

Stretching Your Genealogy Budget by Mary J. Lohr

No hobby, including genealogy, is totally without cost. However, the wise genealogist can find ways and methods to spend their money wisely.

It's about getting the best value for each dollar spent.

This is not an exhaustive list. As you research, you will discover many additional resources.

Backup your data!

Collaborate with other genealogy researchers.

Software: RootsMagic (<http://rootsmagic.com/>), Legacy Family Tree (<https://legacyfamilytree.com/>), and Ancestral Quest (<https://www.ancquest.com/>) all have a standard free version.

A full-featured version is available but try the free one to see if it meets your needs.

You may not need the “bells and whistles” version. Gramps (<https://gramps-project.org>) is a completely free and open source program.

Gensoftreviews.com has user-submitted genealogy software reviews.

Antivirus software: Avast (<https://www.avast.com>), AVG (<https://www.avg.com>), and Windows Defender Security Center (Microsoft.com) are free and highly rated.

Office suite: LibreOffice (<https://www.libreoffice.org>) and OpenOffice (<https://www.openoffice.org>) are comparable to Microsoft Office but are free.

They include a word processor, spreadsheet and other features. Google Drive, formerly Google Documents, also offers a file storage system, word processor and spreadsheet. (<https://www.google.com/drive/download>)

Also, consider looking at Zotero. (<https://www.zotero.org>)

Libraries:

Your best friend in genealogy! Some offer access to Ancestry Library Edition, HeritageQuest, and other databases.

Almost all libraries have free wi-fi and computers for use. You'll also find genealogy books and magazines. What's not to like! *Your librarian is a wonderful resource to knowing what is in the library collection.*

BONUS: Sign up for a "guest account" at Ancestry.com (Not the same as a 14 day free trial!
No credit card needed for a guest account)

Use this shortened link: <https://goo.gl/LV42YA>

You'll be able to search Ancestry; access the over 1,900 free collections (including the 1940 census); read and respond to the message boards; build a family tree, and more. With a guest account, you can do preliminary searching on Ancestry.com at home, and then use your library's Ancestry subscription to see some of the results, a bit of a time-saver.

Vital Records:

Some, like death records for Missouri, are available online.

Become a Google search expert and learn how to locate what is available.

Other sources include FamilySearch.org, and county GenWeb sites.

<http://www.usgenweb.com>

Some states restrict access to vital records but one way around this is to check the FamilySearch.org website to see if the records you need have been digitized. You may be able to view the record online directly on your computer. (Some licensing agreements limit access to a Family History Center). FamilySearch.org is working to digitize their microfilms.

For an updated list of online death records: <http://goo.gl/KrAz8v>

Also, if you cannot access vital records at the state level, try at the county level.

And, if available, ask for a non-certified copy which is probably less expensive.

Volunteer:

Volunteer at your local or state genealogical society.

Donate your time and energy to helping others ... you will learn in the process.

Learn:

Avail yourself of learning opportunities through genealogy podcasts,

(Genealogy Gems podcast, Genealogy Guys Podcast), Youtube videos (search for "genealogy" or "family history").

Follow Facebook groups: suggested ones are Technology for Genealogy, The Organized Genealogist,

Social Media for Genealogy, Random Acts of Genealogy Kindness.

Frugal Genealogy (Disclaimer: the author of this article is an administrator for this group.)

Read the blogs! Family Tree Blog, FamilyHistoryDaily.com, etc.

Randy Seaver's www.geneamusings.com Do a Google search for “genealogy blogs”

Better yet: start your own blog and describe your genealogy journey. This also makes excellent “cousin bait” to get distant relatives to contact you and share information. Wordpress.com and Blogspot.com are both free blogging platforms.

Use the FamilySearch wiki and online learning center.

Podcasts:

Ancestral Findings <https://ancestralfindings.com/genealogygold/>

Family History: Genealogy Made Easy <https://lisalouisecooke.com/family-history-podcast/>

Genealogy Gems <https://lisalouisecooke.com/podcasts/>

Genealogy Guys <http://genealogyguys.com/>

Generations Cafe

<https://www.amyjohnsoncrow.com/announcing-generations-cafe-genealogy-podcast/>

Research Like a Pro

<https://familylocket.com/introducing-the-research-like-a-pro-genealogy-podcast/>

Books:

FamilySearch.org Books <http://books.familysearch.org>

Hathi Trust <http://hathitrust.org>

Internet Archive <http://archive.org>

Google Books <http://books.google.com>

Digital Public Library of America <http://dp.la> (Books and MORE)

Webinars: Legacy Family Tree <http://familytreewebinars.com>

Southern California Genealogical Society <http://scgsgenealogy.org>

Georgia Genealogical Society <https://www.gagensociety.org/>

Illinois State Genealogical Society <https://ilgensoc.org/>

Minnesota Genealogical Society <https://mngs.org/>

Wisconsin State Genealogical Society <https://wsgs.org/>

Cemeteries:

Billion Graves <http://billiongraves.com>

Find A Grave <http://findagrave.com>

Interment.net <http://interment.net>

Nationwide Gravesite Locator <https://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/>

State Gravestone Photo Projects

Newspapers:

Chronicling America (From the Library of Congress) <http://chroniclingamerica.gov>

The Ancestor Hunt <http://theancestorhunt.com>

Suggestions:

Sign up for email alerts and announcements from genealogy publishers and organizations. You will be notified of sales, conferences, and upcoming events.

Check the website of the New England Historic Genealogical Society (americanancestors.org) for webinars. You can also get the latest announcements by following them on Twitter or signing up for their emails.

Check the ConferenceKeeper (<https://conferencekeeper.org/>) site for upcoming genealogy programs. Many libraries are offering virtual programs which are free but require registration.

Some researchers recommend subscribing to a commercial database for a while, taking a break, and then moving on to another one. If you're paying for a subscription and not using it, that's a waste of money.

Free web hosting sites: Google Sites, Zoomfast.com Github.com, Weebly.com

BACKUP YOUR DATA *Keep Multiple copies in multiple locations*

COLLABORATE WITH OTHER GENEALOGY RESEARCHERS

Keep track of your expenses and decide what is right for you.

References:

Lisson, Lissa. *Your Guide to Researching Genealogy the Frugal Way*. Available from www.lisalisson.com

MacEntee, Thomas. *The 15 Habits of Highly Frugal Genealogists*, Kindle Edition available from Amazon.com

MacEntee, Thomas. AbundantGenealogy.com

MacDonald, Kimberly *Genealogy On a Shoestring Budget: Researching Your Family History Without Breaking the Bank*, Kindle Edition available from Amazon.com

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