

Drexel University

From the Selected Works of James Gross

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The usefulness of genealogy newsletters and blogs

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CHRONICLES

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דברי הימים



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REFLECTIONS FROM YOUR CHRONICLES TEAM

April 2014



All of us, regardless of avocation, trade, occupation, or profession, are able to perform our required tasks thanks to specific tools. As genealogists we depend heavily on a variety of documents—manifests, birth, marriage, and death records, naturalization papers, immigrant bank records, property deeds, etc.—to guide us in our research process. Have we ever considered the other types of tools at our disposal?

I recently browsed through past issues of *Chronicles* and recognized once again the importance of photographs in our work. They jog our memories of past events and provide visual cues that indicate possible resemblances between individuals who we didn't think (until then) were related. I remember an article I wrote (Vol. 28-4, Winter 2011-2012, pp. 11-12) about a first cousin of my father's who immigrated to the U.S. in 1940 without her wedding pictures. Imagine the emotional crescendo she and her children experienced when I presented them with copies of those photos when we met in June 2002. Please read an article by Professor Jonathan Herman (*Harvard Divinity Bulletin*, Winter/Spring 2014) which poignantly details the enormous impact of a single photograph <http://www.hds.harvard.edu/news-events/harvard-divinity-bulletin/articles/a-picture-worth-a-thousand-tears> or <http://tinyurl.com/p3hvd3w>. (Thanks to Dick Plotz, Ukraine SIG member, for bringing this to our attention.)

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took place in three languages—English, Spanish, and Yiddish! My sister-in-law was the only one who knew all three languages, and I imagine her brain was stretched to the limit that evening! My cousins brought additional photographs which I've since incorporated into the family albums.

When they said their good-byes, Cecilia commented that the evening was extremely gratifying and emotional for her. She was the sole link to the oldest generation, i.e. her mother-in-law and father-in-law, the original family members who had immigrated to Argentina, as well as her own generation who were my mother's first cousins. This gathering represented the first time the two branches saw each other face-to-face in almost 100 years! Our family was once again linked thanks to a simple envelope. ❖

Evan Fishman is the editor of "Chronicles" and has always been interested in learning about his extended family. He began to methodically research his family history in 2000 and has been amazed by the stories and experiences he's encountered.

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TECH CORNER: THE USEFULNESS OF GENEALOGY NEWSLETTERS AND BLOGS

by James Gross



Genealogy newsletters and blogs are useful for genealogists as they disseminate new and updated genealogical reference information. Everyone seems to be busy these days, so it's not always easy to know how to productively allocate one's time for leisure reading.

Genealogy newsletters and blogs are vehicles that relate new or updated information for genealogy organizations or individuals. Our society publishes the quarterly journal *Chronicles*. Articles can focus on local, national or international information to update readers on genealogy news. Newsletters may be published in print form or online. Blogs are typically published online. Online publications may be produced in a pdf or html format.

The following four sources are sites where interested researchers can find newsletters and online genealogy blogs. The first newsletter worth noting is published by *Avotaynu*.

Its internet-only newsletter called *Nu What's New?* is published weekly. The author labels it the "E-zine of Jewish Genealogy".¹ An annual subscription is well worth the \$12.00 fee. I find the newsletter helpful, and Mr. Mokotoff seems to have a pulse on the latest genealogy announcements.

The second newsletter worth mentioning is *Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter*.² This newsletter offers two internet options: a free edition and a fee-based (Plus) edition which costs \$9.95/month or \$19.95/year.³ I usually read the free edition, but the paid edition does have more material.

The third genealogy newsletter, previously entitled "*Genealogy Roots Newsletter*", is now called the *Genealogy Roots Blog*.⁴ This online genealogy blog is devoted to helping users find online genealogy databases, resources, and records including vital records, obituaries, census, naturalization, and military records, and ship passenger lists.⁵

The fourth genealogy resource is a blog entitled, *Ancestry.com blog*,⁶ which is designed to help users learn more about some of the diverse resources available from Ancestry's online website, Ancestry.com.

For additional genealogy newsletters and blogs, readers can skim *Cyndi's List* for the links.⁷

The ultimate decision regarding which genealogy newsletter or blog to read depends on that publication's availability and cost plus one's time and budget. I think readers will agree that additional knowledge of genealogy reference material can be very useful, especially when it can help the user discover additional genealogy resources and tools. After all, we never really do stop looking for more genealogy information on our family members. ❖

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- (4) <http://genrootsblog.blogspot.com/2008/04/happy-birthday-genealogy-roots-blog.html>
- (5) <http://genrootsblog.blogspot.com/>
- (6) <http://blogs.ancestry.com/ancestry>
- (7) <http://www.cyndislist.com/magazines/>

Author James Gross has been working on his family tree since the early 1990s and is a periodic contributor to various genealogy newsletters. He also has a genealogy website: <http://tinyurl.com/gross-steinberg>

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