

## Family History Success Requires Spiritual Motivation for Creating Eternal Memories: Here's My Story, Part 7 - *"Let's connect rather than evaporate over time"*

If ever there is an central eternal theme from my previous "Life Story" posts to live by, this is the best: "Let's connect rather than evaporate over time." this post will verify this fully in pursuing extended family connections. As the youngest of my generation with little cooperation from my family, I taught myself one important concept: "*How to Survive!*" Three years ago I realized that I had spent a tremendous amount of money, time and effort in doing my own family history over 47 years while enlisting the efforts of all of my children to make the Kuzmich Family extraction program so successful with our FamilySearch beta algorithm extraction project. But I also realized that 50% of my children's genealogy did not come from me but also equally from my wife's genealogy. Compounding this, my wife's family history was basically all done for her extended ancestors. But the connections between living generations was very disjunct between Roslyn's numerous cousins who were all in their 70s and 80s and especially since their families, children and grandchildren lived predominantly in Utah while mine were well outside of Utah. Consequently, our family relationships and memories were mostly non-existent. Which meant that future generations of my posterity would evaporate all connections sooner than later. In reality, my family was destined to be islets from my wife's rather large extended LDS families permanently. Thus, our future family memories would never progress further beyond a paper trail.

However at the RootsTech 2017 Conference, I learned about Forever.Com's potential of creativity in collectively and actively maintaining relationships and connectivity with living relatives both near and far. his potential interested me significantly. This vision of an extended family tree growing over time for both the paternal and maternal family lines for both husband wife together was an utopian expectation. But learning to take full advantage of this open-ended architecture took some time to utilize. But once it did, it is the greatest single boast in connecting my Eastern European roots with my wife's extensive Danish and German ancestry that I could ever hope to have accomplished in my entire lifetime of genealogical pursuits! Below is my story on how am I accomplishing this dream presently by establishing memories with multimedia web-based interactions between extended living relatives today!!!

### **Prerequisite Steps: Do You Own Family History First**

First by actively doing my own original family history, I was well acquainted with my ancestry and its roots, culture and traditions as well as its limitations. By learning how to accomplish original research, I had a deep respect for my family roots and my progenitors. Second by actively gathering family memories brings family history to the surface to share with ones own family first and eventually with others. Had I not pursued these two separate avenues, the steps sited below with Forever.Com would never have occurred. And worst than that, I'd probably never even attempt to write my own life story because of its complexities. But after managing and publishing my posts and genealogical testimonies on this Facebook group, it is now a welcomed challenge to share my life story with future generations in publishing my life story. Between the "Spirit of Elijah" and my patriarchal blessing, the love for my family has grown enormously over the years and there's no turning back!

### **First Step: Forever.Com**

As previously stated in part 6 of this "My Story" series, I made a commitment to learn how to use Forever.Com which is a robust website. One of their ambassadors took a genuine interest in me and we met on Sunday evenings weekly by videoconferencing on GoToMeeting to help me create and develop my account to also cover my own extended families. Miraculously within nine months, I was able to find and organize nearly 34,000 photos and 70+ videos from shoe boxes, closets and elsewhere which immediately jump-started this project with much enthusiasm that I could actually find and uniquely post photos covering my entire life of 76 years with life-story implications.

This life story concept with multimedia is a fascinating topic to ponder because it directly brings family memories into the lives of other generations now and into the future while at the same time, can link extended families together seamlessly. Initially all I accomplished in my Forever.Com account was to work on my own family lines with multimedia implications as I didn't fully realize of how I could combine my life story with my wife's life story to bring our life stories together with more meaning and impact for my children and future generations. The complexities of dealing with two totally different extended family roots of Eastern Europe with my wife's Western European roots was the million dollar question before me.

## Second Step: Forever.Com

At the RootsTech 2019 Conference I was inspired by the "Spirit of Elijah" to create a second Forever.Com account for my wife's family lines starting with her great grandfather. Last August, there was a family reunion for my wife's cousins in Utah with Roslyn and I attending. These cousins have a very special bonding because their parents were part of nine siblings of the early Mormon Pioneer Danish immigration to the USA. Knowing that this generation of cousins would soon be passing on because of their ages and my children would never have any identity with these cousin's children, grandchildren, etc., I designed an email to actively solicit their assistance in sharing photos of their entire living extended family members. In turn, I would share these photos through a separate collective Christensen Family on the Forever website that was password protected with privacy from browser search engines. This email requested photos to be posted including ones for every subsequent living generation. Here's a copy of this email.

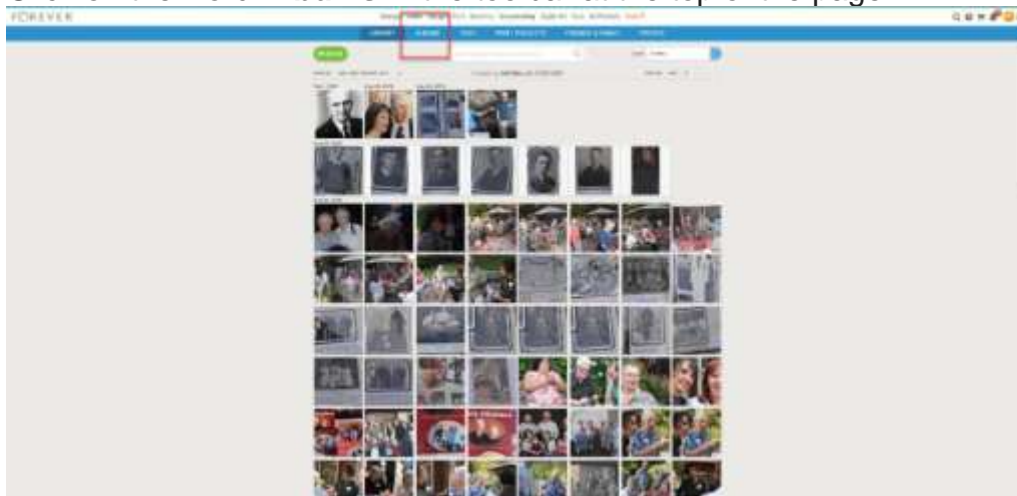
Dear Christensen Family Cousins:

### How to view and use the newly created Christensen Forever.com account:

1. Go to a web browser
2. Type in the URL bar: [forever.com](https://forever.com)
3. **Log-in** with the following username and password: **jxxxxxxxxxxxxx.com** and **xxxxxxxx**



4. The library of all photos posted on the Christensen Cousin Forever.com account opens. Click on the word **Albums** in the toolbar at the top of the page.



5. The patriarch albums & event album & mission statement album will appear on the upper left thumbnail photo above. Suggest you click and read the brief Mission Statement in **01 LET'S CONNECT**.

- Click on any album cover photo to open and view the photos in that album.
- As each of us adds photos to our individual family albums, we, our children and grandchildren can remain connected for future generations.



## Posting Photo Instructions

- Click on an album cover photo to open and view that album.
- Click on the **Upload** button to load photos in JPEG, stories in PDF and recordings in .MP3 file formats from your computer.

**Revisit & Enjoy memories of our 2019 Christensen Cousin Reunion.** Click on **02 Candid 2019 Photos** album to view 40 photos. You can double click on any photo to enlarge it. Click on the left or right arrows along side the photo to move through the album. Or double click on a photo and then click on the **Slideshow** button in the top toolbar to begin a slideshow presentation.

Hope this information is helpful. Please note, the Christensen Forever.com account is password protected and not available to the general public.

QUESTIONS? NEED HELP? Contact Terry Kohler, our Forever Ambassador and mentor, who lives in the Salt Lake valley and will be happy to assist you.

90-second video [About FOREVER](#) to learn more about Forever.Com.

Thank you.

John Kuzmich, Jr.

### **Third Step: Forever.Com – Never Give Up When Doing The Lord’s Work!**

To my surprise, these elderly cousins did not respond at all. I can speculate that because of their age and previous generations having done their genealogy, they were complacent about doing anything new to establish future memories with future generations. But the family reunion gave me the opportunity to converse with number of these cousins and to assess who had the charisma and personality to want to follow through on my ambitious project. So I called one and immediately they took heart literally melted when I stated the theme for the account. With just a single personal phone call we started the ball rolling to involve 9 different family lines and here’s the email that I used to follow-up with her to extend that phone conversation relationship.

Dear Marty:

Perhaps you remember me as the outlaw (Roslyn's husband) from the 2019 Christensen Cousin Family Reunion? I am presently getting ready for the RootsTech 2020 conference in February and desire to pursue the Christensen Cousin website at: <https://www.forever.com/app/users/marilyn-c-greenwood/albums>. Hopefully you remember it for my previous September email to all the Christensen cousins?! If not, that email with website images is copied following this email.

- In order to really achieve good participation from each of the Christensen Cousin family lines, is it possible you could be my star contributor by having your family fully represented first? I remember you had a fantastic scrapbook on display at the 2019 reunion. Basically, all I need are some willing participants from Grant's family with at least one photo for each cousin plus a photo of each of their children and their grandchildren if available! Then I could post it in a family tree and use it as a role model for all the other cousins to contribute some photos as well. Again, all that is needed is for one representative for each Grant Christensen family lines to share some photos with me and I'll do all the postings. It doesn't have to be a cousin (yourself) as it could be one of your children or even a grandchild. Hopeful the other cousins can also be motivated to find a good representative to submit to me some appropriate photos. Could you also be that cheerleader? I would think there's at least one cousin family member in each of cousins who is technology compliant and is willing to contribute some photos and bingo, the Christensen Forever.Com web site is progressing. Below is a visual sequence of web pages for the Roslyn’s direct extended family on Forever.Com.

### **Demonstration Visual Demonstration Featuring Roslyn’s Five Generations from Great Grandfather Through Our Daughter and Her Children.**

- **Roslyn’s great-grandfather** – click [here](#)
- **Roslyn’s grandfather:** click [here](#)
- **Roslyn’s father:** click [here](#)
- **Roslyn, my wife** – click [here](#)
- **My daughter and her family:** click [here](#)

Thank you and hopeful that I can deputize you as the Captain of the Grant Christensen extended family to find others to captain their individual family line(s)? The goal is to have several family lines fully represented at our annual Christensen cousin's reunion in August! Is there a good time I can call you to better answer any questions you might have? Again, the entire Christensen Cousin Forever.Com website account is password protected for privacy and security.

**Important note:** the websites cited above for the Christensen Forever.Com account are hardly finished as what has been shared thus far is an outline of what will be an on-going project for generations to come. Each family for generations to come can continue to add photos, personal stories and historical documents for their own individual families pertaining to their direct linkage through their multimedia of individual family "Life Stories." What a creative way to establish Eternal Memories!!!!

John Kuzmich, Jr.

## **Closing Comments**

"It is better to give than to receive." This is the Christmas spirit and the purpose of Jesus Christ. After having pursued family history for 50 years, I have acquired a wealth of information and family memories to share with Roslyn's extended family. These memories are what glues us together because we are emphasizing the living rather than just reconstituting history. Acquiring new friends and relationships is what makes family history so exciting. It is not restricted to just the past but through the present, our families have even a brighter future. There is strength in numbers with extended family relationships is a great heritage that can bond generations together. My excitement for sharing my genealogical experiences as part of my life story is that impossible dreams can be aspired and reached. New frontiers and challenges will always be presented to every generation of our posterity but by living it together, life is so much more fulfilling than expecting someone else to do it for you.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is indeed the networking century. Technology takes dreams and offers miracles that humbles me. It's easy to look back on history and wish that we were born in families that had more heritage and more accomplishments but to make the most with what the Lord has given you is an incredible feeling of fulfillment that drives me every day to want to share my challenges and successes through this Facebook group. May the Lord bless you and may your families wax strong in gathering the "Spirit of Elijah" which is a powerful force to be reckoned with if you live your life in obedience to the Lord's desires. Your patriarchal blessing is but one step but is an incredible stepping-stone that can lead each of us to new horizons beyond your fondest dreams.

Yes, there will be a Part Eight in this "Life Story" series to share with you which is already pictured in my mind that will project what I will attempt to accomplish in the next decade. Fortunately, life has a purpose and our time on this earth is an important stepping-stone to eternal happiness with blessings and joy.