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Petition to Sweden's National Library

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- 19) **The spelling of my surname has always been the same way; we never changed it.** Maybe, but then again, maybe not.
- 20) **Everyone replies to e-mail immediately.** Some genealogists have non-genealogy commitments, such as family and employment. Be patient and wait a few days before posting a follow-up e-mail.
- 21) **I can trace my ancestry in one afternoon at the computer.** Time for a reality check.
- 22) **I can trace my ancestors in one afternoon at the Family History Center.** (see number 21)
- 23) **Someone has already traced my entire family tree. I Just Have to Find It.** That's the tricky part – finding it! Then comes the fun of documenting it.
- 24) **Documentation is only for genealogical geeks who get cheap thrills by asking, Where did you find it?** How will you ever compare three different birth dates for Grandpa if you don't know where you obtained each date?

- 25) **Genealogists are nuts.** More likely they are truly focused on their research. However, one correspondent told me that working on genealogy beats spending “all my free time at a bar.” •
- 26) **Genealogists are rude at the courthouse or library.** Genealogists are people and a few are rude. Just make certain it's not you. No family historian wants to walk into the courthouse just after the most obnoxious genealogist on the planet has left the building.
- 27) **Genealogy is boring.** You must be kidding. I've learned a great deal about history, culture, and myself researching my own family.
- 28) **You ought to be done with that family history by now.** Well, I would except every time I find one ancestor I have two more parents to learn about.
- 29) **There is one best genealogical software package.** Most have their pros and cons. Pick one that works for you, keep alert for new packages, but only change when you have good reason to. Time spent upgrading and upgrading

and constantly learning new packages can be spent doing research.

- 30) **You are completely addicted if you search the ingredient list of your breakfast cereal for your ancestral surnames.** This is likely true, but I'm not admitting to this one in public!

- 31) **DNA solves everything.** NOT

The author

Michael John Neill is a well-known American genealogist, living in Illinois. His main interest in researching seems to be his Ostfriesen maternal ancestors, people with specific family names like Habben, Ufkes, and Trautvetter. Some of the first names were Noentje, Tjode, and Mimka. His paternal side seems to be Irish: Neill from County Derry, Murphy, but also fairly early Americans from Maryland, Kentucky, and Rampley from England.

He shares his genealogical experiences on his web site *Rootsdig*. *Link on p. 26.*

His *Genealogy Tip of the Day* can be found on Facebook.

His e-mail is <mjnrootdig@gmail.com>.

A demand from the public to the Royal Library

The Royal Library (*Kungliga Biblioteket* /*KB*) in Stockholm is the country's national library. They have extensive collections of books, but also newspapers of many kinds from the 1600s onwards.

For many years they have had digitized newspapers from the 1700s and forwards to around 1900 open to the public for free.

A few years back they digitized many newspapers, for instance *Dagens Nyheter*, *Svenska Dagbladet*, and *Aftonbladet*. This sounds fine, but you are only allowed to study them until 1901 online, even if they are digitized until ca 2017.

Why is that? That is because KB follows the copyright law of 1960, evidently before the digital revolution.

The law states that 115 years must pass before it is possible to give access to the information in the more recent newspapers.

Newspapers from all times have contents of major interest to all kinds of researchers, and possibly mostly to genealogists. Well-known genealogist *Ted*

Rosvall has said that after the church records, newspapers may be the second most important source for genealogy.

At the moment you may search the more recent newspapers, but you can not see the actual item, unless you go to KB, and use their in-house computers.

The Federation of Swedish Genealogical Societies (*Sveriges Släktforskarförbund*) has for a long time tried to get KB to allow access to more recent newspapers.

On 23 March 2017 the president of the Federation, *Mr. Erland Ringborg*, initiated a petition that KB should change the rules. This petition can be signed by anyone, and hopefully many researchers will do so.

KB answers

The assistant chief librarian, *Mr. Lars Ilshammar*, has commented on the petition, and says that KB also feels that the situation is untenable, and that they are working on changing things for the better. They have several times mentioned the situation to the



government, and KB has got an assignment to facilitate the access to digital items, not just newspapers.

But there are other laws to follow, including the European Union laws on copyright. They say that all material, where the original writer has been dead less than 70 years, may not be in the public domain.

Another important law of the EU is the one on protection of personal data for individuals (*dataskydd*). That concerns questions about sensitive notices in newspapers about religion, membership in political parties, health issues, and much more.

This is evidently very complicated!

Link on p. 26.