

Why I am passionate about genealogy

Everything has been a day at a time, a piece of information at a time, and a new clue to be curious about. I guess if I am going to be addicted to something, it might as well be family. I don't think anything is more important. God brought us into this world in the love and bond of our family. I want to celebrate what He has given us.

We may be scattered, we may have been distracted, we may not have seen each other for years, perhaps we didn't even know each other, but there is a connection that cannot be denied or ignored. I may not have seen you in many years, but you have been fondly in my thoughts. I feel an immediate bond when we reconnect. It is as though the years have suddenly vanished.

The Free Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines curiosity as 1: desire to know: a: inquisitive interest in others' concerns: nosiness b: interest leading to inquiry <intellectual curiosity>.

My curiosity was peaked when my mother was going through her mother's papers. There was a tablet marked "Stites Family History – Do Not Destroy". It appears my Grandma Alice and her sisters started collecting family history. It was a jumble of names, dates, notes, letters, and handwritten copies from unknown books talking about distant family members as they pioneered across the country. I wanted to know more. I wanted to know who these people were and how I fit in. Once I organized what I could, I found there were more questions than answers. I went to the library and the Federal Archives. I poured through census records and history books. The more I learned, the more questions I had. I became addicted. I expanded my search to my Volga German families.

As I continued researching, I came to many brick walls. It was as though our ancestors disappeared. They could no longer be found. They were among the forgotten ones. It was as if they lived their lives in vain – ashes to ashes, dust to dust. It was as though they were blown into the unknown never to be thought of again. I did not want that to happen to our family. We are an important link in a chain started many centuries ago. I do not want our chain to be broken. What I am doing today is not for the benefit of today's generations. It is for the benefit of our grandchildren and their grandchildren so that our lives, our trials, our accomplishments, our victories, and our love will live on forever in the hearts and minds of our family to come.