

# Genealogy 101

How to Grow a Family Tree



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## Step One: Get Organized!

- Helpful Tools:
  - Calculator
  - 3 Ring Binder
  - Page Dividers
  - Plastic Page Protectors
  - Manilla Folders
  - Family Group Forms
  - Pedigree Forms



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## Helpful Forms to Help You Stay Organized

- **Family Group Sheet:** Use to record information about individual families. (Ex: A married couple and their children)
- **Ancestor Chart:** Use to record birth, marriage, and death information for your direct line ancestors. Does not include space to record information about siblings, aunts, uncles (collateral lines), etc.
- **Ahnentafel Table:** Use to record the names of your direct line of ancestors. Each ancestor is assigned a number to help you stay organized. Similar to the pedigree chart, but without the birth, marriage, death information. Fits many generations on one page.
- **Research Checklist:** For each individual you are researching, you can keep track of what information you have found and what information you still need.
- **Blank Census Forms:** Every U.S. Federal Census asked different questions of the population. Use these helpful forms to transcribe census records, or to keep as a readable reference.
- **Research Extract Form:** For each source you use, try to write down all the facts you were able to glean from the book, record, or Internet source.



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## What is Genealogy?



- Identifying individual ancestors and their family relationships.
- Identifying the following facts for each individual:
  - Date and place of his or her birth
  - Names of the parents
  - Date of Marriage
  - Names of any children
  - Date and place of death

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## Who is an Ancestor?



An ancestor is a person from whom you are descended. This includes the following:

- Parents
- Grandparents
- Great-grandparents
- Great-great-grandparents, etc.

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## Types of Relationships



- **Lineal Relationships:** Your parents, your grandparents, your children, your grandchildren, etc.
- **Collateral Relationships:** Your brothers, your sisters, your cousins, your aunts and uncles, etc.

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## Start With What You Know



- Start with yourself and work backwards in time. Record the names of your parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, etc.
- Interview your family members. Call, write, email, or visit them. Let them talk, and bring a notepad!
- Ask living family members to fill out a family group sheet for their families.
- Ask the elder relatives to identify people in old photographs.

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## Gather and Copy Family Records



- Newspaper clippings
- Birth and death certificates
- Birth announcements
- Funeral cards
- Old photographs
- Old letters and envelopes
- Passports
- Diaries
- Family bibles
- Yearbooks
- Wills

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## Where Can I Find My Ancestors?



- U.S. Census Records (1790-1930)
- Vital Records (Birth, Marriage, Death)
- Newspapers
- Church Records
- Military Records
- Immigration & Naturalization Records
- Church Records
- Cemetery Records
- City Directories
- Local History Publications
- Published pedigrees in books and on the Internet
- Connecting with other genealogists

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## Using the Federal Census Records



- Find parents, siblings, children
- Approximate year of birth and marriage
- Place of residence, and state or country of birth.
- Trace migration of family
- Occupations
- Year of immigration

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## Where Can I Find the Census Records?



- Microfilm – Available at genealogical libraries.
- AncestryPlus – Subscription database available at the Algonquin Library.
- Heritage Quest – Subscription database available from Algonquin Library. Home access available!

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## Who Will I Find in the Census?



1790-1840 – Only the name of the head of household is recorded in the census.  
1850-1930 – Includes the names of family members, lodgers, and resident servants.

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## How Do I Search the Census by Name?



Usually need to search by the head of household.

Exceptions:

- Individuals living in institutions indexed.
- Persons with different surname than head of household are indexed.
- Heritage Quest – 1870 index includes all males over 50 and all females over 70.
- AncestryPlus - All names indexed for years 1850-1880, 1930.

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## Common Search Problems



- Nicknames
- Middle Names
- Initials
- Misspelling
- Indexing/Transcription Errors
- Census Enumerator Errors
- “Evolving” Surnames

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## For Hard to Find Relatives



- Try alternate spellings.
- Try phonetic spellings.
- Try searching for last names without first names, or vice versa.
- Try searching by location without any names, but limit by age, location, and birthplace.
- Try browsing images by enumeration district.
- Try searching for your ancestor’s neighbors.

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## What are Vital Records?



Record of a birth, death, or marriage kept by the state, county, or town in which the event occurred.

- Birth Certificates
- Death Certificates
- Marriage Certificates

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## What Information Might I Find on A Birth Certificate?



- Name of child
- Sex of child
- Date of birth
- Place of birth
- Father's name, age or date of birth, birthplace, occupation, and residence
- Mother's maiden name, age or date of birth, birthplace, occupation, and residence
- Number of children born to the mother, and the number living at the time of the birth being recorded.

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## Where to Find Birth Dates



### Best Sources

- Birth Certificates
- Birth Indexes
- Family Bible
- Social Security Card Applications (SS-5)
- Church Records
- Baptismal Records

### Other Sources

- Death Certificates
- Social Security Death Index
- Obituaries
- Gravestones
- 1900 Census (Month and Year)

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## What Can I Learn from Marriage Records?



**Marriage Licenses -**  
Authorization to marry.

- Groom's name, age, birth date, birthplace, occupation, and address.
- Bride's maiden name, age, birth date, birthplace, occupation, and address.
- Date and place the license was issued.
- Father's name and birthplace.
- Mother's maiden name and birthplace.

**Marriage Certificates -**  
Documents the marriage ceremony.

- Names of the bride and groom.
- Date of the marriage.
- Place of the marriage.
- Who performed ceremony.
- Witnesses.

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## Where to Find Marriage Dates



- Marriage Licenses
- Marriage Indexes
- Obituaries
- Church Records
- Pension Records
- 1900, 1910, 1930 Census (Approx. year)

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## What Information Might I Find on a Death Certificate?



- Name
- Date of death
- Place of death
- Age at death
- Date of birth
- Birthplace
- Occupation
- Place of residence
- Marital status
- Name of surviving spouse
- Date and place of burial
- Name of the funeral director
- Father's name
- Father's birthplace
- Mother's maiden name
- Mother's birthplace

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## Where to Find Death Dates



- Obituaries from newspapers
- Death Certificates
- Death Indexes
- Social Security Death Index *(Since 1962)*
- Gravestones
- Probate Records
- Cemetery Records
- Church Records
- Pension Records
- Funeral Homes

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## Where Can I Find Vital Records?



- Town Offices *(New York and New England)*
- County Offices
- State Health Departments
- State Archives
- Family History Center Microfilm

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## How Do I Know Where to Send for What?



### Books

- *Ancestry's Red Book: American State, County & Town Sources*
- Bentley, Elizabeth Petty. *County Courthouse Book*
- Kemp, Thomas Jay. *International Vital Records Handbook*.

### Web Sites

- [www.vitalrec.com](http://www.vitalrec.com)
- [www.linkpendium.com](http://www.linkpendium.com)

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## Where Can I Find Published Family Histories?



### Books

- Larger Genealogical Libraries
- Local Libraries for local families

### Internet

- Rootsweb.com (WorldConnect)
- Ancestry.com (Ancestry One Tree)
- Genealogy.com
- Gencircles.com

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## Find the Local Library in Your Ancestors' Hometown



- Obituaries
- County Histories with Biographical Sketches
- City Directories
- Cemetery Transcriptions

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## Where Can I Find Immigration Records?



- National Archives (NARA)
- Large Genealogical Libraries
- [www.ellisland.org](http://www.ellisland.org) (New York, 1892 to 1924)

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