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# Gen News

The newsletter of the Douglas County Genealogy Club  
Volume 11:3  
Editor: Jane Sigfrids

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jnjsig@yahoo.com  
[Facebook](#)

## Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 1, 2016 at 6 p.m. at the Superior Public Library.

Agenda items will include:

- February Meeting Minutes
- Treasurer's report
- Calendar of Events
- Member Info Updates

## Meeting topics for 2016

- January – Business Meeting
- February – Meeting with the DCHS
- March – Potluck celebrating our heritages and cultures
- April – Joining TPGS at the LDS Center in Duluth.
- May – Library resources at UWS.
- June – Picnic with TPGS on Monday, June 6; Native American research on Tuesday, June 7
- July – Cemetery Walk at the cemetery on County Highway Z
- August – *Songs of the Mariners*, a musical group that sings sea chanties and gives some history of sailors' lives.
- September – Clerk of Courts and other courthouse research resources available
- October – DAR
- November – Bong Center; Jane will contact them
- December – Holiday Potluck

## February Meeting Minutes

February 2, 2016

The meeting of the Douglas County Genealogy Club at the Douglas County Historical Society was called to order at 6:03 P.M. by President Jim Mattson. Officers present were Jim Mattson and Jane Sigfrids. A motion made by Bobbi Hoyt to

accept the minutes of the January meeting as appeared in the newsletter and seconded by Karen Smoley. The motion carried. The treasurer's report was given by Jane Sigfrids; a motion to accept was made by Judy Aunet and seconded by Lorrie Madden. The motion carried. A motion was made by Emily Fredrick to accept the review of the changes to the constitution as adopted at the January meeting; it was seconded by Bobbi Hoyt. The motion carried. There was a review of the roster of committee members as appeared in the newsletter.

## Committee Reports

Program committee report: A change was made to the April meeting program as follows: the DCGC will join the Twin Ports Genealogical Society at the Family History Center at 521 Upham Road, Duluth. The May meeting of DCGC will be the Library Resource at UWS.

February 20th has been set as the educational program at Douglas County Historical Society from 11 A.M. to 1:30 P.M. April 1st will be the lock-in at the Superior Public Library from 5:30 P.M. to 8:30 P.M.

The Financial Review Committee met and approved the treasurer's yearly report.

The March 1st meeting will be "Celebrating Your Heritage Potluck" with Twin Ports Genealogical Society. Please bring a potluck item to share, something to drink other than coffee or tea, and serving utensils.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Jane Sigfrids at 6:33 p.m.. Second by Lorrie Madden. Meeting adjourned.

Members present were: Karen Smoley, Bobbi Hoyt, Jane Sigfrids, Emily Fredrick, Sandy Novak, Jim Mattson, Marlene Case, Lorrie Madden and Judy Aunet. Representatives from the Douglas County Historical Society were: Tony Tracy, Jon Winter, Katie Montgomery and Joe Mann.

*(Respectfully submitted by Emily Fredrick)*

### **DCHS History Saturday**

We'd like to thank the Douglas County Historical Society for co-sponsoring our introductory genealogy workshop at their History Saturday on February 20<sup>th</sup>. The event was well attended; many members presented their family histories and shared research and organizational tips with newcomers. Being at the Historical Society Museum helped provide context with local and regional history.

### **Upcoming Meetings and Events**

DCGC= Douglas County Genealogy Club  
TPGS=Twin Ports Genealogical Society  
WSGS= Wisconsin State Genealogical Society  
MNGS= Minnesota Genealogical Society

#### **April 1, 2016**

Details have been finalized on our Library "Lock-in" event. The introductory genealogy workshop we will be conducting has been titled "Fooling Around with your Family Tree"; registration forms are available at the library front desk and an event has been created on the library's Facebook page. Many thanks to Leslie Meyer at the library for doing the public relations work.

Volunteers are still needed for registrations, dinner set-up and clean-up and helping attendees with website use and general genealogical research information. Please contact me with any questions at [jnjsig@yahoo.com](mailto:jnjsig@yahoo.com).

#### **April 8 and 9, 2016**

**The Wisconsin State Genealogical Society** is offering Gene-A-Rama 2016 at the Plaza Hotel and Suites in Wausau, WI, on April 8 and 9, 2016. The keynote speaker is Judy Russell, *The Legal Genealogist*. She is a genealogist with a law degree who writes and lectures on topics ranging from using court records in family history to understanding DNA testing. On the faculty of IGHR, SLIG, and GRIP, she is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Board for Certification of Genealogists, from which she holds credentials as a Certified Genealogist® and Certified Genealogical Lecturer<sup>SM</sup>. Her award-winning blog is at <http://www.legalgenealogist.com>. More info for this event, along with registration forms, can be found at [www.wsgs.org](http://www.wsgs.org).

Be sure to check out the Minnesota Genealogical Society Calendar at <http://www.mngs.org/calendar.shtml> for a listing of other club events in the Twin Cities Area. Pay special attention to who is staffing the MNGS Library. Each of the affiliate clubs take turns which means you can have country focused genealogical research help.

The MNGS will hold its Spring Conference on Saturday, April 16, 2016 at the Bunker Hills Activity Center in Andover, MN. A conference flyer and registration information can be found at [www.mngs.org](http://www.mngs.org).

**Upcoming Meeting and Events** is a work in progress. We invite all area genealogy organizations to submit their events with contact information for publication here to [jnjsig@yahoo.com](mailto:jnjsig@yahoo.com).

As always, if you have additional dates for the calendar or if you find a date in error, please email them to me at [jnjsig@yahoo.com](mailto:jnjsig@yahoo.com).

## **Ancestry to Retire Family Tree Maker**

Dick Eastman · December 8, 2015

If you are using Family Tree Maker, you probably need to start looking for another genealogy program. Kendall Hulet, Senior Vice President of Product Management at Ancestry, posted an article to the Ancestry Blog today stating, **“We’ve made the tough decision to stop selling Family Tree Maker as of December 31, 2015.”**

The announcement is available at <http://blogs.ancestry.com/ancestry/2015/12/08/ancestry-to-retire-family-tree-maker-software>.

This announcement shouldn’t surprise anyone. For several years, Ancestry.com has supported **TWO** interfaces: a web interface at <http://ancestry.com> that looks at the company’s online databases plus the Family Tree Maker software installed in Windows and Macintosh computers that looks at the same online databases plus allows the user to add more information with the option to keep the new information private or to share it online. In effect, Ancestry.com’s biggest competitor for some time has been Ancestry.com! It’s tough when you compete with yourself.

Next, Ancestry.com traditionally has announced new upgrades to Family Tree Maker every September or October. This year, there was no such announcement. That led to some speculation that a major change was underway.

Of course, the entire computer industry is moving away from software and databases installed in desktop and laptop computers. The trend is to iPads, Android tablets, Chromebooks, and other devices that store both data and programs in the cloud. Such storage typically is more secure and more reliable than keeping programs and data in a free-standing computer

where it is sensitive to hard drive crashes, user errors, and other problems. (You do have multiple backups of your data, correct? With cloud-based services, multiple backups are made for you automatically.)

The cancellation of desktop and laptop programs isn’t new. Adobe already has switched many of its products to cloud-based equivalents. (Details may be found at <https://www.oracle.com/cloud/index.html>.) Microsoft’s Office Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) has been available for some time in two versions: the traditional desktop and laptop version and the cloud-based version called Office 365. (See <https://www.office.com>.) I suspect the desktop/laptop version of Microsoft’s Office will go away one of these days. Google Docs has already become a strong competitor of Microsoft Office and is free for personal use.

Email software used to always be installed in the computer. Email programs including Eudora, Thunderbird, Pegasus, and others used to be installed in almost everyone’s personal computer. Now those programs have largely disappeared, replaced by cloud-based programs (Gmail, HotMail, Outlook.com, Yahoo Mail, and others).

In the genealogy world, **Personal Ancestral File** was canceled years ago and **The Master Genealogist** also disappeared some time ago. Now **Family Tree Maker** is suffering the same fate. I doubt if today’s announcement will be the last one we read of a Windows or Macintosh genealogy program being canceled by its producer.

Another sign is that almost no new, full-featured genealogy programs for Windows or Macintosh have appeared in recent years. All the programming efforts now seem to be devoted to mobile apps for tablets and cell phones or cloud-based applications. I suspect we will see more

Windows and Macintosh genealogy programs disappear within the next few years.

I see this as a positive step. Cloud-based applications open up possibilities of collaboration with other genealogists as well providing safer and more reliable databases that don't disappear with a hard drive crash. Of course, changes always make many people uncomfortable. Users of Family Tree Maker are now facing discomfort.

The fact that Family Tree Maker is being dropped shouldn't be a major problem for anyone. There are numerous alternatives. In fact, if anyone prefers to stick with a desktop or laptop program, there are many good ones available for Windows, Macintosh, and even for Linux. Changing to a different product certainly will be inconvenient, of course. There will be a learning curve to overcome. However, the use of GEDCOM files will transfer the data. Some manual clean-up is usually required after a GEDCOM data transfer, but that should still be a lot less painful than re-typing everything!

### **Current Family Tree Maker users have three options to choose from:**

**1. Keep using the current version of Family Tree Maker for some time.** It will not stop working any time soon. Perhaps an upgrade of the Windows or Macintosh operating system will break something in Family Tree Maker someday, but that probably won't happen for a while. There is no need to rush to a new product. Perhaps a bigger risk is that support from Ancestry.com for the now obsolete Family Tree Maker will end on January 1, 2017. If you have a problem after that date, you will not receive support from Ancestry.com.

**2. Switch to a different desktop or laptop genealogy program.** There are many excellent genealogy products available for those systems. I plan to publish a number of articles about

available Windows and Macintosh products over the next few weeks.

**3. Start transitioning to a cloud-based genealogy service.** There are two versions of cloud-based genealogy applications available: one method where you share a database with thousands of other users and the other method where you maintain your own private database in a cloud service where no one else can access it without your permission. Family Tree Maker users probably are already familiar with Ancestry.com's web interface. They may choose to use that. However, that certainly is not the only choice available. MyHeritage.com, The Next Generation of Genealogy Sitebuilding, webtrees.org, WeRelate.org, FamilySearch.org, WikiTrees.com, Heredis, and others all have excellent web-based products as well. Again, I plan to write about the cloud-based genealogy services over the next few weeks.

If you are looking to switch from Family Tree Maker to a different product, I also suggest you stop and consider your long-term solutions. Do you want to switch to a different desktop or laptop application? If so, what is the life expectancy of **THAT** program? You could switch to a cloud-based program, but I will warn you that those programs have both great strengths and major weaknesses. For instance, most of today's cloud-based programs do not have nearly the variety of printed reports that are contained in most desktop and laptop program.

Every genealogist should evaluate today's offerings and also try to look into a crystal ball to see what lies in the future as industry trends keep shifting. As for me, I am moving to the cloud. My coming articles will explain why.

*The preceding article comes from Dick Eastman's genealogy blog, [blog.eogn.com](http://blog.eogn.com). Lisa Louise Cooke, host of the Genealogy Gems podcast, has a slightly different take on the issue, which she posted on her blog, [lisalouisecooke.com](http://lisalouisecooke.com):*

## What Ancestry's Retirement of Family Tree Maker Software Means for You

December 8, 2015 by [Lisa](#)

I think this is a long post, but this is an extremely important topic. I hope you will invest the time to read it through to the end.



I travel the world presenting sessions on a wide range of genealogy topics. One of the presentations that is most near and dear to my heart is called **Future Technology and Genealogy – 5 Strategies You Need**. In it I not only outline 5 strategies that genealogists can use to cope and thrive in an ever-changing technological world, but I share 3 major areas that I believe genealogists should be aware of as we move into the future. One of those is *thedesktop moving to the Cloud*.

Certainly Adobe and Microsoft have already moved that direction by discontinuing physical software sales and moving to a Cloud based subscription service. But the desktop moving to the Cloud has been a more subtle transition in the genealogy space. Today, however, our

industry was hit between the eyes with this new reality.

Ancestry has announced the “retirement” of one of the cornerstone products in genealogy, the Family Tree Maker desktop software.

I couldn't help but think that Ancestry was striving to paint a picture of Family Tree Maker as Charles Coburn (in black and white of course) in his classic double-breasted suit, gold watch in hand, walking off into the sunset in a Jean Arthur movie. Perhaps it would be more accurate to visualize him being pushed out. Let's start with the announcement that Ancestry released on their blog late Tuesday December 8, 2015, and then we'll probe deeper:

*“Ancestry to Retire Family Tree Maker Software*  
By Kendall Hulet

*Ancestry is proud to have made a significant investment this year to bring valuable new content and records to the Ancestry site. In 2015, we've made 220 million searchable historical records from Mexico available, more than 170 million pages from the largest collection of U.S. will and probate records, among others. We've also introduced new features such as Ancestry Academy and major advancements for AncestryDNA.*

*We remain dedicated to helping people gain new levels of understanding about their lives, and who and what led to them, harnessing the information found in family trees, historical records and genetics. As a company, we're also continually evaluating ways to focus our efforts to provide the most impact and best product experience for our users through our core offerings.*

*True to this focus, we've taken a hard look at the declining desktop software market and the impact this has on being able to continue to provide product enhancements and support that our users need. With that, we've made the tough decision to stop selling Family Tree Maker as of December 31, 2015.*

*Our subscription business and website, on the other hand, continue to grow and we are doubling down our efforts to make that experience even better for our Ancestry community.*

Ancestry will continue to support current owners of Family Tree Maker through January 1, 2017. During this time, all features of the software, including TreeSync™, will continue to work, and Member Services will be available to assist with user questions. We will also address major software bugs that may occur, as well as compatibility updates.

These changes are never easy, but by focusing our efforts, we can concentrate on continuing to build great products for our loyal Ancestry community.

If you have inquiries regarding Family Tree Maker, please reach out to our [Member Services](#) team. We'll also provide updates on our blog as needed leading up to January 1, 2017."

### What this Means for Genealogists

In reality, I would wager to guess that this move is a cold, calculated business strategy, not a warm and sentimental retirement. And that's OK. Business is good. If Ancestry didn't do well in business, we wouldn't have such easy and convenient access to all those records.

Discontinuing Family Tree Maker is a strategic move. The goal is it to get everyone from family history "dabblers" to seasoned genealogists to enter their family tree data directly onto a family tree housed on the Ancestry website. This puts them in the drivers seat.

It is keenly important to understand what is really happening so that you can **make the wisest decisions possible for the life of your genealogical research**. Our family trees are not Ancestry's responsibility, or anyone else's for that matter. They are our responsibilities, and we need to be as calculated and ruthless in protecting them as any savvy CEO.

We must understand that it is more profitable for Ancestry to quit producing software CDs, and all that packaging to put the CDs in. It's more profitable to stop employing and paying employees to ship all those CDs. Digital content is more profitable and easier for a company to control. But is that the whole story?

Absolutely not. Information is King, and it is valuable. Your genealogical information is financially *valuable* to genealogy companies.

(Read [Ancestry's Terms of Service](#) to refresh yourself on what they can do with your information.) Think AncestryDNA is only about your ancestry? You must understand that it is not. Aggregated data is sold in the marketplace to other companies. (Read [this article](#) at Wired.com about one partnership Ancestry has with the Google-owned biotech company Calico.) Not to say it is not a worthwhile effort on your part to get your DNA tested – it certainly may be. But that DNA data has dollar signs written all over it. It is valuable. But today isn't about DNA, so let's get back to Family Tree Maker and your tree. How do you, the genealogist, retain control in this environment? Take on a "**genealogist-protected approach**" to your data.

### The Genealogist-Protected Approach

**Step 1: Purchase a new genealogy software database program and load it on your computer.** I recommend and use [RootstMagic](#) software. RootsMagic is excellent, reliable and extremely well supported. [Click here to read\\*](#) how they are ready to help you in our transition.

**Step 2: Back up your entire computer with a Cloud-based backup service.** This is critical to protecting and retaining control of your data. I recommend and use [Backblaze](#). ([Here's an article\\*\\*](#) I wrote that will give you a compelling reason not to skip this step.)

*Full disclosure:* RootsMagic and Backblaze are sponsors of the free [Genealogy Gems Podcast](#). This is primarily because I use the products myself and have been impressed and satisfied with their products. Regardless of which products you choose, just be sure you put the *Genealogist-Protected Approach* into action.

I have stated numerous times in presentations, on the podcast, and here on the blog that I view family trees on Ancestry and other websites as "cousin bait" not primary family tree storage. Rather than upload my entire tree, I upload that for which I want to generate "genealogical leads." My master tree and master database file is on my computer in [RootsMagic](#), backed up by [Backblaze](#).

You might be one of the many genealogists who has thoroughly enjoyed having your entire tree on Ancestry, and wonder now how you can get a software program that fully synchronizes with Ancestry. To address this issue, first go back and read the section above under “What this means for genealogists.” Remember, data is BIG business. The truth is that it is not financially beneficial to Ancestry to allow that to happen. They want to be where you house your master family tree. I don’t blame them. But, in my opinion, **that’s not in my family tree’s best interest.** Therefore, I follow the steps outlined above, and upload a gedcom of what I want circulating publicly in order to generate “leads”: hints and cousin connections.

I believe it is generally going to get harder and harder to retain control over our privacy and our data. We don’t know what the future holds for computer software. But no matter what happens, we as genealogists will still be 100% responsible for what happens to our family trees and our data. There’s no whining in genealogy. And last I heard they still produce paper and pencils.

\*[blog.rootsmagic.com](http://blog.rootsmagic.com)

\*\*[lisalouisecook.com/2015/11/cloud-backup-backblaze](http://lisalouisecook.com/2015/11/cloud-backup-backblaze)