

Using Pinterest to Boost Your Genealogy Research

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Pinterest and genealogy make a great combination. As of September 2018, Pinterest has over 250 million users and over 175+ billion pins. Why are people using Pinterest?

Pinterest users go to Pinterest to:

1. Be inspired.
2. Solve a problem.

What is Pinterest?

Is it social media? Is a bookmarking site? Is it a search engine?

While many people place Pinterest in the category of social media, it is not really a social media platform. Pinterest started out as more of a visual bookmarking site. While Pinterest still functions that way, **Pinterest now functions as a search engine.**

Pinterest Terminology

A Pinterest Board - A Board is a virtual bulletin board.

A Pin – A Pin is what you put into your board. Just like the old-style bulletin board on your wall, a Pin is the thing you actually pinned to the bulletin board. In Pinterest, you pin virtually. Pins can be uploaded from your own photographs, pinned from other websites or repined from within Pinterest itself.

A Save (formerly known as a Re-pin)– Re-pins are now referred to as a Save, but many users still refer to these as a re-pin. A Re-Pin is a pin that is already on Pinterest that you pin to one of your boards.

Pinterest Feed – Your Pinterest feed is a collection of pins you see when you first log into Pinterest. These pins represent a collection of pins from boards and people you follow. This is the Pinterest equivalent to your Facebook feed.

Pinterest As A Visual Bookmarking Tool

Used creatively Pinterest can be one of the best tools in a genealogist's toolbox. Each pin is a "bookmark" to a website you wish to return to later. Virtual bulletin boards keep those pins organized based on your research interests.

Examples of Pinterest boards include:

- Location based research boards such as *North Carolina Genealogy* or *Irish Genealogy*
- Genealogy Specific Topic boards such as *DNA & Genealogy* or *Tracing Female Ancestors* or *Genealogy Tips*.
- Surname Boards such as *Talbott Genealogy* or *Howard Family History*

Boards can be subdivided and organized further into board sections if desired, but is not necessary. Pins can then be pinned to the user's relevant board.

Where Do You Find Pins To Add To A Pinterest Board?

- **Pinterest** - Pins may be pinned from within Pinterest (known as a Save or Re-pin). Hover over the Pin of interest. Click the "Save" button that appears and designate which board to save the pin.
- **Individual Websites** – Interested in saving a great online article you just read? Hover over an image in the article and click on the "Save" button that appears. Alternately, use the Pinterest share button found on most websites.

Pinterest As A Search Engine

Pinterest views itself as a powerful search engine. Just as on Google, you can perform searches on Pinterest! Using the same search terms in both will yield different results.

To perform a search:

1. Find the search bar at the top of the Pinterest homepage (<https://www.pinterest.com>). Type in your query or keywords you are searching. For example, you have tracked your ancestor back to Germany. This is a great find, but you are not familiar German genealogy research. You need to learn the ins and outs of German genealogy research.
2. Type in "German Genealogy Research" search bar. The search results return pins that all focus on German genealogy research.
3. Click a pin in the search results to be taken to a closeup with more information. At this point you can save the pin to one of your boards and/or share it with someone OR...

4. Click once more to be taken to the website.

Tip: Hashtags have come to Pinterest and that's a good thing. You can search by hashtag as well. Try #genealogy or #familyhistory or #germangenealogy or #freegenealogy.

More Ways to Use Pinterest

Collaborate with Other Researchers – Group boards can be created allowing collaboration with other genealogy researchers and pinners on a topic of mutual interest. You and a fellow researcher(s) can share pertinent pins as you work on a common research project. Pins might include links to repositories, articles on research in a specific location or resources to area maps.

Follow Your Favorite genealogy bloggers and genealogy industry leaders - In Pinterest you have the ability to “Follow” other pinners including your favorite bloggers and industry leaders. By following other genealogists and genealogy related boards on Pinterest, you stay up to date on current genealogy topics and find others who have similar genealogical interests. Following others and/or individual Pinterest boards also shows Pinterest what your interests are. Your Pinterest Feed (the first page you see when you log in) will display pins from those you follow and will also display new suggestions of pins based on your interests.

Genealogy Research Travel Plans – Pin links to lodging, research repositories and local historical sites to reference as you plan your genealogy research trip.

Genealogy Wish Lists – Are you saving up for more genealogy reference books? Create a board centered around your wish list.