

Focus Groups in TMG: How and What For?

By Martha Grenzeback

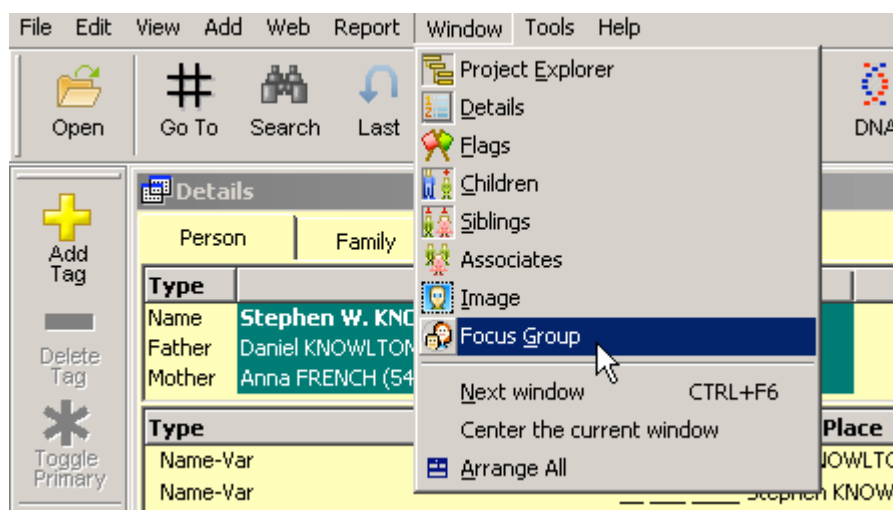
November 18, 2008

Definition

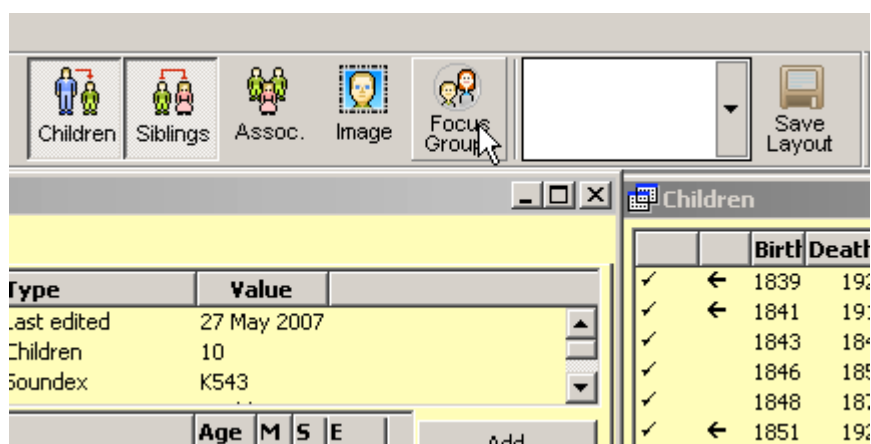
A focus group is any subgroup of individuals in the TMG database that the user selects for collective processing of some kind, whether searching the web, defining accents, copying individuals to a different data set, or exporting to a GEDCOM.

How to Create a Focus Group

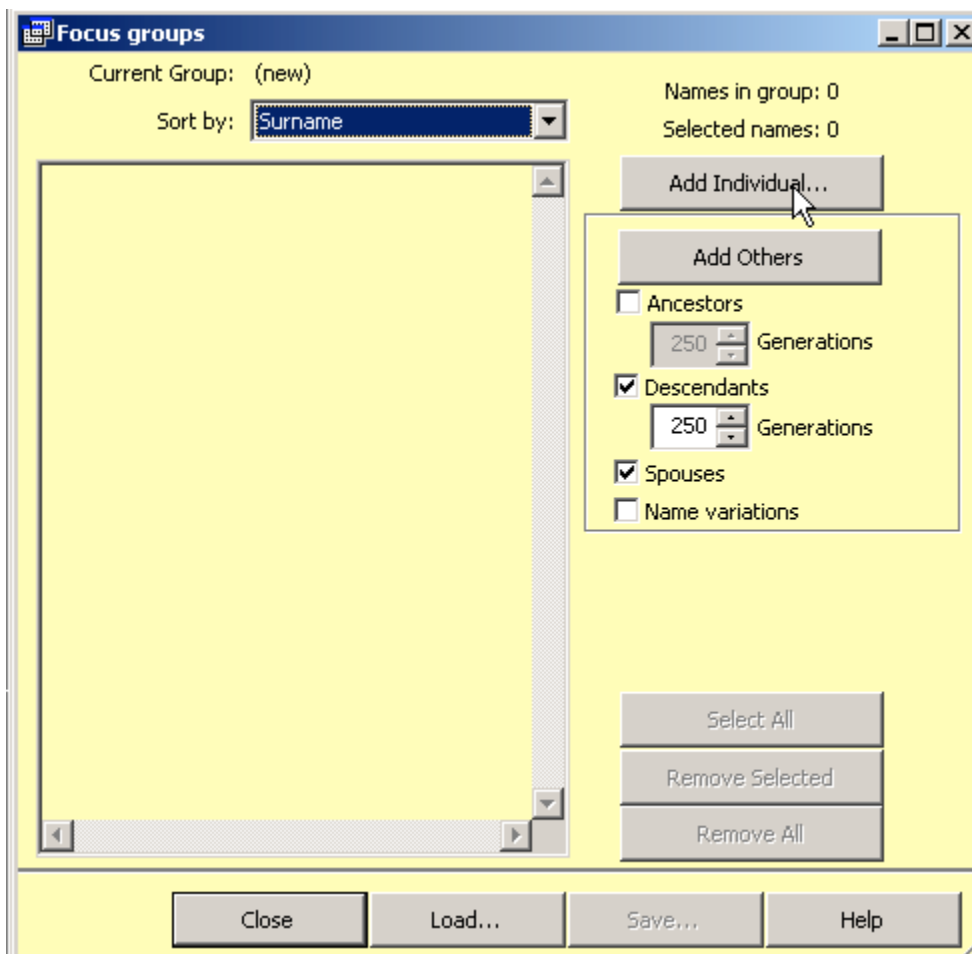
There are two ways to access the focus group menu: from the Window menu



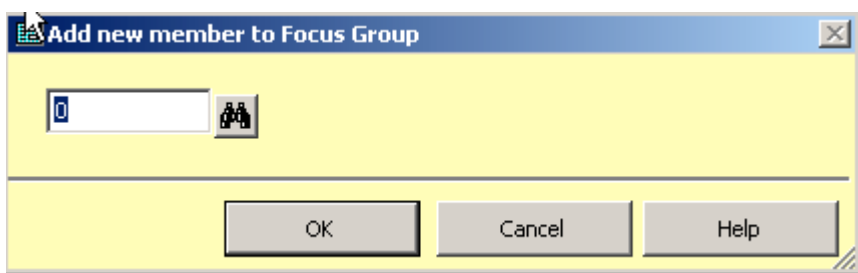
Or from the icon on the layout toolbar



Once you have that window open, you can set up your focus group in various ways.

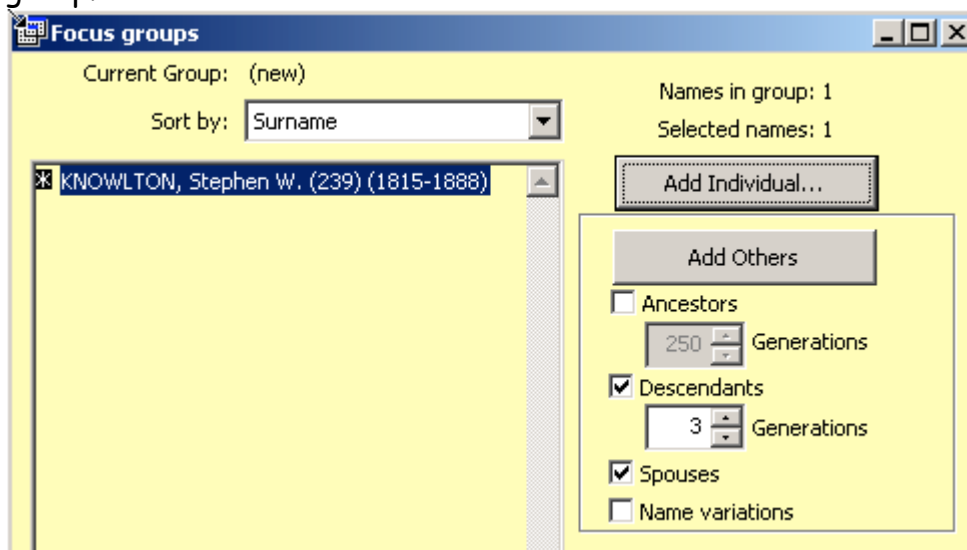


One (somewhat tedious) way is to add individuals successively using the pick list. This may be the way to go if you want to do the same thing to a few random individuals who are not connected by obvious links.

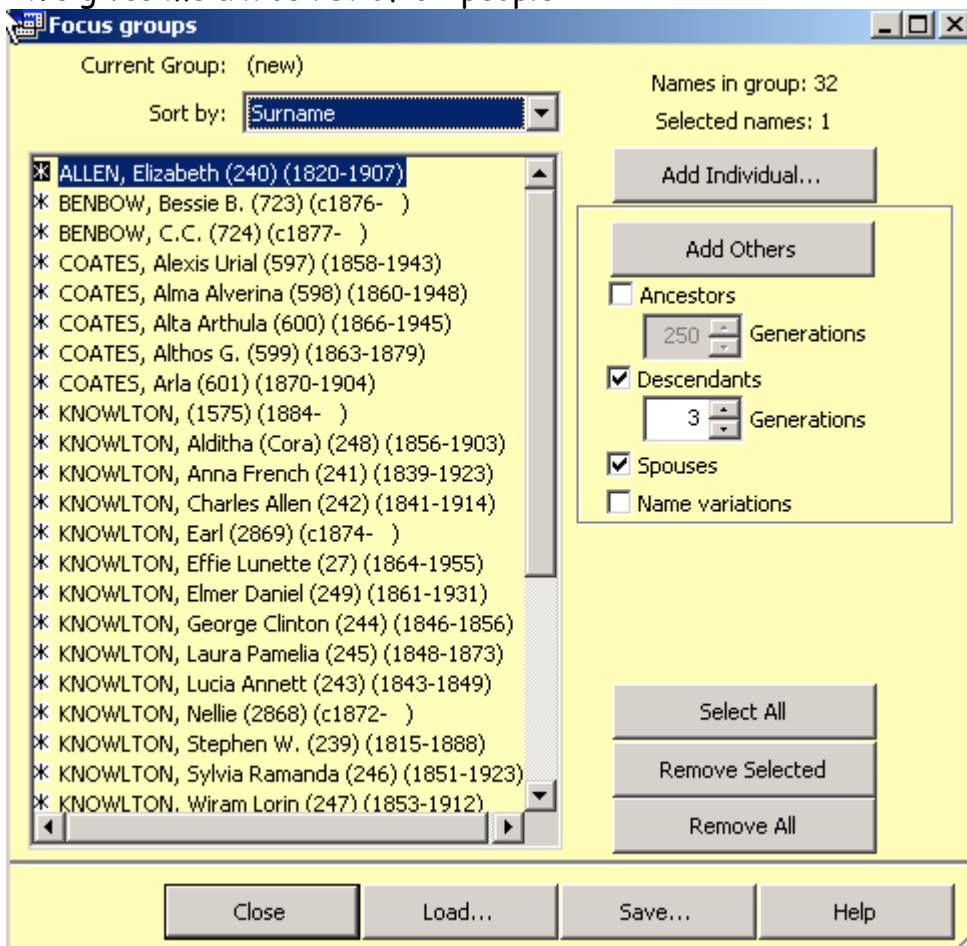


Of course, once you've added one person to your focus group, you can add name variations, ancestors, spouses, and/or descendants using the buttons provided. Make your choices and click on "Add Others."

Here I've selected Stephen Knowlton from the pick list as my main guy, and I want to add his spouse and three generations of his descendants to my focus group.

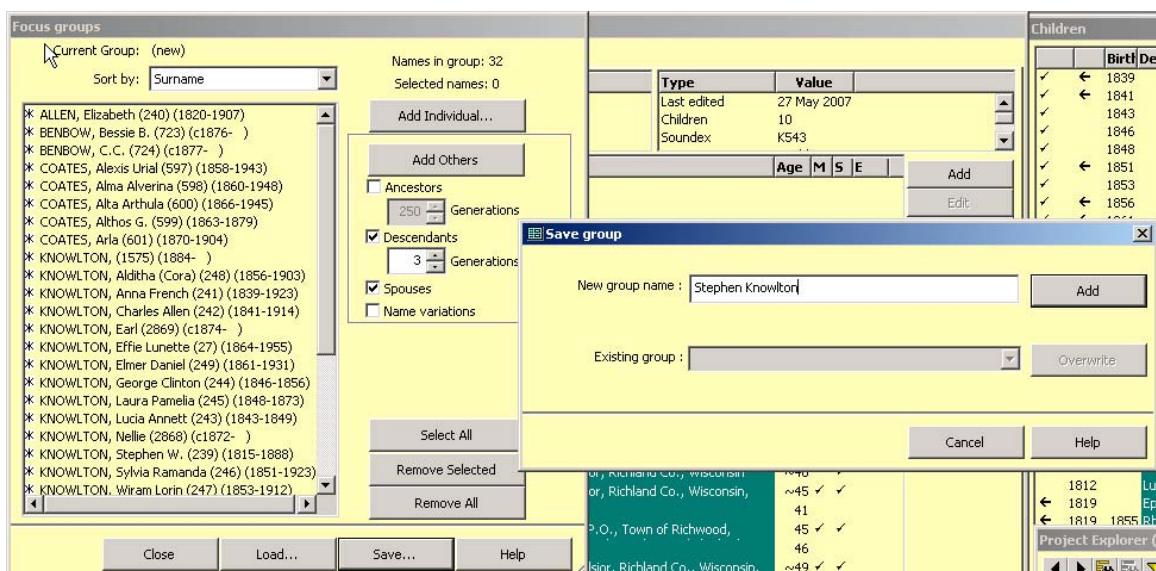


This gives me a nice list of 32 people:

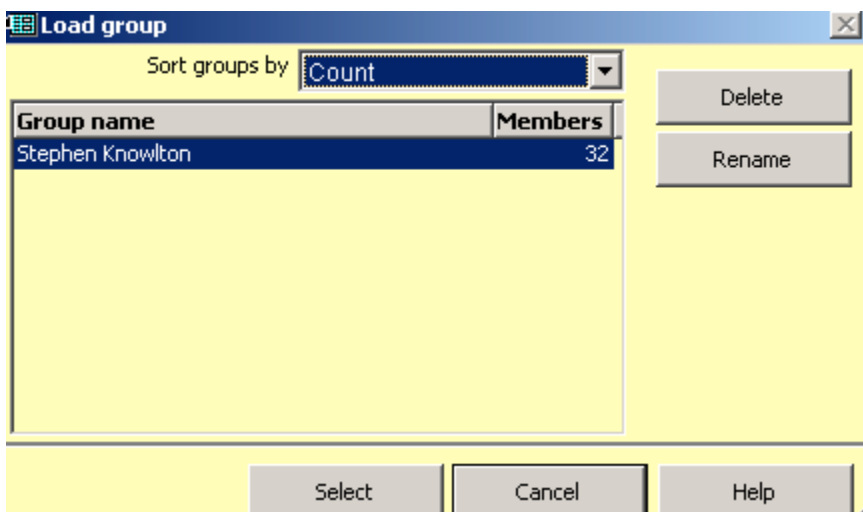


It is important to note that this first operation will NOT add the spouses of the descendants, only the spouses of the people already in the group. Once you have the focus group of Stephen's descendants, you can then do a second "Add Others" operation, selecting spouses—this will add the spouses of the 32 people now in the list.

Once a focus group has been set, the window does not have to stay open for the focus group to remain current; it will stay active until you shut down the current TMG session. You can also save focus groups for future use: Click on the Save button and give the group a name.

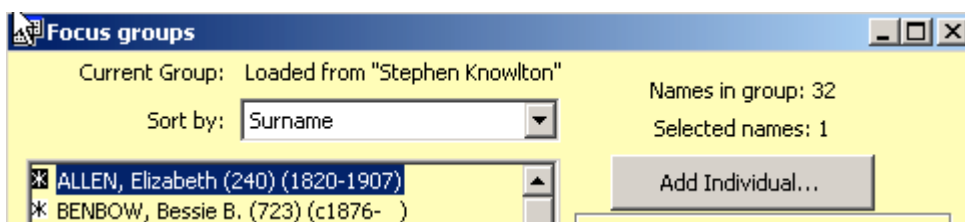


Later you can just click on "Load" and select the group you want. The groups can be sorted by either name or count (not that mine need sorting....).



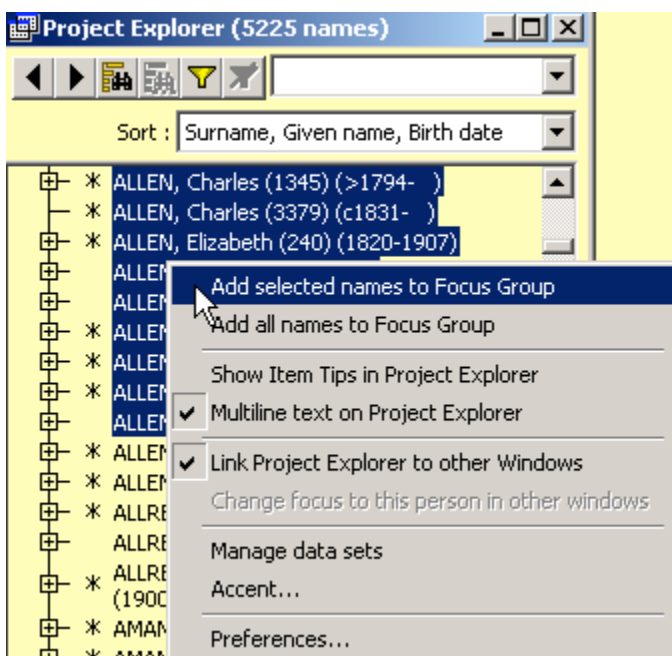
You can also delete or rename groups on this screen.

Once you've loaded a group, the screen will show you the origin/name of the group (if you are just composing the group now, it will say "New Group").



You can remove individuals from the group by holding the Ctrl key down and clicking on those you want to select (just as you do in the Pick List), and then clicking on "Remove selected." Or get rid of them all with "Remove all."

You can also add members to the focus group with the Project Explorer: Select the people you want in the PE, right-click, and select "Add selected names to focus group." (Or you could add ALL names.)



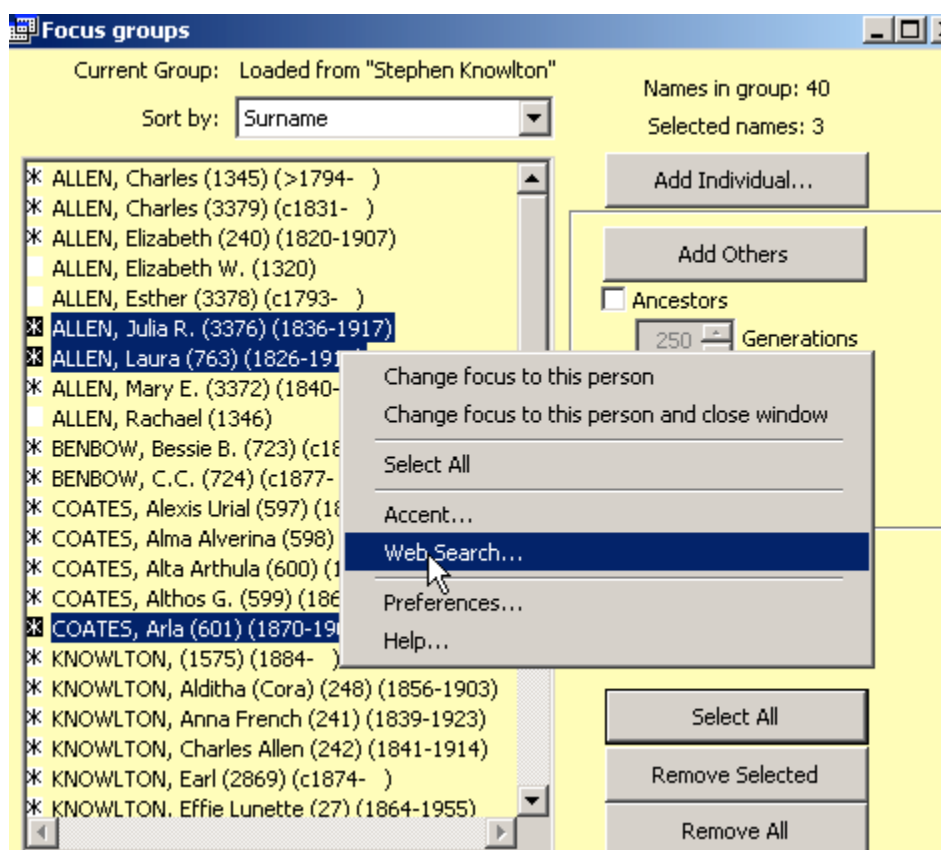
Now I have 40 people in my group (woo hoo!).

A third way to add members to a focus group is to right-click on any name in the Tag Entry Screen, the Children window, or the Siblings window, and select "Add this person to the focus group."

What to Do with the Focus Group (or, What's the Point?)

Once you have your nifty list of people, what can you do with it?

- A. You can navigate to different people's detail screens by double-clicking on their names, just as in the Project Explorer.
- B. You can select specific people to search for on the internet. Select all or one of your focus group (in your Preferences you have set the maximum number of people who can be searched for at a time, so 40 would probably be too many). Then right-click on one of them and select "Search the Web."



I discovered at this point that you can't select several people from the focus group to search—it has to be either one (or all names for one person) or the entire focus group (which in that case would have to be fewer than the default maximum of 10). This looks like a flaw to me.... You *CAN* search for selected names in the Project Explorer. Not that I've ever found this feature useful. You can only look at one webpage at a time anyway.

You can also access the Accent window and the Preferences menu by right-clicking here, but I'm not sure why.

Search the Web

FamilySearch.org | Rootswest.com

☒ Search this site

☒ Exact first and last name
☐ Fuzzy first and last name

Include father : ☐ First name ☐ Last name
 Include mother : ☐ First name ☐ Last name
 Include spouse : ☐ First name ☐ Last name

Include event year : Year range :
 Event : All

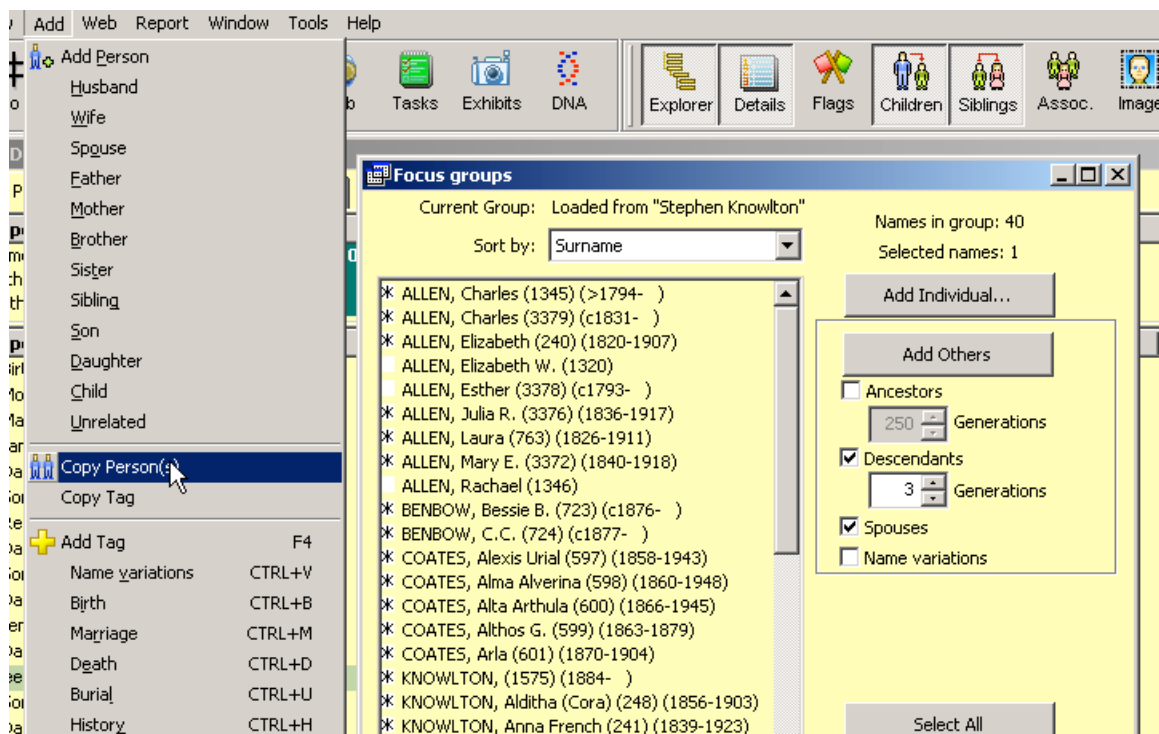
☐ Surname search
☐ Parent search
☐ Include Mother's last name

Search for : ☒ All names for the current focus person
☐ Selected names in Project Explorer
☐ Focus group members

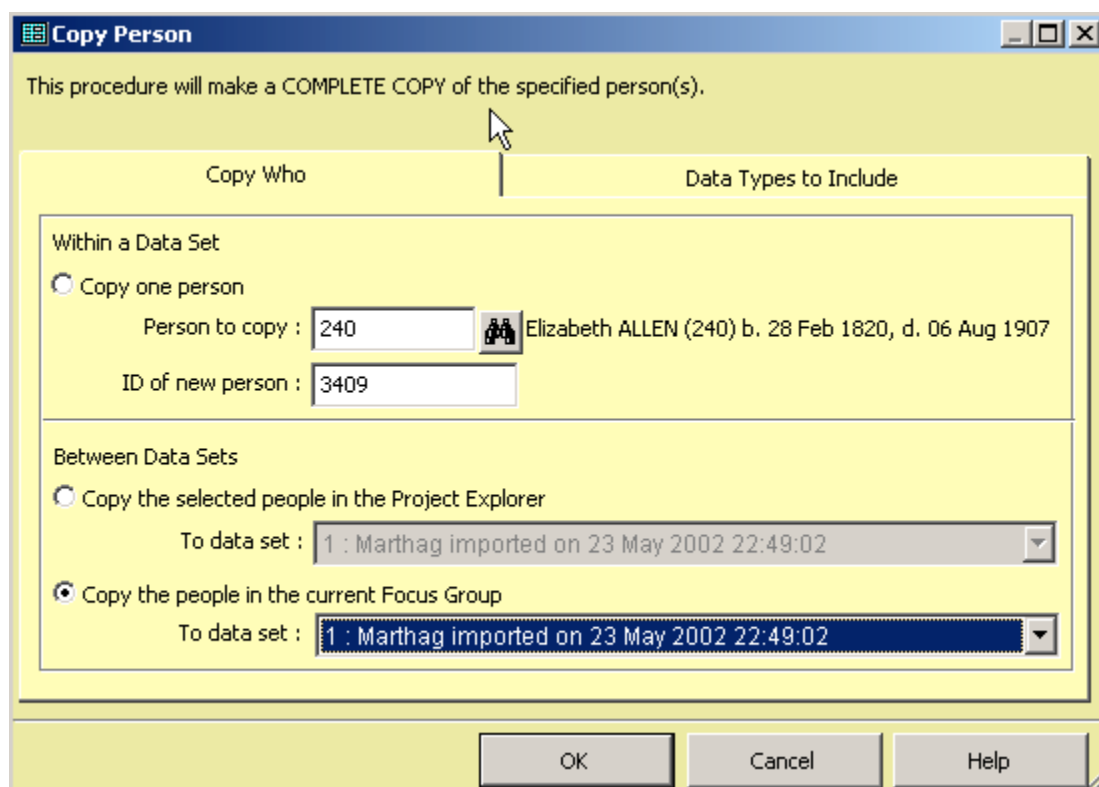
2 name(s) will be searched

Search Close Help

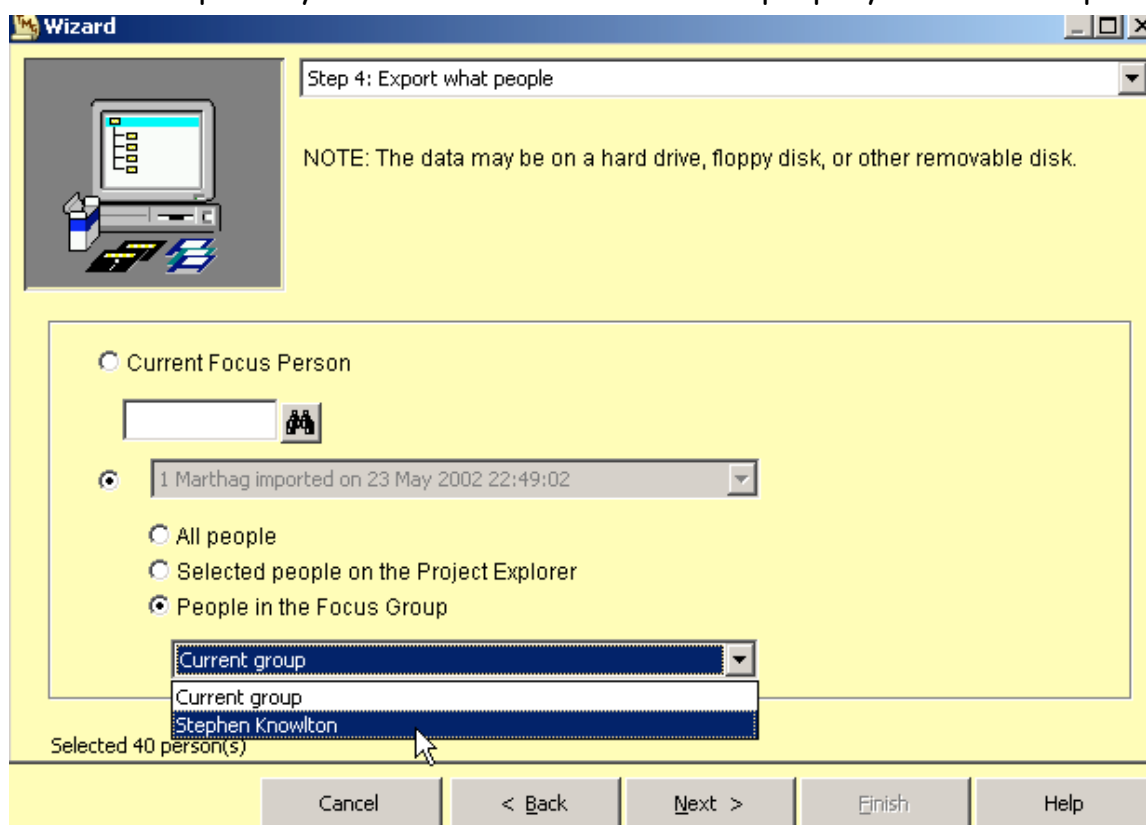
C. One more useful application of the focus group is to create a new data set. Once you have your group, click on the "Add" menu and select "Copy person."



Then select "Copy the people in the current Focus Group" and choose the data set you want to copy them to. Note: You **MUST** already have created the data set you want to copy them to.

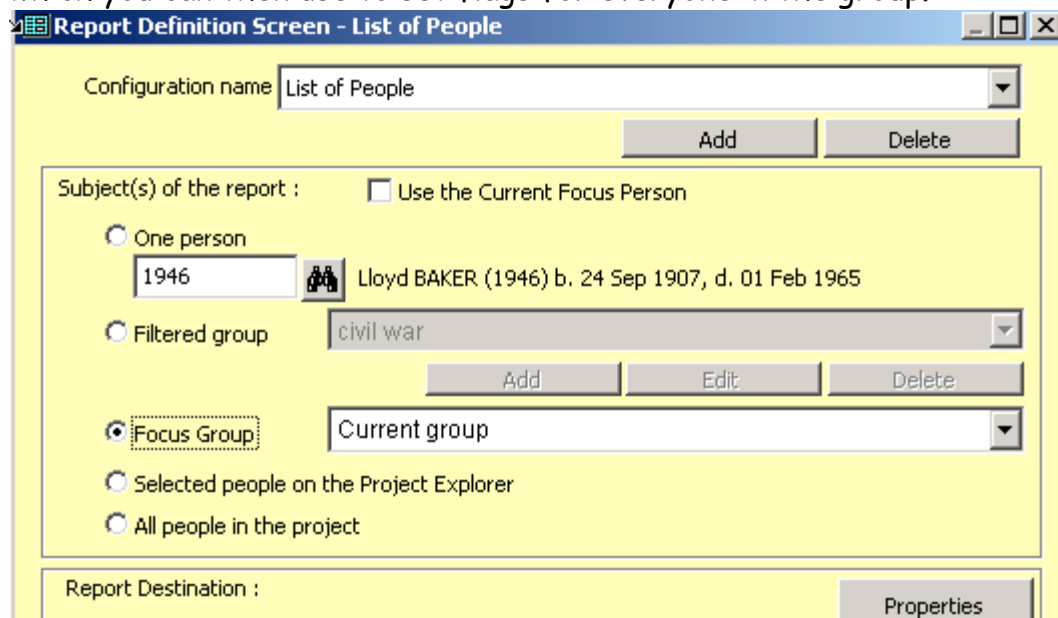


C. The focus group is also a great way to export people to a GEDCOM. Once you have your focus group, open the Export Wizard from the File menu. At step four you will be asked to select the people you want to export:



Choose "People in the Focus Group" (duh), and, if you have more than one focus group saved, make sure you select the right one. Then continue with the Gedcom export (you'll be asked to make various choices about what tags and information to include, format, etc.).

D. Finally, you can use the focus group to create a List of People report, which you can then use to set flags for everyone in the group.



What's the Big Deal?

Now, you may be wondering what the focus group can do that the Project Explorer cannot? Their functions do overlap. However, the focus group allows you to save an actual list of people; PE merely allows you to save a filter which you can use to run the same list again: any changes will make the filter rework the list, which can be time consuming. You can also add random individuals as you like to a focus group or delete them—you cannot do this with the PE, which is governed by its filter. So, for example, if you want to remove from the focus group everyone who died before 1880, you can do so, since you can add and remove individuals manually. Or if you have a focus group of people requiring correction/work, you can remove each person from the group as you finish with him/her (which gives you a nice sense of accomplishment!).

In short, the focus group is a useful way of managing data. Try it out....