Genealogy Basics – Some Copy and Paste Software Techniques
By Joe Petrie

Over 50 years ago when I learned to program in a computer school, I learned the importance of copying and pasting. It was usually software routines that we copied and pasted into new software or existing software that was being updated.

Background: In October 1959, because of an illness, I left college. That December, my doctor recommended that I get trained in computers in case I could not return to college. I was happy to do it – because in October it seemed like I was dying. In fact, initially, I was not the only one who thought that I would die.

I began my computer career in January1960. I was first trained on the tabulating equipment. A few months later I was trained to program. In September 1960, I returned to college as a Junior with a new major Economics and Business Administration, new computer skills and a new attitude. For the next 40 + years, I used computers in college, in graduate school and in my computer specialist – systems analyst – program management – consultant positions with the Federal government where in the latter I managed large distributed administrative systems.

My last and final paid career (from 2001 to 2011) was teaching college as an Adjunct Professor of Computer Science.

I describe my current career as a volunteer genealogist.

Keystroke Tools that I learned as a Computer Programmer in 1960: Three of my most important software hints for genealogists are keystroke utilities that seemed to have been designed for programmers:

- Control-C (2 keys pressed at the same time) to copy a selected item

- Control-V (2 keys pressed at the same time) to paste a copied item

- Print Screen (or Control-Print Screen Keys on some software) to copy something to eventually paste using Control-V into a record, a report, and Email etc.

How do I use the tools? In my database, I have an enormous collection of individuals' records with Notes that include obituaries. Most obituaries are from records in www.cbgen.org or from CAN-NS-CAPEBRETON Digest.

There are also a lot of records with Census information. Favorites are the Canadian Censuses of 1901, 1911 and 1921. I use Control-C and Control-V to copy and paste families' census records into the head of household records in my database.

Keystroke Tools to Copy Images

I never copy images for my database. I identify the source in Notes. I do not bother entering the references.

I do copy images, copy the image file to computers or flash drives, print them and/or send them by Email to the individuals that come to the Morrill Memorial Library in Norwood, MA or to Friends of Irish Research at the North Main Baptist Church in Brockton MA for my free 1-on-1 consults.

Why? Typically, the records are vital records that the client does not have a copy of – and would like to have a copy of. For example, marriage records often have the parent's legal name including mothers' full maiden names. In one session I went back 5 generations for a client's maternal roots. Please remember that one can build a Pedigree Chart (Ancestry Chart) solely from marriage records.

Let's cover a few sources.

To copy an image from www.FamilySearch.org, I have the client register. Then the client selects Search. The next screen allows the client to identify the individual to search for. (I usually fill in Name, Country, State or Province, and Birth Year or Birth Year Range.) When we see a record that applies, we look for a camera icon on the far right. We click it on and the software shows the image and allows the client to use the download option. It is often downloaded to my laptop and I copy it onto a flash drive for the client. Sometimes I attach the file to an Email.

Ancestry is similar. The results screen indicates that there is an image of the original record. To save the image to the computer, the user simply clicks on the software to view the record. The screen has an icon named SAVE that allows the user to save the image to the computer.

AmericanAncestor.org allows the user to save the image to the computer. The client can view the original image. At the bottom right of the image there is an icon that looks like a 3.5 inch floppy. Click the icon and the software downloads a JPEG photo. The software names it with the page of the image. Images of marriage records in AmericanAncestor.org have more fields than transcribed records FamilySearch and Ancestry.

Some software allows the user to see the image but not to download it or save it. Sometimes, I simply position the cursor on the image then right click on the Mouse to get the adaptive menu. I select Save the As option which allows me to save the image. I use Paint to change the format. Sometimes I use the Print Screen key to capture the screen. Sometimes I select what I want and use Control-C to capture it and Control-V to paste it into Word or even WordPad. That is enough for now.

An Invitation:

For people who live in the greater Boston area: there are many Friday evenings at the Friends of Irish Research (FIR) at the North Main Baptist Church in Brockton MA that I am available for free 2 hour 1-on-1 sessions. Often there are up to 8 FIR volunteers available to help guests and clients. You can schedule appointments on-line at www.friendsofirishresearch.org.

For CBGHA members (CBGHA is our affiliate) Friends of Irish Research still offers free distance consults. You can enlist our assistance by contacting us on-line at www.friendsofirishresearch.org.

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Your comments and suggestions are important to me. My Email address is: joe-apg@norwoodlight.com.

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