



Diabetes: A Family Matter

Family Genealogy

Brief Description:

This activity has to do with getting to know your personal family history. While many across the nation are busily searching to learn more about their family members and history, many have not tried to do so. In the past, this would be a task and might have been quite costly. Now with access to the internet, it is much easier to search for one's relatives and learn more about those family ties. People in Appalachia have varied histories. Many have relatives that came from distant places to settle in the region. Some families have lived in the Appalachian region for generations in the same communities where they still reside. It is likely that many in your community not only know their extended family members, but many probably live nearby. However, even with this knowledge, many still do not really know their full family history. In fact, they may even have kin connections to others in the area that they are not aware.

This activity suggests ways to complete a family genealogy. It is about gathering information that can be kept and shared with great-grandchildren. A complete family history can assist people to understand themselves better. It can help us understand more about our roots and help us know connections to people and places we did not know about before. While not everyone in the community will want to be involved in studying their family history, many will be eager to work on an activity like this. Your local librarian can likely be a great resource. Perhaps you have a historical society in your community that can also assist you with your search.

Volunteer *SUGAR Helpers* can get involved as they do a personal search for their family's history. They can encourage others to do the same. Promoting health not only has to do with the body, but also the mind and spirit. This is one of those activities that can help one attend to these other parts of self.

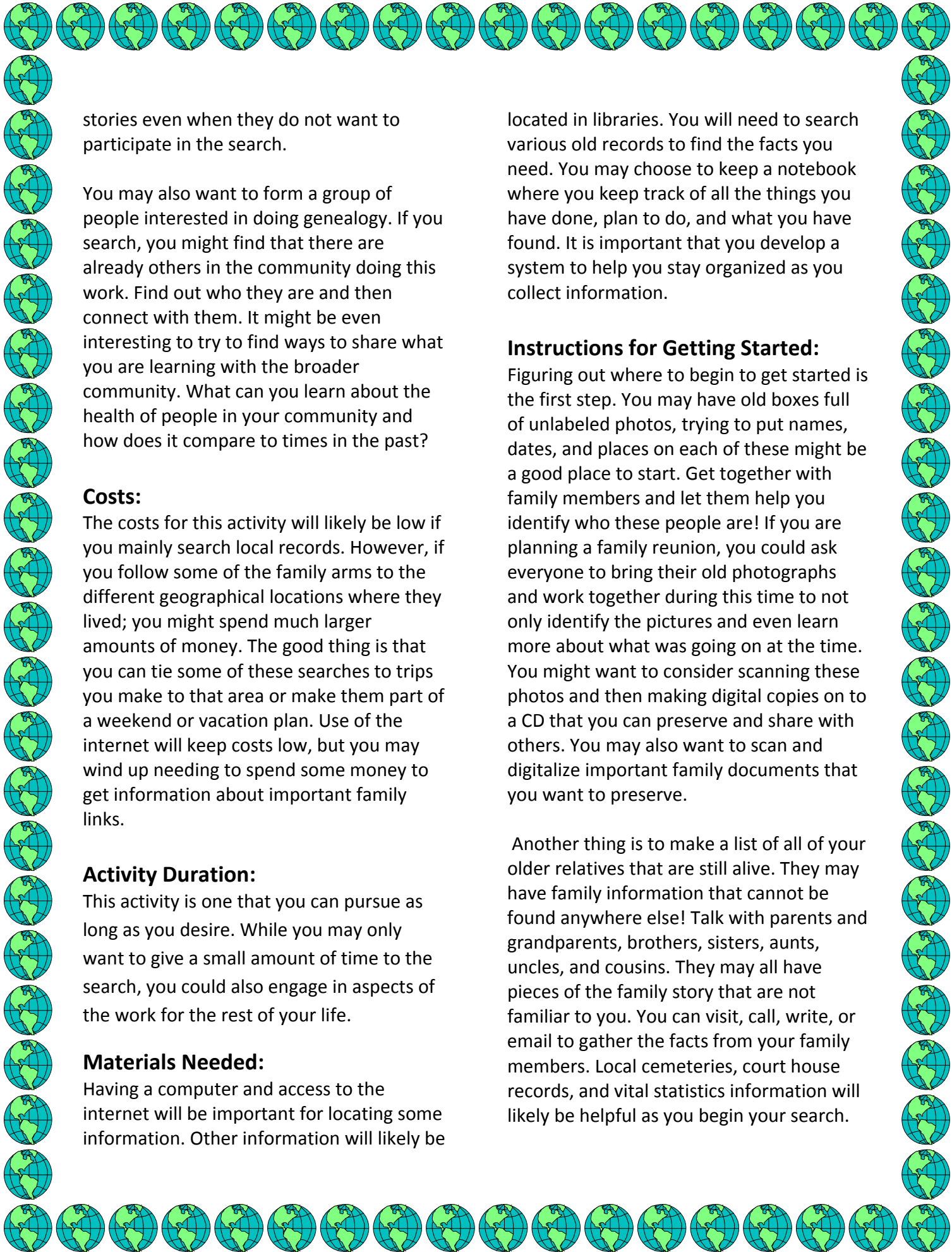
Objectives:

1. Identify personal family history.
2. Share family history with other family members.
3. Preserve the history for future generations.
4. Find ways to share family stories connected to your community with other local people.

Participants

The more the merrier! While one can conduct a search for the family history as a solitary person, it can be much greater fun if other family members are enlisted. This is an activity that you can engage in with as much time as you have available. It can be a hobby that you pursue when you have a few extra hours, but it can also become a major focus for a period of time. It is something you can do for awhile and then come back to later even when a long period of time has lapsed.

If others get involved then you can each search different arms of your family. The joy and surprise as you discover the facts can be quite valuable. You will likely want to share this with others in your family. Other family members may enjoy hearing the



stories even when they do not want to participate in the search.

You may also want to form a group of people interested in doing genealogy. If you search, you might find that there are already others in the community doing this work. Find out who they are and then connect with them. It might be even interesting to try to find ways to share what you are learning with the broader community. What can you learn about the health of people in your community and how does it compare to times in the past?

Costs:

The costs for this activity will likely be low if you mainly search local records. However, if you follow some of the family arms to the different geographical locations where they lived; you might spend much larger amounts of money. The good thing is that you can tie some of these searches to trips you make to that area or make them part of a weekend or vacation plan. Use of the internet will keep costs low, but you may wind up needing to spend some money to get information about important family links.

Activity Duration:

This activity is one that you can pursue as long as you desire. While you may only want to give a small amount of time to the search, you could also engage in aspects of the work for the rest of your life.

Materials Needed:

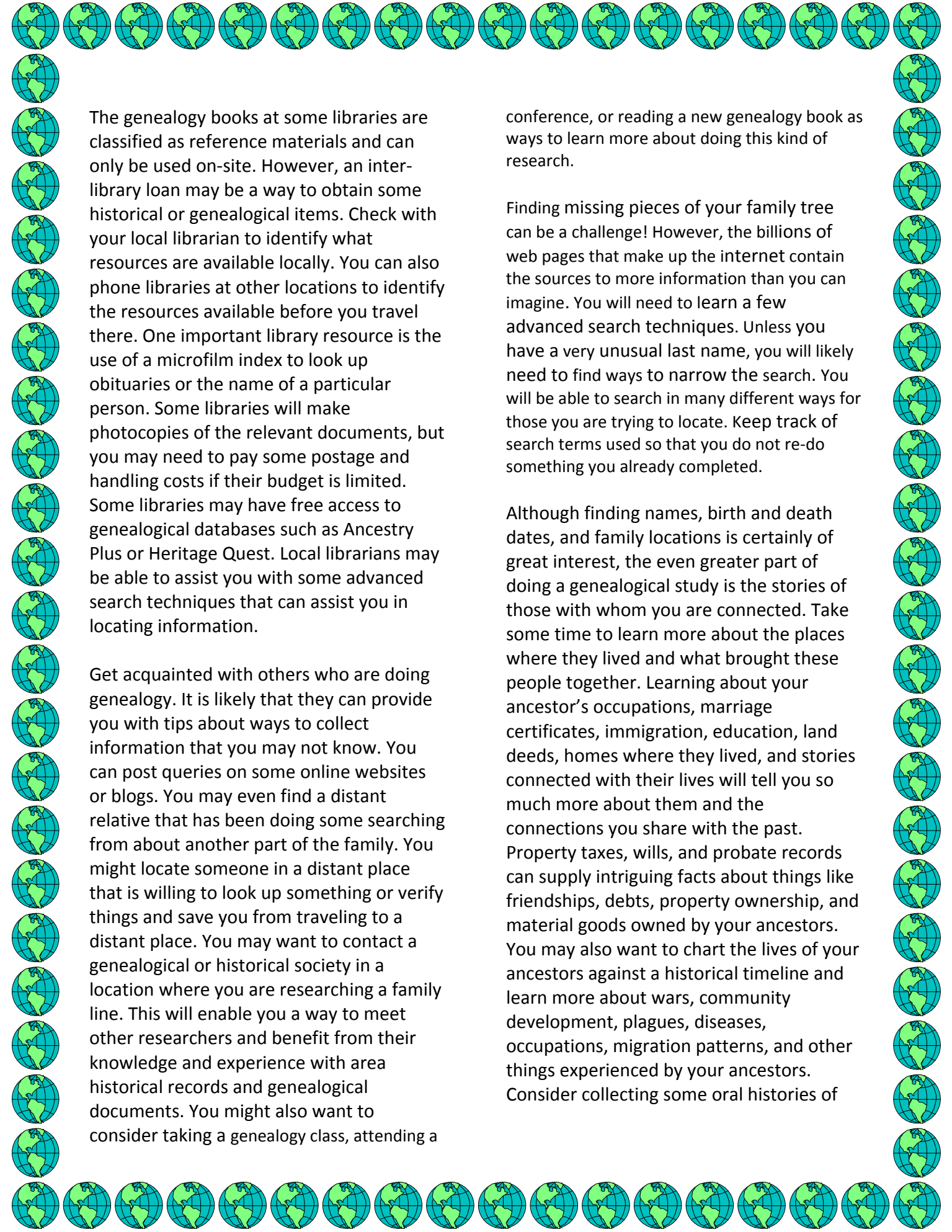
Having a computer and access to the internet will be important for locating some information. Other information will likely be

located in libraries. You will need to search various old records to find the facts you need. You may choose to keep a notebook where you keep track of all the things you have done, plan to do, and what you have found. It is important that you develop a system to help you stay organized as you collect information.

Instructions for Getting Started:

Figuring out where to begin to get started is the first step. You may have old boxes full of unlabeled photos, trying to put names, dates, and places on each of these might be a good place to start. Get together with family members and let them help you identify who these people are! If you are planning a family reunion, you could ask everyone to bring their old photographs and work together during this time to not only identify the pictures and even learn more about what was going on at the time. You might want to consider scanning these photos and then making digital copies on to a CD that you can preserve and share with others. You may also want to scan and digitalize important family documents that you want to preserve.

Another thing is to make a list of all of your older relatives that are still alive. They may have family information that cannot be found anywhere else! Talk with parents and grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and cousins. They may all have pieces of the family story that are not familiar to you. You can visit, call, write, or email to gather the facts from your family members. Local cemeteries, court house records, and vital statistics information will likely be helpful as you begin your search.



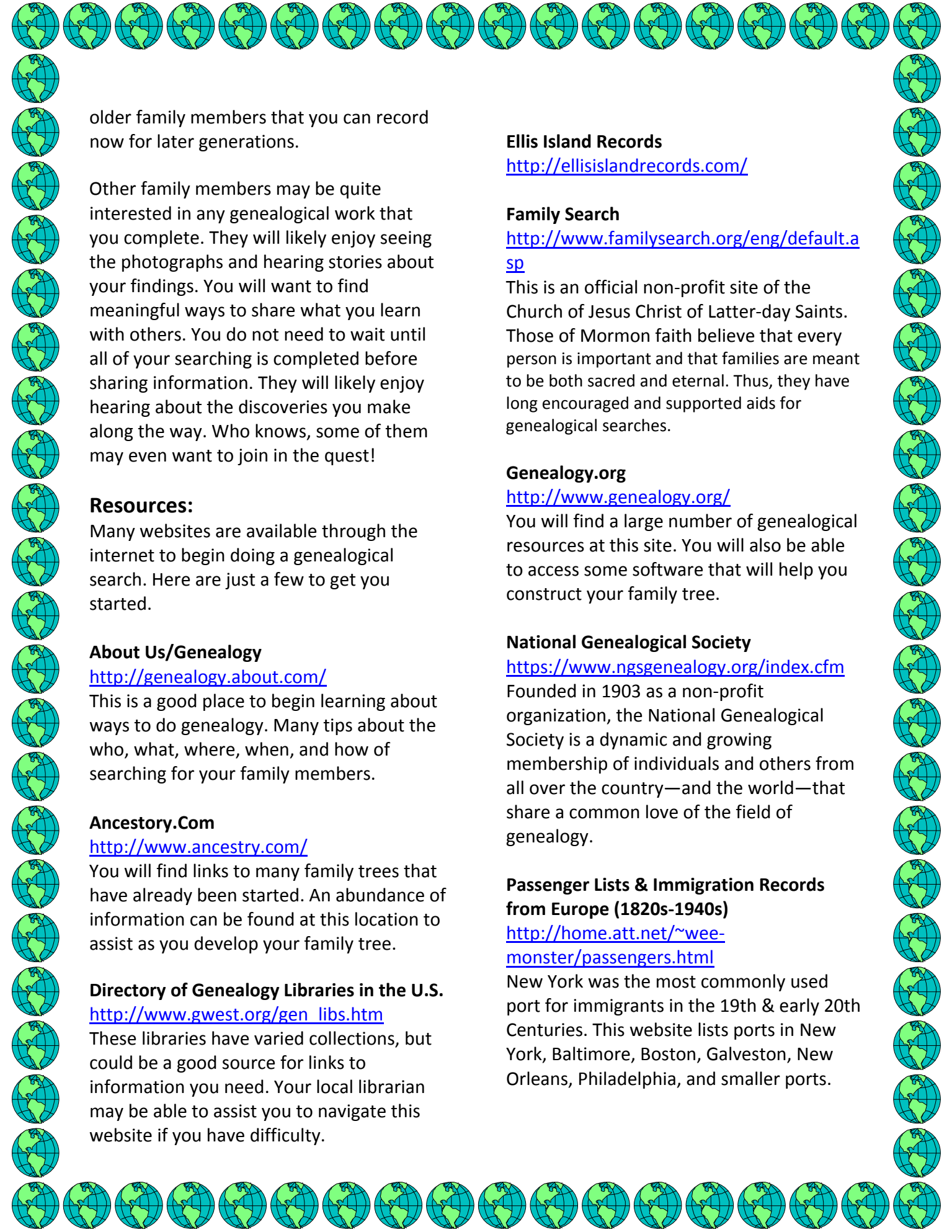
The genealogy books at some libraries are classified as reference materials and can only be used on-site. However, an inter-library loan may be a way to obtain some historical or genealogical items. Check with your local librarian to identify what resources are available locally. You can also phone libraries at other locations to identify the resources available before you travel there. One important library resource is the use of a microfilm index to look up obituaries or the name of a particular person. Some libraries will make photocopies of the relevant documents, but you may need to pay some postage and handling costs if their budget is limited. Some libraries may have free access to genealogical databases such as Ancestry Plus or Heritage Quest. Local librarians may be able to assist you with some advanced search techniques that can assist you in locating information.

Get acquainted with others who are doing genealogy. It is likely that they can provide you with tips about ways to collect information that you may not know. You can post queries on some online websites or blogs. You may even find a distant relative that has been doing some searching from about another part of the family. You might locate someone in a distant place that is willing to look up something or verify things and save you from traveling to a distant place. You may want to contact a genealogical or historical society in a location where you are researching a family line. This will enable you a way to meet other researchers and benefit from their knowledge and experience with area historical records and genealogical documents. You might also want to consider taking a genealogy class, attending a

conference, or reading a new genealogy book as ways to learn more about doing this kind of research.

Finding missing pieces of your family tree can be a challenge! However, the billions of web pages that make up the internet contain the sources to more information than you can imagine. You will need to learn a few advanced search techniques. Unless you have a very unusual last name, you will likely need to find ways to narrow the search. You will be able to search in many different ways for those you are trying to locate. Keep track of search terms used so that you do not re-do something you already completed.

Although finding names, birth and death dates, and family locations is certainly of great interest, the even greater part of doing a genealogical study is the stories of those with whom you are connected. Take some time to learn more about the places where they lived and what brought these people together. Learning about your ancestor's occupations, marriage certificates, immigration, education, land deeds, homes where they lived, and stories connected with their lives will tell you so much more about them and the connections you share with the past. Property taxes, wills, and probate records can supply intriguing facts about things like friendships, debts, property ownership, and material goods owned by your ancestors. You may also want to chart the lives of your ancestors against a historical timeline and learn more about wars, community development, plagues, diseases, occupations, migration patterns, and other things experienced by your ancestors. Consider collecting some oral histories of



older family members that you can record now for later generations.

Other family members may be quite interested in any genealogical work that you complete. They will likely enjoy seeing the photographs and hearing stories about your findings. You will want to find meaningful ways to share what you learn with others. You do not need to wait until all of your searching is completed before sharing information. They will likely enjoy hearing about the discoveries you make along the way. Who knows, some of them may even want to join in the quest!

Resources:

Many websites are available through the internet to begin doing a genealogical search. Here are just a few to get you started.

About Us/Genealogy

<http://genealogy.about.com/>

This is a good place to begin learning about ways to do genealogy. Many tips about the who, what, where, when, and how of searching for your family members.

Ancestry.Com

<http://www.ancestry.com/>

You will find links to many family trees that have already been started. An abundance of information can be found at this location to assist as you develop your family tree.

Directory of Genealogy Libraries in the U.S.

http://www.gwest.org/gen_libs.htm

These libraries have varied collections, but could be a good source for links to information you need. Your local librarian may be able to assist you to navigate this website if you have difficulty.

Ellis Island Records

<http://ellislandrecords.com/>

Family Search

<http://www.familysearch.org/eng/default.asp>

This is an official non-profit site of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Those of Mormon faith believe that every person is important and that families are meant to be both sacred and eternal. Thus, they have long encouraged and supported aids for genealogical searches.

Genealogy.org

<http://www.genealogy.org/>

You will find a large number of genealogical resources at this site. You will also be able to access some software that will help you construct your family tree.

National Genealogical Society

<https://www.ngsgenealogy.org/index.cfm>

Founded in 1903 as a non-profit organization, the National Genealogical Society is a dynamic and growing membership of individuals and others from all over the country—and the world—that share a common love of the field of genealogy.

Passenger Lists & Immigration Records from Europe (1820s-1940s)

<http://home.att.net/~weemonster/passengers.html>

New York was the most commonly used port for immigrants in the 19th & early 20th Centuries. This website lists ports in New York, Baltimore, Boston, Galveston, New Orleans, Philadelphia, and smaller ports.



**The National Archives:
Genealogists/Family Historians**

<http://www.archives.gov/genealogy/>

The National Archives offers insight into the lives of people, their families and our history. Because the records at the National Archives come from every branch of the Federal government, almost all Americans can find themselves, their ancestors, or their community in the archives. Knowing how a person interacted with the government is key to a successful search.

The US GenWeb Project

<http://usgenweb.org/>

This is a group of volunteers working together to provide free genealogy websites for genealogical research in every county and every state of the United States. This Project is non-commercial and fully committed to free genealogy access for everyone. Organization is by county and state, and this website provides you with links to all the state genealogy websites which, in turn, provide gateways to the counties. The USGenWeb Project also sponsors important Special Projects at the national level and this website provides an entry point to all of those pages.

Sons of the American Revolution

<http://www.sar.org/library/library.html>

The collection has many items and includes family histories, state genealogy materials, federal census, Revolutionary War pension applications, and CD collections. The primary focal point of the collections are the Revolutionary War period but the collection does include other materials of a genealogical nature. The online catalog allows you to see what is available.

Final Word:

If you are completing a **Family Genealogy Activity** and want to connect with others who might be doing similar kinds of work, please be sure to go to the *Diabetes: A Family Matter* website <www.diabetesfamily.net> and share with others what you are doing. A place on the **Communicate Section** of the website will be available for share your ideas. If you have created a family website that has information about your family, please post the link to the website so others can take a look.