FAN Club Research & Correlation of Evidence

Preface

There is a lot of information here. Do not let it overwhelm you.

"Take it one ancestor and one record at a time."
Connie Knox

Start with your Target Ancestor (the person you are researching). Let us go from there.

What is the FAN Club?

The FAN Club strategy, affectionately named by Elizabeth Shown Mills, stands for Friends, Associates, and Neighbors. Some family historians even use "family" in place of "friends." Regardless, the FAN Club Research strategy is versatile, applicable to family as well as friends, associates, and neighbors. It is arguably the most powerful research technique you can use in genealogy.

What is the FAN Club

Friends

Associates

Neighbors

Why FAN Club Research?

You might be using the fan club strategy without even realizing it. When you compare records and individuals in your family tree, you likely focus on names, dates, and other data to correlate evidence. By consciously applying the fan club strategy, you can discover more records, connect with more family members, and achieve better results.

**GenealogyTV.org**   **YouTube.com/GenealogyTV**

Confirming Records

Using multiple interconnected individuals, whether they are friends or family, helps confirm records. This approach also aids in placing people at specific locations during certain times.

Confirming Family

One of the things you want to look for in records to help you with the fan club research is to look for witnesses and Informants. Transcribing this record, it says:
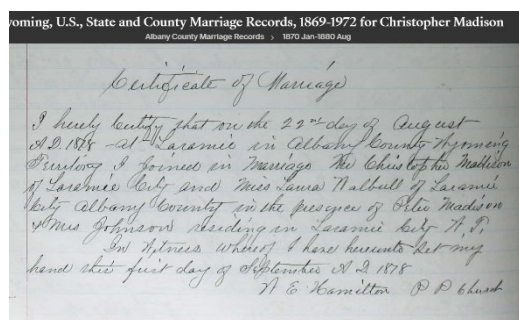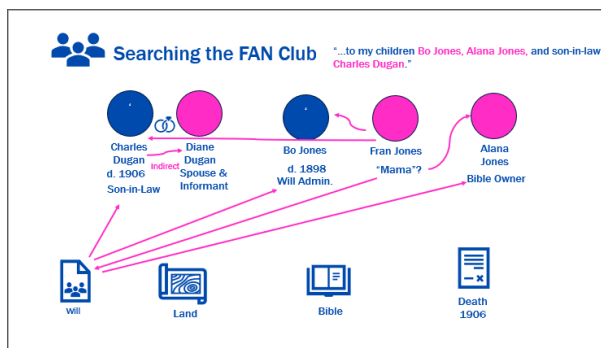
"Certificate of Marriage.

I hereby certify that on the 22nd day of August AD. 1878 at Laramie in the Albany County, Wyoming Territory I joined in marriage Mr. Christopher Madison of Laramie City and Miss Laura Wabull of Laramie City Albany County, in the presence of Peter Madison & Mrs Johnson, residing in the Laramie City W.T.

In whereof I have hereunto set my hand to this first day of September A D. 1878.

W E Hamilton. P P Church"[1]

This record lists witnesses **Peter Madison** and **Mrs. Johnson.** Given that this family has many Madsen's and Johnson's and both families came from Denmark, these witnesses are likely family members. Even though "Madsen" and "Madison" are spelled differently, spelling was not as consistent in the past as it is today. Names were often spelled phonetically, leading to variations in records.

What to look for…

- Witnesses in Marriage Certificates
- Family in Obituaries
- Neighbors in Census Records
- FAN Club members in Social Columns in Newspapers
- Wedding Registries are full of FAN Club members

Just to name a few.

Reasonably Exhaustive Research - Using Other Platforms

In short, you are turning over every rock and looking everywhere.

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[1] Albany County, Wyoming, Certificate of Marriage for Christopher Madsen and Laura Walbull, marriage date 22 August 1878, Laramie City, Albany County, Wyoming, received from vendor Backgrounds USA, 1760 Gaylord Street, Denver, Colorado, 80206.

- Think geographically, Federal records, State records, Local Records (District or County)
- Go Sideways, meaning research the siblings of your target ancestor (the person you are researching).

Family Tree Platforms

- Ancestry (Subscription, worldwide records)
- FamilySearch (Free, worldwide records)
- MyHeritage (Subscription, worldwide records)
- FindMyPast (Subscription, focused on UK & Ireland)
- WikiTree (Free)

Basic Strategies

- Use all platforms available to you.
- Reasonably Exhaustive Research – Not exhausting Research.
- Look for witnesses, neighbors, and others named in documents.
- Consider Extracting Neighbors from Census Records.

Lessons on extracting pages of census data into an excel spreadsheet can be found here Extract Census from Ancestry into Excel.

No Brainer Strategies

Search All Platforms if Possible

- Ancestry (Subscription, worldwide records)
- FamilySearch (Free, worldwide records)
- MyHeritage (Subscription, worldwide records)
- FindMyPast (Subscription, focused on UK & Ireland)
- WikiTree (Free)

Use Smart Research Strategies

- **Target** Ancestor
- Research **Question**
- Research **Plan**
- **Execute** Research
- **Resolve** Conflicts

Reference Live from YT Video About the FAN Club

Newspapers

Make sure to look for FAN Club members as you are reading (and hopefully transcribing) newspaper articles. See the other handout for newspaper research.

Information found in newspapers can lead to other records. This was the story of a "Friend" who kept showing up in newspapers that led me to the story about my ancestors land transactions, foreclosure and recovering the bankrupt ranch.

See this video lesson for the full story. There is also another handout in that lesson about FAN Club Research.

Emerging Tools

FamilySearch Full Text Search

This is the **newest and hottest technology in genealogy** since the invention of the computer.

Instead of searching for indexed names, this new experimental search feature from FamilySearch **reads the entire document**, *typed or handwritten* and finds the keywords you searched for.
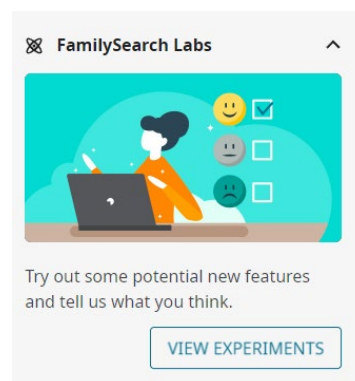
New Strategy

Now you can search for things like "foreclosure," or "Last Will," or "Guardianship." **Think about phrases in court records in combination with names, dates, and places.**

This is necessary for researching today. The results are amazing. We are finding records we never knew existed. As of this writing (July 1, 2024) these are the records available.

1. U.S. Land and Probate Records 1630-1975
2. Mexico, Notarial Records, 1600-1909
3. US Plantation Records cs. 1700s-1865
4. Victoria, Australia Probates 1853-1976
5. Auckland, New Zealand Wills and Probates 1834-1997

Land and probate records are some of the most family rich records you can find.

However, I have found records in this collection that go beyond land and probate. You must try this, and it is free!

Here is the example from the presentation. Search various keywords and names.

Learn More

Learn More about Full Text Search on FamilySearch here on the Genealogy TV Academy website in a video called **OMG Bingo! Finding a 5 Year Old Girl Who Was Missing in the 1880 Census.**

Ancestry

On Ancestry, you can easily **keep track of FAN Club members using the Floating Tree Strategy.** This is where you have disconnected persons as "floaters" in the tree so you can let the algorithm work for you.

[Floating Trees for FAN Club Members Path on Academy](#)

Use **MyTreeTags**® for Floaters so you can find them again. You do this from the tree view on **Ancestry**, then **Find**, then **Add Custom Tree Tags.**

AI Tools

Genealogy websites have been using artificial intelligence for years. This is nothing new. However, AI technology is getting smarter and faster every day.

However, the biggest change recently is the addition of **handwriting recognition**. Starting with the 1950 U.S. Census, Ancestry's handwriting technology in collaboration with FamilySearch volunteers managed to index the entire 1950 census in days rather than months for the 1940 census.

New AI Tools on all platforms is allowing for records to be computer read and indexed faster than ever.

This newly uploaded record for a delayed birth certificate for my grandmother has her signature! This makes the color copy an original.
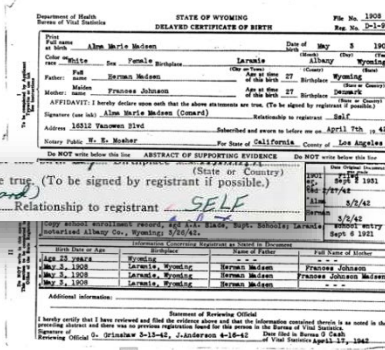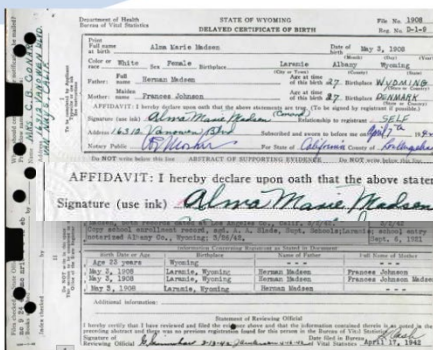
Go to the **Ancestry Card Catalog** added for the latest records. It has several FAN Club members in it.
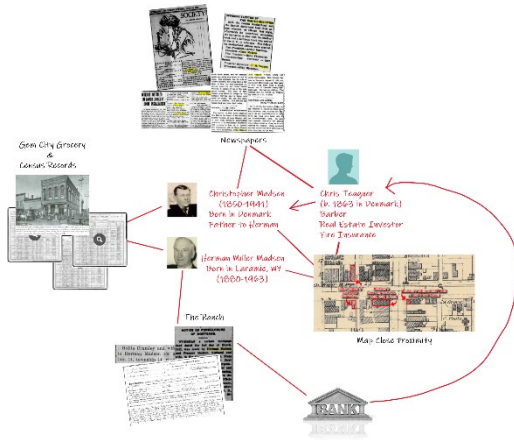
Correlation of Evidence & FAN CLUB

Using records in combination with FAN Club members may help enhance the family history story... or resolve a missing piece of the puzzle.

There are **two lessons** about **Correlation of Evidence**.

Correlation of Evidence, Part 1: U.S. Census Records

Correlation of Evidence, Part 2: Any Record

New Pro Tools

Ancestry recently added Pro Tools as an extra subscription. You may find more FAN Club members by using the Enhanced Shared Matches tool, to focus your DNA matches on a specific branch of the tree... and then see how your shared matches related to each other. This helps build the family tree faster by figuring out the relationship between the matches you share with a DNA cousin and how they relate.

AncestryDNA®

Find more FAN Club and Family with DNA Cousins and their family trees.

DNA Cousin Matches

Looking at your **DNA Match List**, you can you see how you relate to your cousin matches in a unit called cM. This can give you an estimated range of how you are related to that DNA Cousin.

Shared Matches

Drilling into a cousin match, you can then see more information. By clicking on the **Shared Matches tool,** you can now see all the DNA cousins that you share DNA with that one cousin.

Enhanced Shared Matches (Pro Tools Only)

Using the New **Pro Tools** version of the **Enhanced Shared Matches**, you can now see both your relationship to the shared matches and how your DNA cousin (whom you originally clicked on) also shares DNA with them.

The image to the right shows where I clicked into my DNA Cousin Carol. The left column is DNA matches we both share, thus coming from the same branch of the tree.

The middle column shows my relationship with each row of cousins. The right column shows how Carol is related to those same cousins.

Keep Track of FAN Club Members

It is important to keep track of FAN Club Members. I do this in my research notes for people who regularly show up in records.

I also do this in Excel spreadsheets for census and DNA matches when working on a specific problem.

Comparing census like this from decade to decade can help you have confidence you have the right family. This is especially helpful when researching early census records when only the Head of Household (HOH) was listed.
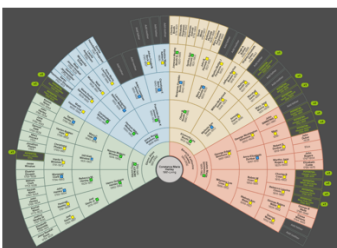

Floating Trees

Using floating trees is a perfect strategy for keeping track of fan club members.

On Ancestry from the tree view, Click on Find in Tree And create a custom tree tag that says floater or floating tree.

Keeping Track of FAN Club Members

- One Ancestor at a time
- Floating Trees
- Spreadsheets
- Lists
- Research Notes

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Don't Get Overwhelmed

One Record... One Ancestor...

At a time!

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