Missouri: the Spoiled Brats of Genealogy!

By Timothy D. Dollens, October 2015

In the Beginning.....

Missouri is one state that if even if your ancestors are not from Missouri, you can find lots of success filling out your family tree. Below are just some of the reasons why I believe—and I know you are saying Show Me-- we in Missouri are the SPOILED BRATS OF GENEALOGY!!

Location! Location! Location!

Missouri is in the middle of the country where any of those who heading west from the Eastern shore, had to come through going further west. In fact, many didn’t get any further and stayed! Why would your ancestor stay in Missouri.

Politically—the compromise state in 1821!

Geographically/ topography--center of the country
    Infrastructure in place—man -made and natural
    waterways
    indian trails
    land aplenty—cheap and free!
    Natural resources aplenty—zinc, fruit growing, cotton producing, grain growing, livestock grazing, horse raising, tree timber, mining, salt, fish and wildlife to name just a few.
    Our landscapes were similar to those of our ancestor’s home areas—weather it was the hills of Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia and the Carolinas or Germany, etc.

Religious/ Ethnically
    Almost every type of religious/ ethnic group came through Missouri. Most of them stayed.

Legal System
    Borrowing our laws from our neighboring states from the east of us, we benefited from those who came before us: good and bad.

All of these—and many more—set the stage as to why we have now become the SPOILED BRATS of Genealogy!
Now and Forever—the Records

Court House records
- Land
- Probate
- Civil/ criminal
- Tax

Church records
- Each denomination has a vast variety of records, but many times accessible at the local level.

Census records—state and federal—population, agricultural, industrial and slave
- 1830-1940 for now federal records available
- 1876 several counties have their state of Missouri taxes

Military Records
- Adjutant General’s records are available at the Missouri State Archives and online!
- Personal records for soldiers through the personnel records Center in St. Louis

Vital Records
- Birth and Death Records in the larger cities as well as in the counties
- 1910 to the present by the state.
- Death Certificates are Online!—1910-1964. Must be 50 years old!

Repositories—let’s highlight just some of their collections!
- Missouri State Archives—Jefferson City—county records, physically, on microfilm and online, death certificates, Missouri laws, state library,
- State Historical Society of Missouri—Columbia—largest collection of Missouri newspapers on microfilm, personal collections, printed books about Missouri culture and its people, every name index to county and local histories. Maps, Gazetteers
- Missouri History Museum—St. Louis—private and public records of early Missouri and especially the Saint Louis and surrounding areas. GAR records, company and private records, city directories.
- National Archives—Central Plains Region—Kansas City—federal census records, homestead records, some Indian records
- University of Missouri Archives—Columbia, St. Louis, Rolla and Kansas City—all campuses collect Missouri records both private and public

Libraries—public and private—but open to the public!
- Midwest Genealogy Center—branch of the Midwest Genealogical Center—large collections of Midwest and records from around the country! Indian research resources, newsletters from all over—Kentucky Tax Lists—Missouri State Genealogical Association collection.
- Saint Louis Public Library—Central Library—downtown—local records of genealogical nature—index of deaths and burials from St. Louis newspapers! City directories—much, much more
Saint Louis County Public Library—local records of genealogical nature—National Genealogical Society collection!—German interest collections-St. Louis Genealogical Society publications.

Kansas City Public Library—Missouri Valley Room—local records of genealogical nature
Family History Libraries—throughout the state! Family search.org and order film!
Ellis Library on the UMC campus—Early American History collection, Federal Government Document Center—newspapers from around the country!

Mercantile Library—Saint Louis—lots of early one of a kind records!

The Library Center—Springfield—public library with lots of resources on migration from North Carolina, Tennessee to SW Missouri emphasis, local Ozarks Genealogical Society collections. Postcard collection, Much, Much More!

Associations and Organizations that help us as genealogists!
St. Louis Genealogical Society
Missouri State Genealogical Association
Ozarks Genealogical Society
American Family Records Association
Historical and Genealogical Societies in almost every county!

Did I mention GLOBALLY—the Records!
Missouri Digital Heritage
FamilySearch.org
MoSGA.org
Cyndi’s List
Ancestry.com—library edition
Heritage Quest
Fold 3
Blmglo.gov
Ngs.org
Fgs.org

And many, many more...........

Have I showed you enough?

Note to the Consumer: The above information is merely a tip of the iceberg of the records in Missouri that make us a unique state to do research in. This list is in no way every type of record that each repository, library, archive has that would pertain to genealogy, local history and family history. This presentation is merely a teaser for you—the family historian—to be aware of the kinds of records this great state has to offer us.

I wish you well in your endeavor to finding your family tree!

And above all, thank your ancestors or yourselves for living in Missouri—you’ve earned the Spoiled Brat Status!