

Iida Larkin's Family History Tips

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From the Dick Eastman Newsletter dated January 4, 2010 some interesting news:

- Free Online Foreign Language Courses
Would you like to be able to read documents written in your ancestors' native tongues? The Foreign Service Institute is the US Government's primary training institution for officers and support personnel of the US Foreign affairs community. Through the use of language programs and studies, the FSI prepares future diplomats and other professionals who are advancing US foreign interests overseas and around Washington, via communication and whatever else those people do. These foreign language courses are published using federal money, which basically means they are public domain, and thus, available to any citizen who's interested in learning a new language.

FSI Language Courses.com is a community-driven site that collects, scans and distributes the Foreign Service language program documentation and audio-tapes to anyone interested in learning Cantonese, Spanish, German, French and Portuguese, among many other languages, all free of charge. The audio tapes have been digitized and now you can listen to these audio files on your computer.

The web site will not make you fluent in

any of these languages.

However, it will give you a good introduction to each language and will teach you to read documents written in the language.

The site is not affiliated in any way with any government entity; it is an independent, non-profit effort to foster the learning of worldwide languages. Courses are made available through the private efforts of individuals who are donating their time and resources to provide quality materials for language learning.

Available languages include: Amharic, Arabic, Bulgarian, Cambodian, Cantonese, Chinese, Chinyanja, Finnish, French, Fula, German, Greek, Hausa, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Igbo, Italian, Japanese, Kituba, Korean, Lao, Lingala, Luganda, Moré, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Shona, Sinhala, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Thai, Turkish, Twi, Vietnamese, and Yoruba.

For more information, look at <http://fsi-language-courses.org>.

Do you have comments, questions, or corrections to this article? If so, please post your words at: http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy/2009/12/free-foreign-language-courses.html

You may find that other newsletter readers have already posted comments, questions, or corrections to this article at the same place.
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A look back at great genealogical research advice from the Family Tree Magazine.

More Expertise Uncorked
12/15/2009

By David A. Fryxell

A sampling of the timeless genealogy tips we've shared over the years. Our top 10 pointers barely scratch the surface of the useful how-tos passed down over the issues. Some other timeless tips we've shared:

- **Work back in time one generation at a time.** Skipping generations can lead to tracing the wrong people.
- **Network with others.** You won't find answers only in records—they often come from fellow researchers and distant cousins you connect with through social networking, message boards and e-mail.
- **Study social history.** Understanding the world your ancestors lived in can help point your research in the right direction, and explain migrations and record gaps.
- **Check every available source.** Even if the first record you find has the answers you need, keep turning over every rock—you never know which document may contain a detail you'll need later.

- **Seek alternative and substitute sources.** Grandpa's birth record went up in flames with the courthouse? Check to see if another repository has a copy, and look for a newspaper announcement or baptismal certificate that contains the same information.

- **Always go to the original record.** Errors often sneak into genealogical information transcribed in databases and published in other secondary sources; you might find additional details in the originals, too.

- **Cite your sources.** How else will you keep track of where you found what? Documentation prevents you from duplicating your efforts—and shores up the credibility of your work.

From the January 2010 *Family Tree Magazine*

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Also from Family Tree Magazine an article about food and recipes that I can really relate to. In my husband's family Grandma Brunner made Potato Dumplings – and all of his siblings loved them. I, too, had to work side by side with Grandma to determine what the amounts were and how to “feel” when the flour and mashed potato mixture was “just right.” I thought you, too, would enjoy the following suggestions about making your family stories come more alive with food and recipes. Lida

Discover Your Culinary Heritage
9/25/2009

By Maureen Taylor

Your kin's favorite fare is fortified with family facts and memories. Serve up a helping of history with our guide to discovering and preserving your food heritage.

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My grandmother was from the "pinch of this and dash of that" school of cooking: She had no idea how much of any ingredient she actually used. My mother finally got Grandma (her mother-in-law) to write down the clam chowder recipe our family loved—but Mom's resulting concoction was barely edible. In desperation, she watched my Grandma cook and interrupted to carefully measure each ingredient before it went into the mix. The end result: a perfect pot of chowder.

From once-a-year specialties to everyday meatloaf, food evokes family history and lore. During the chowder episode, for example, I learned why Grandma began making the dish: Her childhood summers weren't complete without a visit to Rhode Island's Rocky Point Park and Shore for a carousel ride and a bowl of clam chowder. Talking about mealtime memories can yield a smorgasboard of details that help you delve deeper into your genealogy. Recipes even may hold clues about family origins—if your great-grandmother often baked peach kuchen, you may have some German blood. So grab a knife and fork, tuck in your napkin and start exploring—and reliving—your family's food history.

Table Talk

We associate heirloom recipes with all kinds of occasions, but none more than the holiday season. Every Christmas Eve for generations, my mother's French Canadian family has served tourtiere, a meat pie, although no one remembers how the tradition began. At my grandmother's house, parsnips and baby onions—two of her children's favorites—always showed up at Thanksgiving dinner. But any gathering presents an opportunity to talk about favorite family fare. So ask your kin these questions between mouthfuls:

- **Who made this?** Recipes get passed down from generation to generation through oral tradition, on recipe cards, in cookbooks and via show-and-tell (the way my mother finally perfected Grandma's chowder). When you notice dishes that reappear on the dinner table, find out who the chef was, compliment him and ask how he got the recipe. It may be an updated version of an ancestral dish.

- **Who made it first?**

Ask if anyone can remember the origins of the food. You might be surprised that recipes hopped across the family tree: The lines of descent aren't necessarily mother-to-daughter. I don't make all the foods my mom loved to cook—to be honest, I just don't like mincemeat pie—but my cousin selected several for her dinner table.

You might add new information to your family history if relatives can identify the originator of a dish. Chances are that person was

a woman. Locating your female ancestors can be challenging since they changed surnames and tended to "hide" behind their husbands in official records. But cookery was one way for those ancestral women to express their ingenuity and resourcefulness, so try to get to know them through the recipes they prepared. If you can't trace the recipe's originator, you may be able to use ingredients or cooking methods to help identify her.

- **Why is the dish a family favorite?** This question reveals the memories that go along with the food. You're apt to hear stories about who liked it, when it was served and how the recipe has changed. Oral tradition in the Avery family of Groton, Conn., tells of their 17th-century ancestors' introduction to tea. One of the Mrs. Averys (it's unknown which one) boiled tea leaves and served them as a vegetable with pork. Predictably, the lore also recounts how no one ate the new dish.

- **What other family recipes exist?** Ask around, and you might learn that a cousin has Aunt Millie's cookbook or Grandma's recipe box. What a treasure! Like old family Bibles, cookbooks often include notes scribbled in the margins ("Billy's favorite," "use less vinegar"), and mementos such as flowers or menu cards pressed between the pages. Aunt Millie may have noted when she made a recipe and changed the measurements

based on how many she was feeding.

As you're doing genealogy, keep an eye out for meal mentions in letters, diaries and papers. Even if you don't find recorded recipes, you may learn names or descriptions of favorite foods. Then you can research how to make them using other resources.

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From Sylvia Sonneborn's Genealogy Newsletter comes a fun bit of advice:

UK AND IRELAND RESEARCH

CuriousFox.com - the village by village contact site for anybody researching family history, genealogy and local history in the UK and Ireland. Every UK county, town and village has a page for family history, local history, surname and genealogy enquiries. Use the search box to find your village or town. <http://curiousfox.com/>

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Hope Your Holidays have been wonderful and that your New Year holds lots of promise. lida

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That's all Folks! For this time.

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