



Beginning & Organizing Genealogy – by : Lynn Baker

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• WHY DO GENEALOGY

People undertake genealogy research for a wide variety of reasons:

- Leaving a family legacy
- Studying your medical history
- Joining lineage/hereditary societies
- Solving a family mystery
- Confirming a family legend

What do you want to create?

- Manuscript / Book
- Organized history information
- Stories
- Photo Album
- Website or blog

• DO YOU NEED A COMPUTER?

Absolutely not, BUT they sure do help!

- They provide easy access to info when on the road.
- They offer the ability to quickly update when new info is found.

Go with paper if computers frustrate you.

Cloud vs Computer Program Software

• GENEALOGY RESEARCH PROCESS

You will quickly discover that your genealogy research goes through cycles:

- Gathering what you know;
- Choosing who & what to study;
- Finding records to research;
- Evaluating what you've found.
- Sharing what you've learned.



• STEP 1 – GATHER

Identify what you currently know about your family.

- As a beginner, do your “home” work!
 - Look for records & info you already have.
 - See Home Sources Checklist in this handout



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- Talk to relatives
- ▪Do Interviews
- Start with yourself and work backwards in time (Don't chase shiny objects)

ORGANIZE YOUR GATHERED INFO

Best to utilize standardized forms & formatting (pencil) or Computer Program

- Pedigree Charts, Family Group Records (see reference section below)
 - Enter your info using standard genealogical formatting
 - ▪ Use Maiden names
 - Organize your folders and name files (hardcopy or digital) in same way “Create Cheat Sheet”
 - PROTECTING ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS
- **STEP 2 – CHOOSE**
 - Decide what you want to learn about your ancestors. (Create Research Question)
 - Have a “final destination” in mind.
 - Most goals should focus on researching an individual or that individual's family.
 - i.e. “Identify the immigrant ancestor on the Pierce line.”
 - Research objectives are specific pieces of info to gather about that person or family.
 - i.e. “What date did he arrive?” and “At what port did he arrive?”
 - As a beginner, start with individuals or families that could be the easiest to research.
 - Likely a family closer to you in time – a parent or grandparent family.
 - DON'T “skip ahead” (jump generations) - starting with earlier generations before pinning down more recent ones can cause time consuming errors.

- **STEP 3 - FIND**

Once you have your objective, locate specific records that help you answer the objective's question.

- This can be the toughest part of the process for some research objectives (i.e. when you don't
- know where someone came from or when they were born).
- Using compiled records (indexes, abstracts, databases, etc.) can speed the process along, but be
- sure to validate with original records whenever possible.
- Don't rely solely on Internet websites – there are many more records available (especially at the
- local level).
- Document your discoveries: Who, What, When, Where, Why
- Cite the sources
- Use Research log
- SESSION 2 will focus on on-line research

- **STEP 4 – EVALUATE**

Once you find records for your research objective, it is essential to evaluate what you have found.

- Determine how reliable the info is and how relevant the record is to your research objective.
- Read all the information carefully
- Always cite your sources
- Record your findings (vital statistics, stories, personal information)



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- **STEP 5 – SHARE**

Never sell your research quest short – if it was worth doing, it is worth doing well.

- Doing it well includes sharing the fruits of your labors.
 - If you don't share it, who will?
- Share along the way.
- You'll never finish researching because new discoveries always lead to more questions.

- **REPEAT PROCESS**

- Develop new Research Question
- Create a Research Plan and Research Log

Remember your “final destination”

Enjoy the journey!

To get ready for Session 2:

Log onto FamilySearch.org website and set up your free account

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/>

Family Tree Maker (Computer Genealogy Software) <https://www.mackiev.com/ftm/>

Documents referenced in presentation:

- Genealogy Checklist: [Click here](#)
- Person List: [Click here](#)
- Where to Find Information: [Click here](#)
- Folder and File Naming system: [Click here](#)
- Digital Tips: [Click here](#)



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LINKS TO USEFUL FORMS – FILLABLE PDF FORMATS

Family Group Record

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/img_auth.php/e/e0/Family_Group_Record.pdf

Pedigree Chart

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/img_auth.php/b/bb/Pedigree_Chart.pdf

Research Log

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/img_auth.php/5/50/Research_Log.pdf

LINKS TO USEFUL BEGINNER’S GUIDANCE (some may require an account)

Family History Guide – “Getting Started”

<https://www.thefhguide.com/get-started.html>

FamilySearch – “Principles of Family History Research”

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Principles_of_Family_History_Research

Ancestry – “Getting Started”

<https://support.ancestry.com/s/article/Getting-Started-Lesson-1-Starting-Your-Tree>

MyHeritage – “Getting Started”

<https://education.myheritage.com/getting-started/>

Family Tree magazine – “Get Started”

<https://www.familytreemagazine.com/family-tree/>

American Ancestors (NEHGS) – “Getting Started”

<https://www.americanancestors.org/education/learning-resources/read/getting-started>

Family Tree Magazine on Naming Convention for Files

<https://familytreemagazine.com/organization/organizing-digital-genealogy-files/#:~:text=Keep%20a%20consistent%20file%2Dnaming,%2C%20numbers%2C%20hyphens%20and%20underscores.>

VOCABULARY

Ancestor = someone from whom you directly descend.

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Your parent, grandparent, etc.

NOT your aunts & uncles, etc.

Descendant = someone who descends directly from you

Your child, grandchild, etc.

NOT your nieces & nephews, etc.

Collateral relations = aunt/uncle, niece/nephew, cousins, etc.

Direct lineage = grandparent → parent → you → child → grandchild

Half-relation: children with a common ancestor but from different spouses (i.e. half-brothers = sons of same mother but of different fathers)

Step-relation: child/parent connected solely by marriage with no blood relations (i.e. step-sisters = child of step-father by different mother)

Cousins

1st – have same grandparents

2nd – have same great-grandparents (but not same grandparents)

3rd – have same gr-gr-grandparents (but not same grandparents, gr-grandparents)

“removed” – signifies a generational difference (i.e. 1st cousin once removed; also shown as 1C1R)

Vital Records: A written account of an important life event such as birth, marriage or death
i.e. - birth, marriage or death certificates kept by government official.

Original Source: Record created at or near time of event.

Derivative Source: Record derived from original sources or other derivative sources.

Compiled record: Info gathered from original records, other compiled records and verbal testimony.

Timeline: A way of charting events and dates, often including places.

Oral History: A conversation with someone in which questions are asked to learn about a person or family.

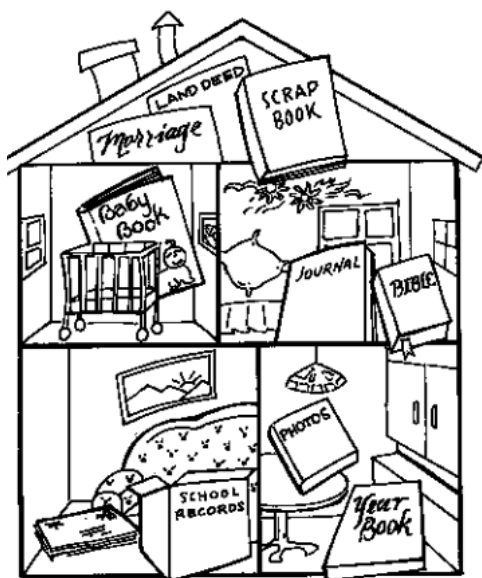
Open-ended questions: Questions that are answered with a free response (e.g., ‘What do you remember about the farm?’)

Close-ended questions: Questions that are answered with short, specific response (e.g., “What is your maiden name?”)

Research Log: A document that helps a researcher keep track of sources searched and where those sources are held.

Repository: A place where sources are housed.

Family and Home Information Sources Checklist



Sources of information about

...

Birth

- ☐ Baby Book
- ☐ Adoption Record

Marriage

- ☐ Wedding Announcement
- ☐ Wedding Book
- ☐ Anniversary Announcement

Divorce

- ☐ Papers

Death

- ☐ Obituary
- ☐ Funeral Book
- ☐ Will
- ☐ Memorial Cards

... School

- ☐ Report Cards
- ☐ Honor Roll
- ☐ Awards
- ☐ Graduate Diplomas
- ☐ Transcripts
- ☐ Yearbooks

Religious Activity

- ☐ Blessing
- ☐ Baptismal Record
- ☐ Christening Record
- ☐ Confirmation Record
- ☐ Ordination Record
- ☐ Ministerial Record

... Every Day Life

- ☐ Journal
- ☐ Diary
- ☐ Biography
- ☐ Letters
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Autograph Album

- ☐ Publications/ newspaper clippings (about the person)
- ☐ Scrapbooks

... Employment

- ☐ Social Security Card
- ☐ Apprenticeship Records
- ☐ Citations
- ☐ Achievement Awards
- ☐ Disability Records
- ☐ Pension Records
- ☐ Membership Records
- ☐ Income Tax Records
- ☐ Union Records
- ☐ Severance Records
- ☐ Retirement Records

... Military Service

- ☐ Selective Service Records
- ☐ Pension Records
- ☐ National Guard Service Records
- ☐ Citations
- ☐ Disability Records
- ☐ Service Medals
- ☐ Ribbons
- ☐ Insignias
- ☐ Discharge Records
- ☐ Sword
- ☐ Firearms
- ☐ Uniform

Land and property ownership

- ☐ Deeds
- ☐ Land Grants
- ☐ Water Rights
- ☐ Mortgages
- ☐ Leases
- ☐ Tax Notices
- ☐ Abstracts of Title
- ☐ Estate Records
- ☐ Financial Records

... Civil and Legal Activity

- ☐ Bonds
- ☐ Guardian Papers
- ☐ Contracts
- ☐ Bounty Award

... Family

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Lineages
- ☐ Genealogies
- ☐ Histories
- ☐ Bulletins/ newsletters
- ☐ Coat of Arms

... Health

- ☐ Hospital Records
- ☐ Medical Records
- ☐ Immunization Records
- ☐ X-Rays
- ☐ Insurance Papers
- ☐ Vaccination Records

... Household Items

- ☐ Engraved Items
- ☐ Dishes
- ☐ Silverware
- ☐ Stitched Sampler
- ☐ Tapestries
- ☐ Quilts
- ☐ Needlework

...Licenses

- ☐ Business
- ☐ Occupation
- ☐ Professional
- ☐ Hunting/Fishing
- ☐ Firearms
- ☐ Drivers
- ☐ Motor Vehicle

... Citizenship Papers

- ☐ Naturalization Papers
- ☐ Alien Registration
- ☐ Deportment Papers
- ☐ Passport
- ☐ Visa