

Beginning Genealogy

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Why Do Your Family History?

- To satisfy your curiosity about yourself and your roots.
- To provide your children with a sense of whom their ancestors were, where they came from and how they lived their lives.
- To preserve family cultural and ethnic traditions for future generations.
- To compile a medical family history.
- To prove or disprove family lore
- To assemble and publish a family history book for family members.
- Remember –
 - You are your ancestors, all tied up in one package
 - All their traits, likes and dislikes are passed down to you
 - The more you find out about them, the more you know about yourself

How to Get Started

- Your family history starts with you
- Get a blank piece of paper
- Record the names of everyone in your immediate family, and as many names as you can in your extended family
- Gather up all the birth, marriage, and death certificates you can get your hands on
- Write down as much detail as you know, then start talking to people
- Talk to your relatives
 - Ask them if they have any documents such as family bibles, certificates, pictures, and/or baby books that can provide you with information
 - Ask them about their lives and remembrances
- Document ALL of the information
- Then, and most important, ***get organized***
- To start, as an exercise, I suggest using a Family Group Sheet
- Fill in the blanks, as best you can
- This will give you a 'feel' for how to organize and document your Genealogy research
- Then start using a computer program to record your family information as soon as possible

Genealogy Software

- There are several excellent genealogy software packages available that can help you create a family tree and keep records of all the information you find along the way.
- Almost all family tree software does a good job of letting you enter your family data, organize it in a variety of ways, and print out the information in a wide variety of formats.
- The programs features and extras differ widely, and generally the more they cost, the more useful they are.
- Most genealogy software programs offer free trial versions or a money-back guarantee, so you can try before you buy.
- Software –IBM-PC
 - Legacy Family Tree – Version 8 (\$) free trial version
 - <http://www.legacyfamilytree.com>
 - Family Tree Maker – Version 2014 (\$)
 - Compatible with Ancestry.com, Includes TreeSync thru Ancestry.com
 - <http://familytreemaker.genealogy.com> - Download trial version – (Free) soon
 - RootsMagic – Version 6 (\$) free trial version
 - <http://www.rootsmagic.com/>
 - Ancestral Quest – Version 14 (\$) free trial ver.
 - <http://www.ancestralquest.com>
- Software - MAC
 - Family Tree Maker- MAC 3 version (\$)
 - Includes TreeSync, Compatible with Ancestry.com
 - Reunion (\$)
 - Heredis (\$)
 - MacFamilyTree (\$)

A Little History

- Religion and technology helped make the search for our ancestors much easier.
- In the 1960s, the Mormon Church — which promotes the doctrine of baptism of the dead by proxy and encourages its members to research their unbaptized ancestors — opened branch genealogical libraries throughout the country.
- In the 1970s, these libraries began to receive more and more non-Mormon patrons.
- In the 1990's, digital technology and the Internet revolutionized the way large amounts of information could be reproduced, transferred and retrieved.
- Moving genealogical databases online then made it possible for tens of millions more Americans to research their families in the comfort of their own homes.

Genealogy Records

- There are basically 2 places to find Genealogy records.....
 - The Internet
 - Everywhere else
- Information Sources
 - BMD Certificates
 - Church Records
 - Books
 - Passport Applications
 - Newspapers
 - Obituaries
 - Military Records
 - Naturalization Records
 - Land (Deed) Records
 - Tax Records
 - On-Line Message Boards and Mail Lists
 - Genealogy Societies in Specific Geographic Areas
 - Maps
 - Electoral Rolls
 - Journals, Diary's, and Letters
 - Old Photographs
 - Family Bibles
 - Scrapbooks
 - Heirlooms
 - DNA
 - Wills and Estates
 - Cemeteries
- The Internet
 - See the handout for a list of free genealogy websites
 - Subscription Websites
 - Ancestry
 - Fold3
 - Newspapers.com
 - American Ancestors
 - Plus many more.....

FamilySearch Wiki

- A great source for learning and finding genealogy information

Using the Census

- US Census Records
 - From 1790 to 1940 (except 1890)
- I use census records as an **outline** and **building block** of my ancestors movements through time
 - You should find
 - Spouses
 - Siblings
 - Occupations
 - Where they lived

12 Genealogy Rules to Remember

1. “Speling Dushn’t Cownt”

- Back in the day folks couldn’t spell and many could barely write, so how a name sounds is more important than how it’s spelled.
- Use wild card or Soundex searches to help find variant spellings of names.

2. Assume NOTHING

- Check all your facts, don’t assume that any particular document is right or wrong, and always try to find other independent sources to corroborate your facts as much as possible.
- Verify, verify, verify. For instance, don’t assume that:
 - Your ancestors were married; Census information is accurate; Vital (or other) records were correct; Your ancestor’s life events were recorded

3. Use Discretion

- Never lie in your genealogy reports, but use discretion when reporting family information, especially when it involves living relatives.

4. Always Document Your Sources, No Matter How Much They Contradict One Another

- Over time, you will compile more data and those once seemingly contradictory pieces of evidence may prove to be just the pieces of the puzzle you need to prove or disprove your theory.
- Be consistent as you cite your sources. There are standard citation formats, but even if you just make up your own format for listing your sources, be consistent with it.
- You want descendants to be able to retrace your steps, so you always cite your sources.

5. Most Dates are Approximate

- It’s okay to state that someone was born “abt 1845” or died “May 1915” if you don’t have the exact date or where various documents have different dates.
- Which date is “correct?”
- They all are.

6. If Unsure, Say So

- Future researchers will thank you for being honest if you simply say that you cannot prove a specific fact, yet you “suspect” such and such is true.
- Don’t fudge the facts.
- **Ever.**

7. You Cannot Do It All Online

- Yes, we love doing research online and there’s nothing better than using the computer to find new sources, view digital images of original documents and even connect with relatives.
- For genealogists, the internet will never replace the wonderful work of libraries, county courthouses, archives, and historical societies.
- Do as much as you can online, then turn off the computer and hit the road!

8. Just Because It’s Online Doesn’t Mean It’s True

- The internet is a wonderful thing but it’s filled with oodles of bad information.
- Don’t make the mistake of believing anything you find online at face value.
- Verify against other sources, even if you paid for the information you found online.
- Consult the original source whenever possible.

9. Pass Along Your Research

- No matter how many decades you spend researching your family, your research will never be done.
- Plan on passing your research to the next generation’s researchers.
- Leave excellent notes, cite all your sources, explain your shorthand.
- In essence, leave your research the way you’d have like to have found it.

10. Don’t Die With Your Stories Still In You

- Tell your stories as completely and as accurately as possible.
- Genealogy isn’t about just doing research.
- Genealogy is about telling the stories and ensuring that your ancestor’s legacies live on for generations to come.
- Without stories, the research won’t do anyone much good.
- The legacy of your ancestors rests in your capable hands.
- Doing the research is fine, but always remember that you have been chosen to do their stories.

11. DNA Is NOT a Trump Card

- DNA is just one of many possible sources of information you can use to verify or deny a relationship.
- Human error occurs when the results are transcribed, thereby providing false information.
- DNA results should always be used in concert with other sources.

12. Anything You Post Online Will be “Borrowed”

- You need to accept the fact that any family information you post online will be “borrowed” or outright stolen, and you will probably not get credit for your hard work.
- This is the nature of the beast, the internet.
- Get over it!

Your Surname

- Sometimes your last name can provide an insight into your family’s roots.
- Although the same surname may originate in different places in the world, and have different meanings, it may be that your present surname is actually different from the original.
- Immigrants who came to America decades ago may have changed the spelling of their name to "anglicize" it to make it easier to understand.
- Surnames have existed for only about 1,000 years
- They were created to differentiate people according to their trade or where they lived.
- It was a way to identify an individual for collecting taxes.
- Finding out the origins of your family name may be very eye-opening.
- There are many books and websites available that can help you in this quest.

Local Sources of Information

- LDS (Mormon) Family History Center
 - Orange Regional Family History Center
674 South Yorba Street, Orange, CA
 - <http://www.ocfamilyhistory.org> (check for free classes)
 - (714) 997-7710
 - 8702 Atlanta Avenue @ Magnolia
- Huntington Beach Central Library
 - Genealogy Collection maintained by OCCGS

Recommendations - Summary

- Start recording information that you know today
- Join Genealogy Society i.e. <http://www.occgcs.com>
 - Most members willing to help
 - Classes included in membership fee
- Visit Mormon Family History Center
 - Yorba St. in Orange or one near your home
 - Free classes and very helpful in your search
- Visit Huntington Beach Central Library, Genealogy Collection , Talbert at Goldenwest

Orange County California Genealogical Society (OCCGS)

- We meet the first Saturday of each month, 10 times per year (Dark in June and December) at the Huntington Beach Central Library.
- Annual Dues: \$32/\$40 couple

Remember, have fun with your family’s history. Your ancestors aren’t going anywhere, all you have to do is find them.....