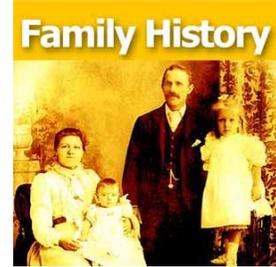


Family History: Genealogy Made Easy

with Lisa Louise Cooke

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Welcome to this step-by-step series for beginning genealogists—and more experienced ones who want to brush up or learn something new. I first ran this series in 2008-09. So many people have asked about it, I'm bringing it back in weekly segments.

Episode 26: Using Church Birth Records in Family History

In our last episode we covered civil birth records. As promised, in this week's episode we finish up this two part series on birth records by talking about church birth records. Just like with civil birth records, there are a variety of records to track down. So to help us in the hunt I'm bringing back professional genealogist Arlene Eakle, PhD. She helps us see the challenges we face and the success we can have locating church records about our ancestors' births.

Read the show notes below for exciting updates to the original conversation.

The first place Arlene looks for church birth records is the International Genealogical Index (IGI). This database can be found at FamilySearch.org at <https://familysearch.org/search/collection/igi>. As you can see below, you'll see a search tool for just the IGI. Community-indexed IGI is what you want to search: the collection of vital and church records from the early 1500s to 1885.

The screenshot shows the FamilySearch.org website interface. At the top left is the FamilySearch logo. To the right are links for "Volunteer", "Get Help", "Sign In", and "Join For Free". Below the logo is a navigation bar with "Family Tree", "Memories", and "Search" buttons. A secondary navigation bar contains "RECORDS", "GENEALOGIES", "CATALOG", "BOOKS", and "WIKI". The main content area is titled "International Genealogical Index (IGI)" and includes a brief description: "The International Genealogical Index was a family history database that listed several hundred million names of deceased persons from throughout the world. Names in the IGI came from two sources." Below this are two links: "Community Contributed IGI (Personal family information submitted to the LDS Church)" and "Community Indexed IGI (Vital and church records from the early 1500s to 1885)". A paragraph explains that the indexed data is organized into original collections and that the Community Indexed search only finds records from the old IGI. A "Learn more" link is provided. At the bottom is a "Search Collection" form with two radio buttons: "Community Contributed IGI" (unchecked) and "Community Indexed IGI" (checked). Below the radio buttons are two input fields for "First Names" and "Last Names".

Unfortunately, the indexed entries are not sourced in this database. Chase down the original source with this tutorial at

https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Finding_the_Source_of_IGI_Batch_Numbers.

Here are 3 tips for searching for church records:

1. Search for a namesake of the person you are looking for, particularly if they have a fairly unusual or unique name. Often times that person will be related and give you a clue as to where to find the other person.
2. Always attempt to get a copy of the original source for information found in transcribed records or online.
3. When you want to locate a church in the U.S. and determine how to access their records, Arlene suggests using the Rootsweb (www.rootsweb.ancestry.com) and USGenWeb (www.usgenweb.org). USGenWeb is organized by state, then county.

And here are links to 3 more places to look for your family history:

1. Google Books (www.books.google.com);
2. The Social Security Death Index, or SSDI, which we talk about in Episode 3 of this podcast. Find it at <http://lisalouisecooke.com/2013/10/family-history-podcast-episode-3-working-backward-and-the-ssdi/>;
3. Volunteer lookups: Arlene mentions Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness. That site went offline, then was revived, but isn't exactly the same. Find it listed along with other volunteer lookup sites at <http://cyndislist.com/lookups/>.