

COURSE OUTLINE

To view the class videos and other reference documents, use this link:
<https://www.thefhgguide.com/vault.html>

Family History Basics




Getting Started

Main

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-  [AC: Getting Started in Family History \(2:15\)](#)
-  [AA: First Steps in Family History \(66:26\)](#)
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- 12  [Getting Started on Your Family History](#)
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 - 13a <https://www.ngsgenealogy.org/free-resources/charts/> [Attached]
- 14  [How to Build a Family Tree: Tracing Your Ancestors](#)

Terms and Definitions

Main

- 15  [GI: Genealogy Word Dictionary](#)
- 16  [LT: Decoding Genealogy-Speak for Beginners: Pedigree Chart and Family Group Sheets \[Attached\]](#)
- 17  [GT: Coming to 'Terms' with Genealogy](#)

Blank charts (2 each):

- Family Group Record
- 5 Generation Pedigree Chart

Top 10 Tips for Starting Your Family History

Source: <https://www.sog.org.uk/learn/hints-tips/top-10-tips-for-starting-your-family-history/>

1. Work backwards in time

It's easier to work methodically from a fact such as the date of birth or a marriage of a relative than to try and trace down from a person you don't know much about.

2. Ask the family

Ask other relatives what they remember about their families. Make a note of any nicknames or name changes. Ask them to tell you any family stories, what their ancestors did for a living, or what they looked like. Ask if they have any photos, letters or documents relating to your ancestors

3. Take notes

You never know what information will come in use in your research so get into the habit of taking notes on what you have looked for and what you found. There are many useful computer software packages that will help you keep your records in an orderly manner and help draw up pedigrees and family groups sheets so you know who you are dealing with.

4. Check out the Web

The Internet can be a useful tool for contacting relatives and finding data. Our website has a lot of information to get you started. Additionally, the [GENUKI website](#) has lots of free information and links to local experts and sources for the United Kingdom and Ireland. Of course, many records themselves are now online at such sites as: [Ancestry](#) , [Find My Past](#), [The Genealogist](#) or [My Heritage](#).

5. Meet other family historians

Family Historians are incredible help to each other. There is a network of local societies with regular meetings up and down the country. Here you can meet like minded people with the same interests and local expertise. The Society of Genealogists prelive.sog.org.uk is the largest genealogical society with a remarkable library and education programme. Details of local societies can be found through the Federation of Family History Societies www.ffhs.org.uk.

6. What's been done before?

It's worth checking if anyone else is doing research into your family before you start. Social network sites like RootsWeb, Familyrelatives, LostCousins or GenesReunited where people can register their research interests and could be a way of finding information. The Society of Genealogists library collects published and unpublished family histories and research notes. It's free library catalogue can be found on the library pages of this website which also list the surnames names in its various collections

7. Read up on the subject

There are many good books and magazines devoted to family history. The Society of Genealogists and The National Archives have good online bookshops with plenty of titles to help you.

8. Ask questions

Who are you dealing with? You must at least know a name. Where did your ancestors live? Most records are associated with a place. When were they alive? Records and research will differ depending on the period you are interested in. What did your ancestors do in their lives and will that affect what information you can find?

9. Get some documentary evidence

Your family history will be drawn from myriad of records and sources throughout history in which your ancestors will be mentioned. Birth, marriage and death records, censuses 1841-1911, wills, church records occupational records, education and apprenticeship, military service records, tax records, criminal records, poor law, newspapers, trade directories, ecclesiastical licences, church records, court records, tombstones etc might all throw up valuable information.

10. Stay focussed

It's easy to get overwhelmed with all of the information that's available to family historians. Remember to have a clear idea of what you are looking for and why you started the search in the first place. Family history is fun and thoroughly absorbing. If you like detective stories and have a mind for solving puzzles then it's definitely the hobby for you. Good hunting. [This document was written by Else Churchill © Society of Genealogists 2017]

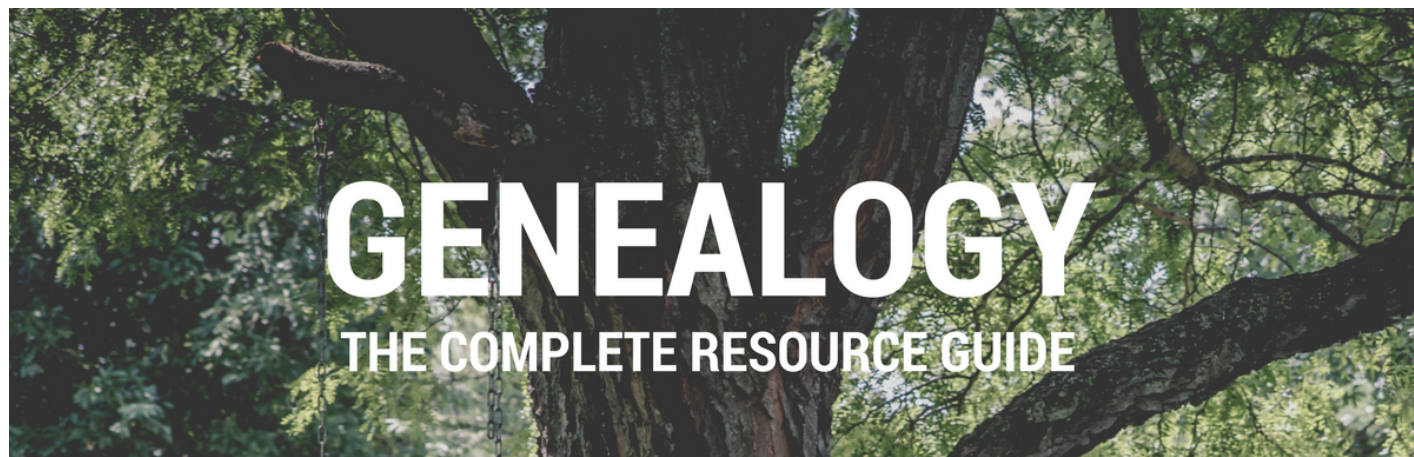


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Introduction

The maxim “know thyself” was well known among the ancient Greeks and to this day people still recite those wise words – especially when searching online for “how-to-genealogy.” Casually known as one’s family history or tree, genealogy is the study of family lineages and defined by the Society of Genealogists as the “...establishment of a Pedigree by extracting evidence, from valid sources, of how one generation is connected to the next.” In addition to helping individuals figure out their roots, genealogy can also offer a more detailed view of their family’s role in the grand scheme of history.

While many people are motivated by the possibility of discovering that their relatives may have been wealthy or famous, it can be illuminating to learn about one’s own heritage and rewarding to pass that knowledge down to future generations. Genealogical information can bring families closer together, offer a new perspective, and guide future decisions. Best of all, it allows one to... know thyself.

The Practical Importance of Genealogy

Genealogy offers a wealth of information and sometimes its findings have a significant impact on people’s lives. Throughout history, kinship and descent often demonstrated legitimate claims to power and wealth. Although not many people these days have an official claim to an iron throne, there are still several reasons why outlining a family tree can lead to big life changes.

Medical History

It’s no secret that many health conditions and ailments are hereditary, meaning that they were transmitted at birth by one’s parents. For those who have been or could have been passed down a hereditary medical condition, preventative measures can lead to much-improved health. This is where genealogy can be a literal lifesaver. Studying family health history can identify the necessary steps to avoid harm. For example, someone with a family history of skin cancer can take preventative

11.5 Videos

measures like staying out of the sun and loading up on the sunblock. Additionally, doctors use family medical history to determine the type and frequency of screening tests, make recommendations for lifestyle

changes, assess risk, and identify other related conditions. In order to create and track a family health history, individuals can use [My Family Health Portrait](#), a tool provided by the U.S. Surgeon General.

Legal Reasons

Being able to prove that you're related to someone can also have significant ramifications in regards to taxation, land ownership, estate administration, and forms of inheritance. Additionally, when conducting family history research, there are many genealogy-related terms that may pop up on legal documents. For example, a "dower" is the share of a husband's real estate to which the widow is entitled upon his death and a "relict" is the widow of a deceased individual. Navigating the legal landscape can be difficult without the help of a professional, but there are resources out there that can aid the amateur genealogist. One is the [FamilySearch Genealogical Dictionary of Legal Terms](#) and another is the paperback book [Genealogy and the Law](#).

Proof of Lineage

There are various reasons why family ties are severed over time, but fortunately, there are numerous resources available to individuals looking to retrace family connections. This may apply to the adopted who are looking to find their birth parents or mothers looking to find their children given up for adoption. Alternately, genealogical resources can be used to determine the biological father of a child.

History of Genealogy

As mentioned earlier, throughout most of history, kinship and descent were often the impetus for maintaining genealogical records. Their primary role was to demonstrate legitimate claims to power and wealth, while heraldry was also used to track the ancestry of royalty through armorial bearings. In the United States, several organizations emerged in the 1800s that began to gather genealogical records, including the [New England Historic Genealogical Society](#) and the Genealogical Society of Utah, which later became the Family History Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints – and they eventually launched [FamilySearch](#). Today, especially after the spread of the Internet, interest in genealogy has expanded largely due to access to resources, which range from websites to societies.

Getting Started

While all this talk of legal terms and genealogical societies may seem intimidating, one of the most efficient ways to research family history is to simply talk to relatives. Don't be afraid to put pen to paper and start sketching out a family tree, because grandparents can offer a wealth of information. The key is to start at the present and work backward. Relatives can offer invaluable leads that will fill in the blanks and save time. To keep track of collected material, you can employ a pedigree chart, such as this [free one offered by Progeny](#). Or you can print out a family group sheet. Once you've collected all the information available and have your leads, you can begin the hunt for official records.

Types of Records

There are dozens of different types of records that can be obtained to shine a light on one's ancestry, though the process can often be time-consuming. In order to properly organize a search, it's important to figure out what type of information you're looking for and where to access the related records. Relevant records may include—but are not limited to—the following:

- Medical
- Criminal
- Birth and death
- Immigration
- Census
- Marriage and divorce
- Wills
- Obituaries
- Religious, such as Baptism or Bar/Bat Mitzvah
- Military
- Social security

- Tax
- Cemetery and tombstones
- Voter registration

Reliability of Sources

When dealing with decades-old paperwork and online searches, it can be difficult to determine which sources are accurate. Fortunately, there are steps that can be taken to help ensure information is authentic.

- To start, begin research with your family (as mentioned above). Chances are much higher that your relatives have collected documents, photos, and memorabilia that pertain to your [family tree](#).
- Next, search for original sources. These are defined as the first recording of a document or event and can include facsimile microforms, photographs, unaltered digital reproductions, and the like.
- Finally, derivative sources can also offer information but do not include original recordings. Derivative sources can include transcripts and indexes, as well as compiled records like local histories, books, and websites—all of which are compiled by a third party.

Tools for Your Search

There are many different sources for obtaining genealogical records and it's important to cast a wide net in order to get the best results. Here are some ways for you to start your search.

Local Library

Some libraries have entire departments or buildings dedicated to genealogical records. With the aid of a short list of names or a family tree outline, reference cards can get you the leads you need. Reference cards are often organized in a few different ways: by surname, geographical region, historical event, historical society, or local departments like the police or political office. Assuming your last name isn't one of the most common, searching the surname will hopefully give you a handful of solid clues, possibly directing you to books, newspapers on microfilm, etc. Even a simple obituary can help fill in the blanks by sharing birth date and location, when or where a person moved, who they married, maiden name and marriage date, and the names of children and their locations.

Ships' logs may also be available. Most ships back in the 1600s and 1700s kept ship logs with information about who was on the ship, where they went, and sometimes even what trade they were in and who they were traveling with. Local census records might help you find potential relatives, but won't likely offer too much information. Some might provide townships or addresses, while others will simply list first and last names. Additionally, many libraries keep yearbooks tracing back to the 1970s, and some much further back than that. If you have a library with a thorough section, you might even find school records and photos from the 1800s.

Online Resources

The Olive Tree

[The Olive Tree](#) has links to many resources, including the aforementioned ships' passenger lists and census records. If you know that a family came over from a specific country, you can find a book of emigrants that lists anyone who left a country and it will often tell you the date and where they went. Some countries also have logs of immigrants that include when they arrived and where they came from.

National Archives and Records Administration

A great resource for U.S. residents is the [National Archives and Records Administration](#), which is a federally-funded collection of public records. It is easy to use, though most searches point you to external links that source from various places on the Internet.

Ancestry.com

[Ancestry.com](#) is one of the most well-known names in genealogy. It is a subscription-based service with a three-tiered quality option. It also offers an additional DNA Analysis service for a charge. Once you're a member of Ancestry, you can link up with other subscribers in your family and share information with each other. The more you network, the more you can find.

MyHeritage.com

[MyHeritage.com](#) is very similar to Ancestry.com and it offers an intuitive design that lets you build your family tree while suggesting possible matches along the way. However, it is also a paid service and it does not offer monthly payment plans. All plans are billed annually and a free trial is unavailable, so make sure you're ready to make the commitment. The site also analyzes the data in your family tree and can show countries of origin on a map with clickable links to profiles. MyHeritage also offers DNA collection kits and crunches data to show you things like which months were the most popular to be born in your family or the average life expectancy.

Genealogy.com

[Genealogy.com](#) maintains a forum for people to connect, as well as searchable read-only versions of old articles. The family-tree maker service seems to have a few bugs but has clickable links to help guide you through connections others have made. Though it is not at its prime, the website does offer a great deal of information.

FamilySearch.org

One of the best free resources available is [FamilySearch.org](#), still maintained by the Church of Latter-day Saints. It has a fully functional search that can very quickly pull up census records, ship logs, etc. By simply searching for a known relative, one might be able to pull up their family relationships as well as a photo of the census they are listed on.

Digital Public Library of America

The [Digital Public Library of America](#) is another great online resource. This website offers all sorts of wonderful materials that have been digitized and placed online. A brief overview of this resource is included in this video

If you're not finding the records you were hoping for on other sites then you might want to consider [World Vital Records](#). It is a subscription-based aggregation of 4.2 billion names that's also a sub-company of MyHeritage.

Surname Index

Another potential resource is the [Surname Index](#), a resource for anyone who might want to know the history of their surname. It is free and a not-for-profit operation, but it is not the most extensive resource. Because it began with its roots in Ireland, most of the entries stem from Irish surnames.

Find A Grave

Though it may sound morbid, a graveyard can also be a great resource for information. Generally speaking, families are buried nearby each other, some of whom are even listed on the same headstone. Photos and recorded details of gravesites across the country are compiled in the [Find A Grave](#) index. Each entry has a photo of the headstone along with any information on it.

Of course, Google can be a very useful tool for research. To learn more about how to use it, check out this video:



Genealogical Societies

Local historical and genealogical societies bring people together to collect and reconstruct their histories. Societies are generally formed out of necessity by a group of people who have a certain trait in common, be that a historical event or country of origin. Sometimes societies require an application and dues to join, other times they are rather informal, but most are not-for-profit or charity-based. A well-known society is Daughters of the American Revolution, which has collected and pieced together an impressive amount of historical information. Additionally, the [National Genealogical Society](#), [Federation of Genealogical Societies](#), and [American Society of Genealogists](#) are three of the major players and would all be great places to start. The larger and more prominent societies tend to offer things like conferences, educational courses, publications, and even special access to online genealogical databases.

Professional Genealogists

When you've exhausted your options, or perhaps just your patience, you might consider hiring a professional to help you continue your search. It may sound expensive, but most professional services use individual agreements between the historian and the person hiring them to agree on the terms of their search and the price. If you want to see what you can get for \$500, there's an option for that. Otherwise, sparing no expense to find out about a specific lineage has an option too.

Generally speaking, a genealogist will begin by interviewing family members and scouring historical records. Because they've done this for many years they understand how circumstantial evidence for kinship can be found and verified. They can easily turn to and cite sources so they can easily go back if necessary. It would be impossible for any one person to be an expert at the entire field of genealogy so many professionals focus on a specific lineage or region. If you know that your family has lived in one area for quite a while then it would be prudent to hire someone who is local to and specializes in that area. Keep in mind, however, that there is no standard of certification or licensing required for one to claim to be a genealogist. Check out these organizations for leads:

Heritage Consulting

[Heritage Consulting](#) specializes in genealogy story creation. Instead of hiring a genealogist specifically, they work as a team to exact the details of your past and give you a comprehensive report. The price is per hour and the number of hours needed varies wildly between families.

American Ancestors

[American Ancestors](#) began as a project by the New England Historic Genealogical Society. They offer collaborative reports or create lineage mappings. However, at \$105 per hour, services aren't cheap.

Association of Professional Genealogists

The [Association of Professional Genealogists](#) is probably the best place to look for a genealogist. It is, essentially, a comprehensive list of genealogists with a biography on each, including the work they've done, professional certifications, and even testimonials from clients.

DNA Testing

Most of the major subscription-based genealogy sites offer DNA testing that could potentially help people decode their pasts, but they come with mixed reviews. When testing DNA, a vial of your saliva is used to isolate your DNA and map out over 700,000 genetic markers. There are a few different types of ways to test DNA; autosomal or X-DNA, Y-DNA, and mtDNA. Each tracks a different part of the DNA and can lead to different discoveries. Check out the following DNA-testing services:

- [Family Tree DNA](#)
- [23 and Me](#)
- [Ancestry](#)
- [National Geographic](#)

Quick Links

Search Resources

- [National Geographic](#)
- [The Olive Tree](#) – Great resource for finding ship logs and emigration records
- [National Archives & Records Administration](#) – Anything associated with American History
- [National Archives: Calendar of Events](#) – Free; Local to Washington D.C.
- [Ancestry.com](#) – Paid; Comprehensive genealogy website
- [MyHeritage.com](#) – Paid; Comprehensive genealogy website
- [FamilySearch.org](#) – Free; Family tree builder, tons of resources
- [DP.LA](#) – Free; Digital Public Library of America
- [World Vital Records](#) – Paid Subscription; Census, birth, death, marriage, etc.
- [Surname Index](#) – Free; Search history of surnames; Mostly Irish

- [Find A Grave](#) – Free; Volunteer supported; find photos and information about gravesites
- [USA.gov](#) – Free; Access to census data

Societies

- [The National Genealogical Society](#)
- [Federation of Genealogical Societies](#)
- [American Society of Genealogists](#)

Find a Professional

- [Heritage Consulting](#)
- [American Ancestors](#)
- [Association of Professional Genealogists](#)

DNA Services

- [Genealogical DNA Information](#)
- [DNA Service – Comparison Guide](#)
- [Family Tree DNA](#)
- [23 and Me](#)
- [Ancestry DNA](#)
- [National Geographic](#)

Videos

- [Digital Public Library of America](#) – How DP.LA can help
- [Google Tools](#) – Using Google Tools for Genealogy
- [Genealogy Brainstorming](#) – What to do when you're stuck

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How to Begin Tracing Your Family Tree

By **Kimberly Powell**

Updated August 06, 2018

You have a little knowledge about your family history, a few old photos and documents and a consuming curiosity. Here are some basic steps to start you on your family tree adventure!

Step One: What's Hiding in the Attic?

Begin your family tree by gathering together everything you have — papers, photos, documents and family heirlooms. Rummage through your attic or basement, the filing cabinet, the back of the closet... Then check with your relatives to see if they have any family documents they are willing to share. Clues to your [family history](#) might be found on the [backs of old photographs](#), in the family bible, or even on a postcard. If your relative is uneasy with lending an original, offer to have copies made, or take pictures or scans of the photos or documents.

Step Two: Ask Your Relatives

While you're collecting family records, set aside some time to [interview your relatives](#). Start with Mom and Dad and then move on from there. Try to collect stories, not just names and dates, and be sure to ask open-ended questions. Try [these questions](#) to get you started. Interviews may make you nervous, but this is probably the most important step in researching your family history. It may sound cliché, but don't put it off until it's too late!

Tip! Ask your family members if there is a genealogy book or other published records within the family. This could give you a wonderful head start!

Step Three: Start Writing Everything Down

Write down everything you have learned from your family and begin to enter the information in a [pedigree](#) or family tree chart. If you're unfamiliar with these traditional family tree forms, you can find step by step instructions in [filling out genealogical forms](#). These charts provide an at-a-glance overview of your family, making it easy to track your research progress.

Step Four: Who Do You Want to Learn About First?

You can't research your entire family tree at once, so where do you want to begin? Your mom's side or your dad's? Select a single [surname](#), individual, or family with which to begin and create a simple research plan. Focusing your family history search helps keep your research on track, and reduces the chance of missing important details due to sensory overload.

Step Five: Explore What's Available Online

Explore the Internet for information and leads on your ancestors. Good places to start include pedigree databases, message boards, and resources specific to your ancestor's location. If you're new to using the Internet for genealogy research, start with [Six Strategies for Finding Your Roots Online](#). Not sure where to start first? Then follow the research plan in [10 steps for finding your family tree online](#). Just don't expect to find your entire family tree in one place!

Step Six: Familiarize Yourself with Available Records

Learn about the wide variety of record types that may be able to help you in your search for your ancestors including wills; birth, [marriage](#), and death records; land deeds; immigration records; military records; etc. The [Family History Library Catalog](#), the [FamilySearch Wiki](#), and other online finding aids can be helpful in determining what records might be available for a particular locality.

Step Seven: Utilize the World's Largest Genealogy Library

Visit your local [Family History Center](#) or the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, where you can access the world's largest collection of genealogical information. If you can't get to one in person, the library has digitized millions of its records and made them available online for free [through its free FamilySearch website](#).

Step Eight: Organize and Document Your New Information

As you learn new information about your relatives, write it down! Take notes, make photocopies, and take photographs, and then create a system (either [paper](#) or digital) for saving and [documenting](#) everything you find. Keep a research log of what you've searched and what you have found (or not found) as you go.

Step Nine: Go Local!

You can conduct a great deal of research remotely, but at some point, you will want to visit the place where your ancestors lived. Take a [trip to the cemetery](#) where your ancestor is buried, the church he attended, and the local courthouse to explore records left behind during his time in the community. Consider a visit to the [state archives](#) as well, as they are likely to also hold historical records from the community.

Step Ten: Repeat as Necessary

When you have researched that particular ancestor as far as you can go, or find yourself getting frustrated, step back and take a break. Remember, this is supposed to be fun! Once you're ready for more adventure, go back to Step #4 and choose a new ancestor to start searching for!

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Beginning Your Genealogy Research - The Basics

1. START WITH YOURSELF!

Write down your own name, birth date, place of birth, parents, husband or wife if married, date of marriage, place of marriage, children's complete names and their dates of birth. The easiest way to do this in a format that will be easily understood is to use a Family Group Sheet. This is merely a form with places for all of the important information. You should do a Family Group Sheet for each family in your line.

After you do your own family, do your parents, grandparents and so on. (If you have been married more than once, you will do a sheet for each marriage. You will end up with quite a few sheets before you are done since EACH family group needs a sheet of its own. Your mother and father's family group will have a sheet, your father's family group (your paternal grandparents) will have a sheet, your mother's family group (maternal grandparents) will have a sheet and on and on. It is probably a good idea to go ahead and fill in Pedigree Charts at the same time.

As you are filling out these sheets, here are a few things to keep in mind that will be helpful:

- ★ Write the surname in all capital letters.
- ★ List the dates like this - 3 Mar 1899 instead of March 3, 1899 or 3/3/1989.
- ★ Write the "places" in this order: City/Township, County, State, Country. Spartanburg, Spartanburg District, South Carolina, USA.
- ★ Document your sources!!!! We will get into primary and secondary sources later.
- ★ The bottom line is be consistent with how you write your surnames, dates and documentation. If you don't like all caps, don't use them. If you want your dates a particular way, do it as you like, but BE CONSISTENT!

2. CHECK WHAT'S BEEN PUBLISHED

After you glean as much info as you can from living relatives, bibles, military records, etc., you will definitely want to find out if others have already done research on your line. Check places like The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) Family History Centers (their online site is Family Search). Don't stop there. The FHCs have a lot of information that is now yet online. Visit your local FHC and the presentation or volunteers there will be glad to help you. You should also get involved with email surname lists concerning the families that you are researching (you can visit [GENEALOGY RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET](#) to see what is available) and you might also want to join the Roots-L list, where you can ask general questions. Also make sure you run a search of the [USGenWeb Archive Project](#) records that we have online. You can reach the search engines at Search Files by State and National Search Engine.

3. CHECK CENSUS RECORDS

Your next stop is probably going to be in the Census Records. There is a wealth of info to be gleaned from census records, particularly those from 1850 on. You can search these records in person at The National Archives in Washington, DC and in any of the subsidiaries of the Archives. Many libraries have started great genealogical sections that include census records from many, many states. So, check your local library to see what they have. You can also visit your local FHC. If they don't have the census film you need, they can order it for you from Salt Lake City and the charge is nominal.

The Census Index is done in a format called Soundex, so you will need to convert the surname you are researching to Soundex code before using the index. A good online Surname to Soundex Converter is available online. The places with Census Records will have printed Soundex converters that you can use. You will want to record your census data on a Census Worksheet and you can print worksheets from Family History SourceGuide.

A lot of Census Data is now online, thanks to many dedicated volunteers who have spent hours readying this info for the Web. The USGenWeb Project has it's own Census Projects that you should take a look at. The links are [The USGW Census Project](#) & [The USGenWeb Archive Census Project](#).

4. ACQUIRE GENEALOGY SOFTWARE

If you are serious about this hobby and plan to continue as far as you can, you will probably want to invest in a computer program for genealogy. Computer can do the most wonderful things for the genealogist. They can keep track of ALL that paper, they can group families and print out the Family Group Sheets, you can do ancestral or descendency charts. You can cross reference, scan in photos and save those, and so much more. MAKE A BACKUP COPY of the information you've entered and put it somewhere else. Having the backup of your information on your computer when/if it crashes will not help you.

MOST COMMON MISTAKES IN GENEALOGY RESEARCH

- ★ Not using family group sheets and pedigree charts.
- ★ Not contacting relatives for assistance.
- ★ Assuming that "no one else is working on my line."
- ★ Not using maps of the area at the time your ancestors were living there.
- ★ Not knowing the history of the area in which you are conducting research.
- ★ Not using common sense when reading family histories. If a source for information is not listed, be cautious about accepting it. Some information may be hearsay.
- ★ Gathering information on everyone with "that" surname, unless it is an uncommon one.
- ★ Not using primary sources - land, probate, church, county records - but relying on printed histories.
NOTE: Many primary & secondary records are becoming available online. Make sure you check the USGenWeb Archives and our Index pages for these resources.
- ★ Not making photocopies. You can Xerox it or take a picture of the document with your phone.
- ★ Not making a master copy. Leave the master copy at home when you travel to do research and take a duplicate with you.
- ★ Not organizing your records.
- ★ Not paying attention to clues your ancestors might have left.
- ★ Assuming that your surname is never spelled a different way.
- ★ Failing to record your sources.
- ★ GIVING UP!!

Updated by AB Jun 5 2021

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Canvas system. >

Contact the NGS
Course
Administrator at
courses@ngsgenealogy.org

Nine Tips to Start Your Family History

If you are just beginning to research your family history, be sure to take advantage of the resources listed below. They will provide you with a solid foundation as you build your family tree.

- 1 Download and save a free **NGS Pedigree Chart** and **NGS Family Group Sheet**. These free charts will help you keep information organized. Get a notebook for written notes or preserve notes in Word or Google Docs, or use a mobile friendly app like Evernote. Back up everything as you work digitally.
- 2 Recommended guide book: NGS's *Paths To Your Past: A Guide to Finding Your Ancestors, 2018 Edition*.
- 3 Write down and keep track of all surname spelling variations (surname = last name).
- 4 Talk to your relatives. Start with the oldest ones first. Be sure to take written notes or record your interviews.
- 5 Ask family members for permission to see certificates and make a record of family birth, marriage, death, and burial records (known as vital records) in your free Pedigree chart and Family Group Sheet. Also ask if family histories, Bible records, and ancestors' photographs exist.
- 6 Document your findings so you will know the exact sources later. NGS can help you: See our **Family History Skills course** and **Mastering Genealogical Documentation**.
- 7 Get to know your local library, reference librarian, and especially its collections and digital resources for genealogy research.
- 8 Network: Join a local genealogy and/or historical society.
- 9 Learn how to search the large primary databases—**Ancestry**, **Family Search**, **Findmypast**, and **MyHeritage** —and get to know their resources.

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Telephone +1 703-525-0050 or +1 800-473-0060
ngs@ngsgenealogy.org

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Genealogy Terminology: Pedigree Chart & Family Group Sheets

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What's the difference between a pedigree chart and a family group sheet? We'll explain.

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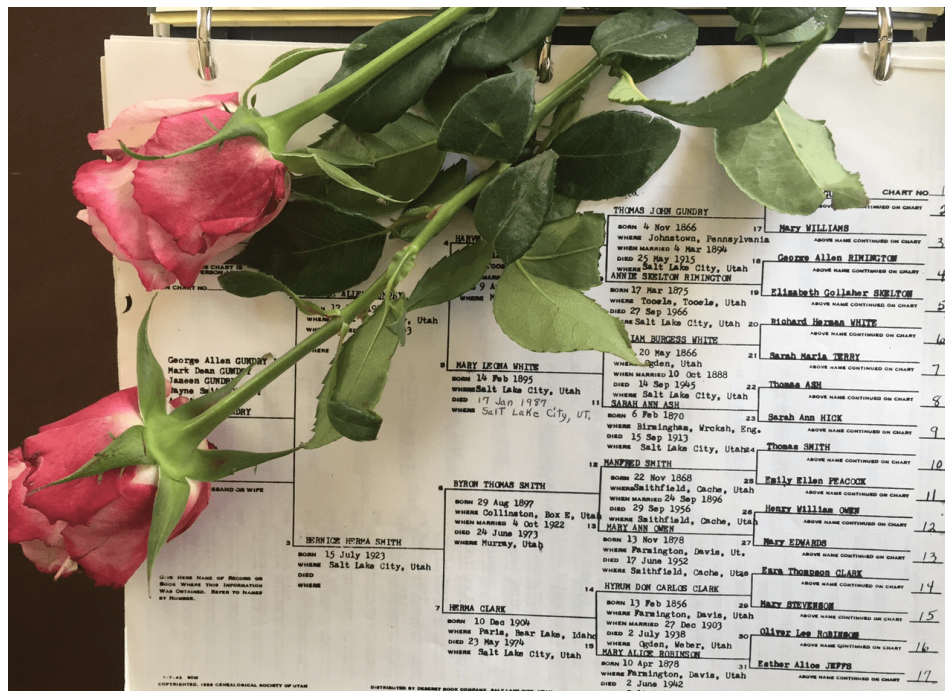
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Let's imagine that you have been bitten by the genealogy bug: suddenly, you are very interested in **where you come from** and who your ancestors are, along with their stories. If you've never done any family history or genealogy work before, you might feel a little overwhelmed at the thought of getting started. But worry no more! We're here to help you take those first steps into the exciting and addicting world of genealogy.

One of the first things you'll need to get started is some information about your immediate family. Collect names of parents, grandparents, and as many great-grandparents, aunts, uncles, great-aunts and uncles and so on as you can. With the names, get dates: birth dates, death dates, christening dates, baptism dates, wedding dates, etc. You don't need every date for every major event that happened in the life of one of your forbears, but the more dates you can find, the better. Ask living relatives for their help or see if you can find family documents with dates on them. Family Bibles, journals, photographs, yearbooks, diplomas, and government papers are all places you can go to when relatives are few and far between.

Next, you will put together a pedigree chart and a family group chart. Don't worry: this is not nearly as daunting as it sounds. You can **find free downloadable and printable** pedigree and

family group charts online and start filling in the blanks.

Pedigree Chart

A pedigree chart tracks your individual family history back through time. This means that every person listed on the chart is directly related to you: you as the focus individual, your parents, their parents, and so on—usually going back six or seven generations.

The person whose pedigree the chart reflects is listed as No. 1 in a pedigree chart; the father is No. 2, the mother is No. 3, and grandparents and great-grandparents are all given an associated number.

If you want to complete a pedigree chart for someone else (a spouse or an aunt or uncle, for instance), you would list that person in the No. 1 position and complete the rest of the chart.

Family Group Chart or Sheet

HUSBAND Isaac ASH	
Ch	22 Nov 1794 (C)
M	18 Apr 1816 (A)
M	23 Jan 1817 (A)
M	28 Jan 1819 (A)
WIFE Mary SATT	
Ch	30 Feb 1796 (A)
M	6 May 1802 (A)
M	2 May 1802 (A)
OTHER FAMILY Joseph SATT	
MARRIAGES	
OTHER MARRIAGES	
NECESSARY EXPLANATIONS	

These charts record families as groups. If you are married and have children, a family group chart will ask you to list yourself and your spouse along with relevant dates (birth, death,

wedding). You will also list each of your children with their birth and other dates (as appropriate). You can fill out a family group chart for any couple and their children in your family tree.

As you find the information you need to complete your pedigree and family group charts, you are very likely to encounter some interesting facts and stories about your

ancestors. This will only strengthen your desire to learn your family's history and find out who these people are who came before you.

Whether your a seasoned family historian or just getting started researching your personal ancestyr, Legacy Tree Genealogists can help. We are a team of experienced and educated genealogists trained in a variety of ways to help people learn their personal genealogy. Let us help you find your stories.

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Legacy Tree Genealogists

The team at Legacy Tree Genealogists has been helping clients worldwide discover their roots for over a decade. We're based near the world's largest Family History Library and connected with genealogists and archives around the world, and we love doing what we do! We also love sharing our genealogy tips with our readers.

GENEALOGY BASICS - Getting started in Family History

September 22, 2021
Stephen Baluch
baluchsj@juno.com
239-691-6233

INTRODUCTIONS - Name and ancestor's nationality (if known).

PURPOSE AND EXPECTATIONS

After this class, you will...

...know where to begin your search for family history information.

...know how to record and organize the information that you find.

...know how to sign up at FamilySearch.org and where to look for information on the internet.

...know what local resources are available to assist you.

This class will NOT...

...tell you how to use a computer or computer programs.

...show you how to access the internet, since other classes deal with these skills.

...hunt for your individual relatives during the class. You will do that afterwards, as you begin your research.

FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why do genealogy? To find out about my family in the past, and preserve information for the future.
2. When is the best time to start? At age 12. If you missed that, then the best time is NOW.
3. Do I need a computer and know how to use it? It helps but it is not essential.
4. Do I have to pay? No. Don't pay for any services until a current user you trust has recommended it to you.
5. What if information conflicts? Information from different sources always contains errors and often conflicts. Find more sources and follow the preponderance of evidence.
6. How do I start? First advice given to me, "Go find out who you are related to, collect documents about them, and then write books about it." This class will be more specific.
7. How do I quickly find all my relatives? Win the lottery and they will find you.
8. How do I contact/interact with other relatives? Be clear about your intentions, explain how you are related, and respect personal privacy. Be cautious about "unknown" relatives seeking information.
9. How far back can I go? As far back as the records exist for your ancestors. This is different for all countries and nationalities.
10. Why record information on current family events? Good information about the present will help researchers in the future.
11. Will volunteers do my research for me? No.

BASIC LOCAL AND ON-LINE RESOURCES

Lee County Genealogy Library

Bryan L Mulcahy
Reference Librarian
Fort Myers Regional Library
2450 First Street
bmulcahy@leegov.com
(239) 533-4626

Large library with books and magazines for review. Call ahead for hours or for appointment. Sign up for monthly newsletter and workshops. Some genealogy resources are accessible from home.

<https://www.leegov.com/library/adults/genealogy>

Shell Point Genealogy Library

Woodlands Commons (back corner opposite the Oak Room)

Hours: M-Th 10 AM-12 Noon
M-Th 1- 3 PM
F-Sat-Sun CLOSED

Phone: 239-454-2040

Web: genatsp.net

Books, data disks, and magazines available for searching. Paid genealogy websites available for searching on the library computer. Volunteers will provide guidance and assistance. Monthly meetings on topics of interest: 2nd Friday each month 10:15 AM.

National Genealogical Society

Download fill-in pdf genealogy charts at this link:

<https://www.ngsgenealogy.org/free-resources/charts/>
save it to your computer, and
update it at any time.



Basic Pedigree Chart
➤



Standard Pedigree
Chart ➤



Family Group Sheet ➤

Sign up for free account:

The screenshot shows the 'Create a Free Account' page on FamilySearch.org. The browser's address bar shows 'familysearch.org'. The page has a navigation menu with 'Family Search', 'Memories', 'Indexing', and 'Activities'. In the top right, there are 'SIGN IN' and 'CREATE ACCOUNT' buttons. The main heading is 'Create a Free Account'. The form includes fields for 'First Name' and 'Last Name', a 'Birth Date' section with dropdowns for 'Month', 'Day', and 'Year', and a 'Sex' section with radio buttons for 'Male' and 'Female'. There is a checkbox for 'I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Use my record information to help me get started. (Requires Church record number.)' and a blue 'Continue' button. At the bottom, there are links for 'About', 'Volunteer', 'Blog', 'Site Map', and 'Solutions Gallery', along with 'FEEDBACK', 'COOKIE PREFERENCES', and 'ENGLISH'. The footer contains the 'FamilySearch Terms of Use' and 'Privacy Notice' links, copyright information for 2021, and the logo for 'THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS'.

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First Name Last Name

First Name Last Name

Birth Date

Month Day Year

Sex

Male Female

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FEEDBACK COOKIE PREFERENCES ENGLISH

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THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS



Name and/or Date	Place
Husband: BALUCH, Michael	
Born: 30 September 1851 (File:1851Se30)	Dúbrava, Spiš, Slovakia
Married: 15 February 1877 (File:1877Fe15)	Nižný Slavkov, Šariš, Slovakia
Died: 4 April 1916 (File: 1916Ap05)	Youngstown, Mahoning Co., OH
Buried: April 1916, Calvary Cemetery	Youngstown, Mahoning Co., OH
Other Marriage: None	
Husband's Father: BALUCH, Andreas	Husband's Mother: FIFIK, Catharina
Wife: TOMASKO (VASKOVSKY), Dorothea	
Born: 5 February 1851 (File: 1851Fe05)	Nižný Slavkov, Šariš, Slovakia
Died: 13 July 1940 (File: 1940Jy13)	Youngstown, Mahoning Co., OH
Buried: July 1940	Youngstown, Mahoning Co., OH
Other Marriage: None	
Wife's Father: TOMASKO (VASKOVSKY), Martin	Wife's Mother: DOROCSAK, Elisabeth
1st Child: BALUCH, George Male: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Female: <input type="checkbox"/>	
Born: 3 April 1879 (File: 1879Ap03)	Dúbrava, Spiš, Slovakia
Died: 30 June 1965 (File: 1965Ju30)	Youngstown, Mahoning Co., OH
Buried: July 1965	Youngstown, Mahoning Co., OH
Spouse: SMIGOVSKY, Mary	Date of Marriage: 1901
2nd Child: BALUCH, Michael Male: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Female: <input type="checkbox"/>	
Born: 22 February 1881	Dúbrava, Spiš, Slovakia
Died: 17 May 1915	Youngstown, Mahoning Co., OH
Buried: May 1915	Youngstown, Mahoning Co., OH
Spouse: BANAS, Anna	Date of Marriage: 18 June 1907
3rd Child: BALUCH, Maria Male: <input type="checkbox"/> Female: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Born: 23 December 1885 (File: 1885De23)	Dúbrava, Spiš, Slovakia
Died: 9 March 1907	Youngstown, Mahoning Co., OH
Buried: March 1907, Calvary Cemetery	Youngstown, Mahoning Co., OH
Spouse: LIPJANIC, Steve	Date of Marriage: 1905?

Sources:

Prepared by / Date:



Name and/or Date	Place	Sex
4 th Child: BALUCH, Jacob		Male: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Female: <input type="checkbox"/>
Born: 18 July 1887 (File: 1887Jy18)	Dúbrava, Spiš, Slovakia	
Died: 17 May 1957	Youngstown, Mahoning Co., OH	
Buried: May 1957	Youngstown, Mahoning Co., OH	
Spouse: KARABIN, Veronica	Date of Marriage: July 1909?	
5 th Child: BALUCH, Stephen Jerome		Male: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Female: <input type="checkbox"/>
Born: 5 July 1894 (File: 1894Jy05)	Dúbrava, Spiš, Slovakia	
Died: 13 April 1949 (Files: 1949Ap13, 1949Ap15)	Youngstown, Mahoning Co., OH	
Buried: April 1949, Calvary Cemetery	Youngstown, Mahoning Co., OH	
Spouse: PRETOKA, Anna	Date of Marriage: 1918?	
6 th Child: —		Male: <input type="checkbox"/> Female: <input type="checkbox"/>
Born: _____	_____	
Died: _____	_____	
Buried: _____	_____	
Spouse: _____	Date of Marriage: _____	

Sources: See attached Table of Sources.
See attached map of eastern Slovakia.

Notes: BALUCH, George arrived at Youngstown from Slovakia in 1899. (File: 1900Jy10)
BALUCH, Michael arrived at the port of Baltimore 28 November 1899 on the SS München. (File: 1899No28)
BALUCH, Maria arrived in the US in about 1901, details unknown.
BALUCH, Michael (father), Dorothea (mother), Jacob (4th child) and Stephen (5th child) arrived at the Port of New York on the SS Rhein. (File: 1910Ap21)

Prepared by / Date: **BALUCH, Stephen Jerome (updated 9 Sept 2021).**



Four Generation Pedigree Chart

YOUR FATHER

Name **BALUCH, Frederick Paul**
 Birth Date **3 January 1924**
 Birth Place **Youngstown, Mahoning Co., OH**
 Death Date **18 November 2012**
 Death Place **Greenbelt, Prince Georges Co., MD**
 Marriage Date **14 June 1947**
 Marriage Place **Youngstown, Mahoning Co., OH**

YOU

Name **BALUCH, Stephen Jerome**
 Birth Date **17 August 1949**
 Birth Place **Washington, DC**
 Marriage Date **8 June 1973**
 Marriage Place **Damascus, Montgomery Co., MD**

YOUR MOTHER

Name **TAYLOR, Dorothy Ann**
 Birth Date **25 March 1924**
 Birth Place **Youngstown, Mahoning Co., OH**
 Death Date **14 October 2014**
 Death Place **Greenbelt, Prince Georges Co., MD**

PATERNAL GRANDFATHER

Name **BALUCH, Stephen Jerome**
 Birth Date **5 July 1894**
 Birth Place **Dúbrava, Spiš Co., Slovakia**
 Death Date **13 April 1949**
 Death Place **Youngstown, Mahoning Co., OH**
 Marriage Date **1918**
 Marriage Place **Youngstown, Mahoning Co., OH**

PATERNAL GRANDMOTHER

Name **PRETOKA, Anna**
 Birth Date **1 August 1899**
 Birth Place **Duquesne?, Allegheny Co., PA**
 Death Date **2 February 1947**
 Death Place **Youngstown, Mahoning Co., OH**

MATERNAL GRANDFATHER

Name **TAYLOR, James (KREJČI, Vaclav)**
 Birth Date **1890**
 Birth Place **Kraselov, Czech Rep.**
 Death Date **1940**
 Death Place **Youngstown, Mahoning Co., OH**
 Marriage Date **1914?**
 Marriage Place **Youngstown, Mahoning Co., OH**

MATERNAL GRANDMOTHER

Name **STYNDL, Barbara Katherine**
 Birth Date **24 November 1891**
 Birth Place **Cleveland, Cuyahoga Co., OH**
 Death Date **18 October 1974**
 Death Place **Pittsburgh, Allegheny Co., PA**

PATERNAL GREAT-GRANDFATHER

Name **BALUCH, Michael**
 Birth Date / Place **30 Sept 1851/Dúbrava, Spiš, Slovakia**
 Death Date / Place **4 Apr 1916/Youngstown, Mahoning, OH**

PATERNAL GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

Name **TOMASKO (VASKOVSKY), Dorothea**
 Birth Date / Place **5 Feb 1851/Nížný Slavkov, Šariš, Slovakia**
 Death Date / Place **13 Jul 1940/Youngstown, Mahoning, OH**

PATERNAL GREAT-GRANDFATHER

Name **PRITOKA, Peter**
 Birth Date / Place **1875, Richvald pod Kopancom, Šariš, Slovakia**
 Death Date / Place **1922, Youngstown, Mahoning Co., OH**

PATERNAL GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

Name **TOMČIK, Maria**
 Birth Date / Place **15 Oct 1882/Mokroluh, Šariš, Slovakia**
 Death Date / Place **15 Jun 1936/Youngstown, Mahoning, OH**

MATERNAL GREAT-GRANDFATHER

Name **KREJČI, Jakub**
 Birth Date / Place **Kraselov, Czech Rep.**
 Death Date / Place **1894?/Kraselov?, Czech Rep**

MATERNAL GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

Name **SKŘIVAN, Marie**
 Birth Date / Place **30 Apr 1864/Milčice, Czech Rep.**
 Death Date / Place **8 July 1937/Baltimore, MD**

MATERNAL GREAT-GRANDFATHER

Name **STYNDL, Frank**
 Birth Date / Place **1865/Staré Sedlo, So. Bohemia, Cz Rep**
 Death Date / Place **27 Nov 1954/Cleveland, Cuyahoga, OH**

MATERNAL GREAT-GRANDMOTHER

Name **PTAK, Ana**
 Birth Date / Place **1864/Kralová Lhota, Czech Rep.**
 Death Date / Place **10 Mar 1933/Cleveland, Cuyahoga, OH**