearance and Themes (in Windows XP), then Display, then Settings, then Screen Area (Screen Resolution in Windows XP).

After downloading a new version of Internet Explorer, some researchers find that on-line images suddenly go an unreadable thumbnail size. The trick to avoid this phenomenon is to go to Tools, then Internet Options, then Advanced, then Multimedia, then uncheck the box for Enable Automatic Image Resizing.

MEET THE NC

Isaiah Harrison

If you live in the Tucson/Green Valley area and would like to meet the National Coordinator in person, this is your opportunity. I will be at the Starbucks in the Safeway store at 260 W. Continental Rd., Green Valley at 10:00am Wednesday, February 11. So stop in and join me, have a cup of coffee and talk about the project, genealogy or whatever. Look for the USGenWeb logo.

You are receiving this newsletter because you are a member of The USGenWeb Project. For address changes, or to be added to or removed from the mailing list visit <http://www.rootsweb.com/~usgwelections/current.html> and contact your EC Rep. To submit articles letters and ideas, write to USGenWebNews@cox.net

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