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Genealogy Notes from Emily March 2017

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Genealogy Notes from Family

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Websites to Remember:

- MSL Genealogy - www.maine.gov/msl/services/genealogy/index.shtml
- Vital Records Researcher Card- www.maine.gov/dhhs/forms.shtml
- MSL Classes- www.maine.gov/msl/services/classes.shtml
- Maine Genealogical Society—www.maineroots.org

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“WHO’S ON FIRST?” NUMBERING SCHEMES FOR GENEALOGY

Thought it might be a good time to review the primary numbering systems used in genealogies. Who knows? You may just want to write one of your own! Let’s start with the one that’s hardest to spell and pronounce: ahnentafel. It is German for “table of ancestors”. Starting with 1 in the present time (or the person of interest), you are working your way back. The higher the number, the further back you’re going. In an ahnentafel chart, the person’s father is number 2 and the mother is 3; paternal grandparents are 4 and 5, etc. The females beyond the first person are always an odd number. Parents may be found by doubling the number of the child. So, everyone has a modern, Arabic number. Basic stuff! Now let’s add another type: Henry Numbering. We start again with the number 1 for the “beginning” ancestor, and add numbers to the right. These numbers denote both generation and birth order. For example: the 3rd child of the first ancestor would be assigned the number 13. The fifth child of the 3rd child of the ancestor would be number 135, and on it goes. If the person’s birth order is beyond 9, then

letters of the alphabet come into play, which can cover up to 35 children without fuss. Our friend in genealogy William Dollarhide has even combined both systems to create one of his own: see Brian R. Smith’s [Dollarhide Numbering for Genealogists: an Authorized Guide for the Serious User](#), on our shelves at 929.1 S643d 2011.

Another important system is called Register Style, used by the [New England Historical and Genealogical Register](#) since 1870. This time the immigrant ancestor is given the number 1. His (or her) children are assigned lower-case roman birth-order numbers. If more information is given on an individual, they also have an Arabic number based on the one last assigned. Some folks like to use a modified version of this which gives an Arabic number to most children then adds a plus symbol to the left of any person whose line is carried forward in the document.

You’ll also notice the use of superscript numbers and letters. A number with the person indicates the generation from the first (immigrant) ancestor. A superscript capital letter shows the generations of ascent from the

immigrant. Superscript small letters are used to complete a word or name.

Abbreviations are plentiful within any genealogy. Many authors are kind enough to explain them in their works; others assume prior knowledge. The best source I can think of is Kip Sperry’s [Abbreviations and Acronyms: a Guide for Family Historians](#) (Ancestry Pub., 2003) It’s in our Genealogy Reference section: 929.103 S751a 2003.

For more information on numbering and genealogical writing, try the following titles: Joan F. Curran’s [Numbering Your Genealogy...](#) (National Genealogical Society, 1999), call no. 929.1028 C976n 1999; [Genealogical Writing in the 21st Century...](#), Second Edition, edited by Michael J. Leclerc and Henry B. Hoff (NEHGS, 2006), call no. 929.1 G326g-w 2006; and Penny Stratton’s [Genealogical Numbering](#), Portable Genealogist Series (NEHGS, 2013), call no. 929.1072 S911g 2013.

See you in the stacks!

NERGC 2017-April 26-29th!

It’s time once again to gear up for the 2017 NERGC Conference, which is being held from April 26th through the 29th at the MassMutual Center located in Springfield, MA. The theme is “Using the Tools of Today and Tomorrow to Understand the Past”, and it’s being sponsored

by a ton of New England genealogical organizations. Pre-conference sessions will cover DNA, professional genealogy, librarians, society management and technology. Featured speakers are F. Warren Bittner, Kenyatta D. Berry and Thomas MacEntee.

The event promises to provide new research methods and ways to access records, some sources for ethnic genealogy, exploration of social history, information on regional repositories and some general skill building. FMI, check out their website, and register soon: www.NERGC.org. Cheers!