

Finding Images to Tell the Story of Your Ancestor's Life

By Gena Philibert-Ortega

Many of us are faced with the unhappy circumstance of not having a photo of the ancestor who fought in the war, our great-grandparent's wedding or the house that our grandparents lived in. But the next best thing to having a photo of an ancestor in our collection is finding an image that depicts the era, event, or place that our ancestor was a part of.

What types of photos exist? Images may depict wars, homes, businesses, geography, gravestones, life and more. Consider images found on photographs, slides, stereoscopes, postcards, and ephemera. Image collections can be found at libraries, archives, museums, historical and genealogical societies as well as online.

Now, I must caution you when finding and using images on the Internet. Always check to make sure that images are not under copyright protection. If they are, you need to contact the copyright holder and ask what their policy is for publication of the photo. The copyright holder may or may not be the person who took the photograph, in some cases it may be a library or archive who houses the collection. Older photos, prior to the early 1920s may no longer be under copyright protection, which means that you are free to use it.

Places to Start

Google Image Search < <http://images.google.com/>>

Google Books < <http://books.google.com/>>

Mountain West Digital Library < <http://mwdl.org/>>

Online Archive of California < <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/>>

eBay < <http://www.ebay.com/>>

Archive Grid < <http://beta.worldcat.org/archivegrid/>>

WorldCat < <http://www.worldcat.org/>>

Tin Eye < <https://www.tineye.com/>>

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Photo Collections

Flickr: The Commons <<http://www.flickr.com/commons>>

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Collection <<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/>>

Click Americana <<http://clickamericana.com/>>

PhotoTree <<http://www.phototree.com/>>

American Memory <<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>>

Dead Fred <<http://www.deadfred.com/>>

Ancient Faces <<http://www.ancientfaces.com/>>

Wikimedia Commons <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page>

Maps

HistoryPin <<http://www.historypin.com/>>

What Was There <<http://www.whatwasthere.com/>>

David Rumsey Historical Map Collection <<http://www.davidrumsey.com/>>

Old Maps Online <<http://www.oldmapsonline.org/>>

Google Maps/Google Earth <<https://maps.google.com/>> and
<<http://www.google.com/earth/index.html>>

Postcards

Tahoe Country's Vintage Tahoe Postcards (Lake Tahoe, Nevada)
<<http://www.tahoecountry.com/macrae/cardindex.html>>

The University of North Carolina's North Carolina Collection –North Carolina Postcards
<http://www2.lib.unc.edu/dc/nc_post/ >

The Cleveland Heights Historical Society Postcard Exhibit
<<http://www.chhistory.org/PostcardExhibit.php>>

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Virginia Commonwealth University - Rarely Seen Richmond (Virginia)
<<http://dig.library.vcu.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/postcard>>

US Historical Postcards (Ancestry.com-Free Index)
<<http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=8705>>

Ancestry.com Picture Search (Civil War, Ships, and more)
<<http://search.ancestry.com/search/category.aspx?cat=43>>

Genealogy websites with images

Ancestry.com <<http://home.ancestry.com/>>

FindMyPast <<http://www.findmypast.com/>>

GenealogyBank <<http://www.genealogybank.com/gbnk/>>

Newspapers.com <<http://www.newspapers.com/>>

US Genweb <<http://usgenweb.org/>>

A Note about Copyright

According to Wikipedia, copyright is a, “set of exclusive rights granted to the author or creator of an original work, including the right to copy, distribute and adapt the work. These rights can be licensed, transferred and/or assigned. Copyright lasts for a certain time period after which the work is said to enter the public domain.”

What do you need to be concerned about when conducting research? Whenever you use for your research books, websites, photos (not belonging to you), and manuscript collections, basically anything that you did not write or produce you need to be concerned about copyright. These items may be under copyright and it is imperative that you find the copyright owner and ask permission to use them if it will be used for something other than your personal use. The copyright owner can be a number of different people associated with the item. For example, it may be the person who produced the item, it may be a publisher, it may be an attorney for the family of the person who created the item or it could be a repository.

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Articles

Copyright Fundamentals for Genealogy by Mike Goad

<http://www.pddoc.com/copyright/genealogy_copyright_fundamentals.htm>

Association of Professional Genealogists Copyright and Genealogy

<<http://www.apgen.org/organization/policies/copyright.html>>

Who owns Genealogy? Cousins and Copyright by Gary B. Hoffman

<http://www.genealogy.com/articles/research/14_cpyrt.html >

Cyndi's List, Copyright Issues <<http://www.cyndislist.com/copyright/>>

Books

Carmack, Sharon D. B. *Carmack's Guide to Copyright & Contracts: A Primer for Genealogists, Writers & Researchers*. Baltimore, Md: Genealogical Pub, 2005.

Images of America series by Arcadia Publishing < <http://www.arcadiapublishing.com/>>