



So You Want to Grow a Family Tree...

Beginning genealogical research and starting a family history

To do a personal genealogy or family history involves many steps and a great deal of time. It is important to work systematically and remember certain guidelines.

A. Be careful.

- ❖ Document everything, even failures.

B. Be aware.

- ❖ Information, even from usually reliable resources, may not be accurate or complete.

C. Be specific.

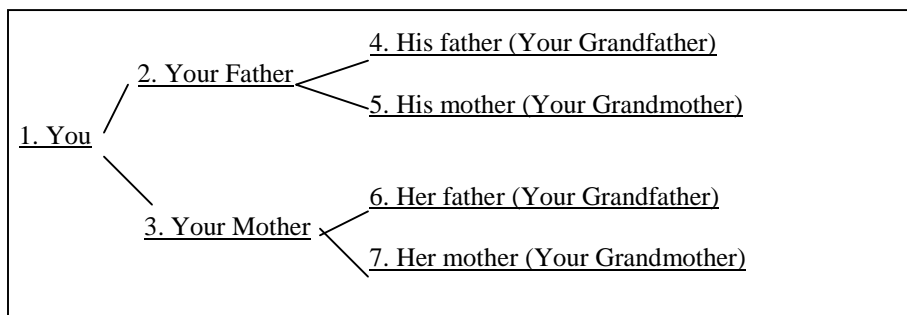
- ❖ Know what you want and have a reasonable idea where the information is located.
- ❖ Follow specific clues; don't look for everything at once.

D. Be polite.

- ❖ Know and follow the rules and policies of the libraries and archives you visit.
- ❖ Don't write in, on, or deface the materials you use. Don't tear or cut pages.
- ❖ When requesting information by mail provide a self-stamped, self-addressed envelope.
- ❖ When requesting information by facsimile or e-mail make sure the answer you request is brief and does not require extensive research.
- ❖ Provide reimbursement for copy services; prepay if requesting by mail.
- ❖ Consider a cash donation. Maintaining a research library is extremely expensive and tax dollars for libraries must be used for many different resources. It is important that nonresidents who use the high-maintenance collections assist in the funding in order to ensure their continued availability.

STEP 1: Collect and record what you already know.

- Start with yourself and create an ancestor or pedigree chart with all the information you have.



- Add date born & place; date married & place; date died & place. If you do not know exact dates & places, guess.
- Extend the chart as far back as you can, to great and great-great-grandparents if possible.
- Set up a worksheet and file for each family group (parents & children).

Family Group Worksheet	
Headset	
Date:	Where:
Death:	Where:
Married:	Where:
His Father:	His Mother:
Other Spouse:	
Wife	
Date:	Where:
Death:	Where:
Married:	Where:
His Father:	His Mother:
Other Spouse:	
Children	
I. Name:	Sex: <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F
Birth:	Where:
Death:	Where:
Married:	Where:
II. Name:	Sex: <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F
Birth:	Where:
Death:	Where:
Married:	Where:
III. Name:	Sex: <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F
Birth:	Where:
Death:	Where:
Married:	Where:
Notes/Source:	

- ✓ Sample pedigree charts and family group worksheets may be downloaded for free from many different websites. An excellent resource for these charts, as well as other information, is www.ancestry.com/.

STEP 2: Decide what missing information you need or want to know.

- Identify and mark the missing or incomplete information on your chart.
- Decide what information you need or want to find first.
- Start with your parents or grandparents and work your way back.

STEP 3: Find out what other family members know or have researched.

- Talk to relatives and family friends. Keep a record of useful information or stories.
- Search family records. Make copies of anything you find – birth, marriage and death certificates, journals, diaries, letters, charts, photos, registers, military papers, and pedigrees in family Bibles.

STEP 4: Search other sources.

- Go to public, university, and state libraries and archives and use published family histories, biographies, place histories and compiled genealogies.
 - Start broad -- search first for your ancestor's last name in the indexes, then look for specific individuals.
 - Remember the further back you go the more likely the spellings will be phonetic or the names changed to be shorter or more easily spelled or pronounced.
- Go to your local LDS Stake Library (Latter Day Saints or Mormons) and use their resources. These libraries are open to both members and the general public. Most stakes have a small genealogy library and are equipped with microfilm readers. You may borrow (for a small fee) microfilm from the main library. The main Library in Salt Lake City has the world's largest collection of microfilmed state and county records.
- Use the Internet. Go to reliable and recommended sources before "web surfing." Use sites such as [AncestryPlus](#) (available in Georgia public libraries on **GALILEO**) or the free version [Ancestry.com](#), and its subsidiary [www.rootsweb.com](#). Other recommended sources are Family Search from the Mormon (LDS) Church ([www.familysearch.org](#)), the U.S. National Archives ([www.archives.gov](#)), the US GenWeb Project ([www.usgenweb.org/](#)), the American Local History Network, ([www.alhn.org](#)), the American History & Genealogy Project ([www.ahgp.org](#)), and selected private sites with a reputation for accuracy such as Cyndi's List ([www.cyndislist.com](#)) or Helm's Genealogy Toolbox ([www.genealogytoolbox.com/](#)).

Always Remember:

- Update your information in your records and ancestor chart as soon as you find new facts. Make sure you keep track of specific information. Write down what you find and where you find it.
 - Name of the family member/ancestor.
 - Date of the search.
 - Results of the search.
 - Name and location of the source (can be a person, library, archive, etc.).
- If you use material resources, record the call number, title, author, page number, film number, file name and location.
- Taking care helps avoid searching for the same information twice and will be useful as you share your information with other family members.
- Negative information is still information. Write down the resources you used that did not have what you were looking for. You won't look there again, and you may go back later for something else if you know what material is covered.
- Question accuracy of records. People guess at facts, newspaper reporters exaggerate; census takers misunderstand or misspell words. Check and double check.
- Research is hands on and often slow and tedious. Don't become disheartened by dead ends. Search and then RE-search.

STEP 5: Hire a professional.

Librarians and archivists can assist you in using the resources of their facilities but cannot do your research for you. If you decide you cannot continue or you need more assistance, consider hiring a professional genealogist. Use members from the Association of Professional Genealogists or lists from other resources. Make sure the person you hire has the appropriate credentials and experience.

Search For Your Ancestors: (Over 1.8 Billion Names)

1. **Ancestor's name:**

First Name(s)

Last Name

2. **Where did they live?:**

Country

State/Province/County

3.

State

Province

County

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