

How I Spent My Stay-At-Home 'cation

By Sylvia Nelson

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I consider myself a genealogist, not a professional one, but one who is passionately addicted to the so-called hobby. For me it is no longer a hobby, though, it is truly an addiction. My other passion is gardening so often the two passions clashed during my staycation. (Thank goodness for the rain.) If my third passion had been present, there would have been no conflict, however, my granddaughters live in Colorado.

I decided to clean up my Family Tree Maker software tree, which is also on Ancestry.com via the "sync" mode between the two. For a while, during the transition of FTM from the old company to the new company, there were many failed sync attempts, resulting in many duplicates being created, often three of the same people. When I did a search for duplicates at the beginning of my staycation I had over 8,000 duplicates. That is a lot; however many of them were not duplicates, sometimes twins with the same birth date, and sometimes different people with similar birth dates, and some with the same name and birth year but with different parents. Plenty of them were duplicates so I had to weed through every single entry.

Weeding through has its advantages and disadvantages. For instance, I ran into my Pierce/ Percy line and how to name the Pierces who were Percys before, which totally distracted me from the duplication-cleaning-up work! There were many other lines that distracted me during this time, but I am only left with about 600 duplicates.

The other project I decided to tackle was going through many boxes of old paperwork that had accumulated in my office. That process was helped because we adopted a very sweet older dog that came with two big beds and since we spend a lot of time in the office I had to clear out a spot under a built-in desk for one of her beds. That spot was full of boxes with old papers. Many went into the recycle box after evaluation, but how could I possibly get rid of one titled "Executions in England from 1606"? One never knows when one will come upon an ancestor who was killed at Tower Hill, or executed at Old Bailey, and you want to know why. Besides, I know both my daughter-in-law and I have a few ancestors who were beheaded at Tower Hill. When we visited England together, we visited and paid our respects to them. Fans of the "Outlander" books will recognize one of the executed -



Lord Lovat, 09 Apr 1747, for rebellion. While not an ancestor of ours, as fans of the books (and of Jamie's, of course) we honored him as well.

When we were in Arlington last summer, Sue Hassenmiller found one of Heritage Quest's free books for me, "Medieval Welsh Ancestors of Certain Americans," which I started to read. Talk about a distraction - wow! What I did discover is that some of my English ancestors were not originally English, but Welsh way back in the day! That includes the Pierce/Percy line, among others.

I also discovered that many of my English ancestors were not English at all but from Normandy, who were originally Franks, and who knows where they originated! While I have not mastered all the new DNA tools, I have begun to understand my DNA breakdown, especially my mitochondrial DNA.

The cleaning out process resulted in numerous genealogical journals that I have put off reading "for a more favorable" time. Going through them now though I discovered information I needed to fill in blanks in my tree, and stories about them and their time.

Then there was cleaning up the My Heritage tree and helping with the WikiTree and Geni Trees. I kept finding mistakes and ended up fixing a lot of misinformation. I even got an "Atta Girl" from one of the folks I helped. I found that I am not very forgiving when someone else makes a mistake with one of my ancestors. But I was taught to play nice!

Of course, there is the Find My Past tree too, and the ones for all those DNA testing sites. Not only did I have to do mine, I had to update the ones for all those tests that I made my relatives take.

I had to keep making lists and tried to use a spreadsheet to keep track of what I was doing and had done and still had to do, if I figured it needed doing! That did not work at all. I am normally a list maker but not when it comes to genealogy chores (which really are not chores at all in my mind). One thing leads to another and on and on it goes, all day long. Fortunately I have a new dog to walk.