

Bygones

Introduction to the Bygones Genealogical Research Note-Keeping Freeware Program

Bygones is a freeware program designed to keep genealogical research notes with, for genealogists who would like to record their genealogical research notes with laptop or desktop computers. It does not replace your lineage-linked database program (Legacy, PAF, Family Origins, The Master Genealogist, Generations, Reunion, Ancestral Quest, Brother's Keeper, Family Tree Maker, etc.); rather it is meant to be used in conjunction with your lineage-linked database program. It does replace paper-only genealogical note keeping forms, such as paper research logs and research extracts, with computer versions of these forms (which can be printed out for your paper files).

Bygones is available for Windows 95+ and Macintosh System 7.1+ computers. It can be downloaded from <http://home.bygonessoftware.com>.

To use Bygones, you fill out a research extract in a Bygones Research database on your computer for each genealogical search you do. (See the sample research extract on the back of this page.) After that, you can view and print out your research notes as full research extracts, or as research logs which summarize your searches. You can also print "document labels" to put on your document photocopies (which have the source citation and your filing references). You can file printed research logs and extracts along with your document photocopies in your paper genealogical files. But having your research notes in a computer program offers some nice advantages over a paper-only based note-keeping system.

Advantages of the Bygones Note-Keeping System

The advantages of keeping your family history research notes in Bygones, as opposed to a paper-only based note-keeping system, are:

1. It offers an efficient method of note keeping. Most people with computers can type quicker than they can write. Plus Bygones can speed up inputting data by giving you some default text in many of the fields of your research extracts. Bygones can also automatically paste citations and information on sources you frequently use into your research extract for you, each time you use that source.
2. You can use the find (search) and sort features of Bygones to harness the power of your computer when you are searching, sorting, and analyzing your research notes. This is usually much, much faster than searching and sorting your paper notes. Every single name, locality, and word you type into Bygones is searchable.
3. You can cut and copy information, such as source citations, document extracts, etc. from Bygones into your lineage-linked database program, word processor program, etc. You can also copy information from other programs, databases, and CD-ROM sources, etc. into Bygones.
4. You can view and print your research notes in several formats after you have input the information only once. After you have entered information on a search into a research extract in a Bygones Research database, you can view or print that data as a full research extract, in a regular research log, in a chronological (by event date) research log, in a locality/event-type research log (grouped by locality and then event type, as marriage, etc.), or onto document source labels for your photocopies.
5. If you have a laptop, you can take and create a lot of research notes with you on your research trips with your laptop, without having to lug around large paper files.

Optional Bygones Databases

In addition to Bygones' main Research database, Bygones includes many other optional databases that can be used to keep related information in. There is a Contacts database to keep information on the people, agencies, and repositories that you visit and correspond with for your genealogical research. There is a Corresp[ondence] database to track your genealogical correspondence. Many of the databases can easily share information with each other. For example, the Corresp[ondence] database can get names and addresses from the Contacts database when you write a letter to someone. After you have received an answer to some correspondence, and noted it in the Corresp[ondence] database, you can click on a button to send that information to your Research database, so that it will be recorded on your research logs also. There is a Sources database that you can use to enter information on sources you frequently use, or plan to use. The Research database can look up source citations and information from the Sources database, so that you do not need to reenter information on that source each time you search it for another person. There is an Index database that can be used to index the people and events (births, marriages, deaths, etc.) recorded in your research notes. It can look up the source citation information it needs from your Research database. There is a TimeLine database that can be used to create time lines for the families you are searching, and it can get much of the information it needs from your Research database also. A Scans database can be used to keep scanned images of your documents. Again, it can look up the source citations for those documents from your Research database. The Locality database is used to keep information regarding localities and jurisdictions--when they were created, fires or wars that effected the existence of records, etc. The Maps database can be used to keep scanned map images.

Other Bygones databases work independently, and do not share data with the other Bygones databases, although they are used to keep track of related information. For example, the Surnames database can be used to keep track of spelling variations and soundex codes for your surnames. The GivnNames database can be used to record common nicknames and foreign variations of given names. The ToDoList database can be used to keep track of pending research tasks and objectives. The Topics database can be used to enter information on genealogical topics--such as general US naturalization laws, etc.

For more information, visit the Bygones web site at: <http://www.bygonessoftware.com>.

