

Where to Start When Your Family History is “All Done”

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The benefits of learning about your family history and teaching the next generation about their heritage are immense. Just because others in your family have researched your family history, doesn't mean you can join in the fun. It is just a little trickier.



What are the benefits?

- ***Understanding and Emotional Healing.***
- ***Realizing Potential.***
- ***Stronger Relationships***
Grounded and Enveloped in Love.
- ***Spiritual Power and Serendipity.***
- ***Resilience, Wisdom and Broad Perspective***

It can be harder when others have already worked to collect your family history, but the benefits are worth all the effort.

But Really how?

1. Chose a place to build a conclusion tree and begin to collect sources. I suggest keeping a copy of your research offline with software that correlates with the online system you choose.

- All the abilities and features of the website
- Keep Personal Information Personal
 - Privacy, living people, research in progress
- Detailed notes, sources, pictures, video
- Interface with other programs
- Usability—Better Screens
- Automates syncing
- Gives you updates of what your cousins are doing but your information remains they was you put it.
- Makes adding information easy
- Helps you manage large amounts of information

There are many features to consider in choosing which software to use, such as charting, reports, sources, useability, etc. Interacting with cousins is easier if you try to use what the rest of the family is using. Ultimately, genealogy software is like a pair of shoes, different styles fit different people and different softwares can be good for different tasks.

2. Focus, Focus, Focus

Find an aspect that interests you. Pick one small goal and take one family at a time. You don't have to have a huge genealogy computer file, and you don't have to have everything connected to New FamilySearch. Make a list. Even if you only accomplish one task in recording your family's history, your descendants will be better off for it. DON'T GET OVERWHELMED.

3. Collect and Correlate non-computerized work

Become the family funnel

- Start with close relatives
 - Work with them to obtain copies first.
- Ask close relatives about distant relatives.
 - Who is interested in genealogy? Who inherited journals and pictures? Will you help me contact them?

Take an hour each Sunday. You'll be surprised how fast things get done. Having to computerize inherited genealogy is actually a blessing. By the time it is in the computer, it will be yours, and you will understand it.

4. **Verify and add sources to what has been done**

Ultimately the reliability of *any historical fact* lies in the sources that have been used to establish that fact. Thus, ultimately the reliability of the New FamilySearch *database* lies in the sources that have been used to establish that database. This database is OUR RESPONSIBILITY. It is crucial to OUR success that you go back to the original sources. Citations should allow another researcher to re-trace your steps so that future conclusions and analysis can be made. Only then can we work together to compare sources and come to the truth. And only then will this database be useful to generations in the future.

Notes and sources are what tell you what the quality of research is that you are dealing with. If there are good source citations you can spot check the research. If there are poor source citations just use the research as a pointer to where to do future research. The current standards for source citations are *Mills, Elizabeth Shown. Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace. Genealogical Publishing Company, Baltimore, 2010. And Mills, Elizabeth Shown. Evidence! Citation & Analysis for the Family Historian. Genealogical Publishing Company, Baltimore, 1997.*

5. **Look for areas to expand**

You can actually build on previous research. Try these ideas:

- Go to the family genealogist and ask for a line to work on.
- Generally you start with the people closest to you—but not necessarily when lots of research has already been done. There are new resources available, but the line might really be stuck. Just be sure you don't get stuck—move on to another line.
- Get it out where you can see it on paper. I did that and ended up with plenty of lines to work on and a company that can make it easy for you to print it out too. generationmaps.com.
- Try side lines
- Start with an ancestor and work down from them. Try:
http://www.familysearch.org/eng/library/Education/frameset_education.asp >Research Series Classes Online>Research Principles and Tools>Descendancy Research or <http://wiki.familysearch.org> Search "Descendancy Research"

6. **Involve your family**

No one will turn down a chance to look at their Great-Grandfather's picture or hear what trouble their Dad got into as a kid. Try pictures and stories, but to interest the next generation, go where they live. Blogging, Facebook, and Email newsletters can be used in a genealogical way. And family history for Christmas gifts gives you a deadline and disseminates the information. Check out the resources at zapthegrandmagap.com For ideas about how to involve your family and leave a strong heritage for future generations.

Don't forget to record your own history and especially your experiences in family history research. You become a great link between generations when you leave a love for your ancestors to your descendants. Even a short history will be a great blessing to the generations to come.



Don't Get Overwhelmed.

I can't promise you it will be easy but I can promise you it will bless your life.

"One arises from the study of genealogy with a clearer and more charitable conception of the whole brotherhood of man." —Joseph Hatten Carpenter