

Bygones® for Genealogy Researchers

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Like most genealogists, I use my pc to record the results of my research, compiling the events and relationships of my ancestors into a single database, such as PAF, TMG, and Family Tree Maker. To aid me in the research process, I am able to generate a number of useful reports from it, but I am demanding of what I want from genealogy software. I want it to do it all (except the analysis, which I love). Well, folks, the ultimate genealogy software is still waiting to be released. Let me know when you find it. As powerful as my genealogy software is, it works from the basic model that you record **the end results** of that research. Not much attention is given to the planning of research (so vital to efficient and effective results).

If you have read many beginning genealogists books or have attended courses for the beginner, you've encountered a variety of paper forms for organizing and tracking research efforts. There are "research calendars," "research extracts," "source summaries," and "correspondence records," along with the ubiquitous "Family Group Sheets," and "Pedigree Charts." All these forms must be manually completed. Then you have to develop a filing system in your home to store and retrieve them. If you dislike ugly filing cabinets as much as I do, you look for technology to eliminate the need for paper forms.

Recently, a colleague asked me to evaluate the database software, called Bygones®. Bygones® is designed to computerize and organize the research process, not just the end results. Thus, it complements the weaknesses, in my humble opinion, still evident in genealogy databases: facilitating the planning and tracking of the research process. After playing with its features, I liked very much what I saw. Basic to its function, it automates and links the above-mentioned research forms, thus saving you a lot of time, avoiding repeating steps, and quickly finding those records in your files. Whether you choose to keep your records in filing cabinets or on your computer, Bygones® could be a useful tool in your research toolkit.

The chief benefit of the software is that it provides an efficient method of note keeping. As every researcher knows, research is really a messy process. The published results, polished and "perfect," don't reveal the messy enterprise that created it. Many times, in the course of researching a family line, I will find a record that seems related to my ancestor, but I am not fully convinced that I should link that data to him/her. Or maybe I think I may have found an ancestor's parents, but I am not yet ready to commit to the relationship. By having software where I can record those half-baked theories, those still vague ideas, I can continue my work without fear that I will forget connections that I have already established and what my thought process was at the time I made those interpretations. AND—this is important—I don't mess with my more firmly established findings, recorded in my genealogical database.

There are search and sort features that allow you to find previously entered research notes by locality, person, or source type. The search can even be performed on the free text notes field. You can index

records according to key words, but I could not see the advantage of that. Cut-n-paste functions save time in typing, both within the software and between Bygones® and your genealogy database. You can link scanned images and maps (although my other software does this as well). Oh, and did I mention that Bygones® is freeware? The price certainly makes it worth a try.

For a demonstration of the software, follow this link: [Bygones Overview](#).