



Genealogy Research: Getting Started

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An Overview

One very basic principle when doing genealogy research is

Start with yourself and work backwards

To begin your research, use these four basic steps as a guide:

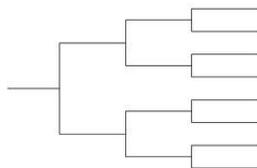
1. Get organized
2. Talk to family members
3. Research in the U.S. census
4. Research in death records

Source for this research guide:

Basics of Genealogy Reference: A Librarian's Guide by Jack Simpson

Get Organized

Step one: The first step when beginning your family history research is to organize the facts you already know. You can use a pedigree chart to help you get started. Fill out as much information as you can remembering to begin with yourself and work backwards.



For pedigree charts, go to: <https://www.ancestry.com/cs/charts-and-forms>

Talk to Family Members

Step two: Bring your pedigree chart along and talk to your family members. This will help you fill in more information and provide you with a chance to learn stories from your family's past. Sharing family photos can also be a fun place to start the conversation.

Twenty questions to ask: <https://www.familytreemagazine.com/premium/20-questions>

Census Basics:

Step three: Start with U.S. census records. Here's why:

- ◆ Researchers have a good chance of finding ancestors.
- ◆ You can learn significant facts about your ancestors here.
- ◆ Family members are recorded as a group, so you can connect one generation to another.

U.S. census records are a great place to begin doing genealogy research. The U.S. census has been taken every ten years since 1790. For privacy reasons, these personal records are closed for 72 years. Therefore, the 1940 census contains the most recent personal information available to the general public.

Census Basics continued on next page . . .

Census Basics cont.:

As time passed the questions asked on the U.S. census have changed. Here are some of the major changes in the census over the years:

- ◆ **1790-1840:** Censuses only recorded the head of the household
- ◆ **1850:** First census to name all the members of the household
- ◆ **1850-1860:** Separate slave schedules counted the number of slaves and the owner's name, but did not give the names of the slaves
- ◆ **1880:** First census to record the address being enumerated
- ◆ **1890:** On January 10, 1921 a fire destroyed most of the 1890 census
- ◆ **1900:** First census to ask immigrants the year of immigration and naturalization status
- ◆ **1940:** Currently the most recent population schedule available.

Begin your census research with the Ancestry.com database available at the Family History Center in Hailey (208-788-9810) or click on the links below (you will need to register for a free account):

- | | |
|---|---|
| ◆ United States Census, 1790
tinyurl.com/1790census | ◆ United States Census, 1870
tinyurl.com/1870uscensus |
| ◆ United States Census, 1800
tinyurl.com/1800census | ◆ United States Census, 1880
tinyurl.com/1880uscensus |
| ◆ United States Census, 1810
tinyurl.com/1810census | ◆ United States Census, 1900
tinyurl.com/1900uscensus |
| ◆ United States Census, 1820
tinyurl.com/1820census | ◆ United States Census, 1910
tinyurl.com/census1910 |
| ◆ United States Census, 1830
tinyurl.com/1830census | ◆ United States Census, 1920
tinyurl.com/1920uscensus |
| ◆ United States Census, 1840
tinyurl.com/1840uscensus | ◆ United States Census, 1930
tinyurl.com/1930uscensus |
| ◆ United States Census, 1850
tinyurl.com/1850census | ◆ United States Census, 1940
tinyurl.com/1940uscensus |
| ◆ United States Census, 1860
tinyurl.com/1860uscensus | |

Death Records

Step four: Death records are one of the most useful starting places for any genealogy researcher, for two reasons:

- ◆ Death records can be located by knowing, roughly, place and date of the deceased.
- ◆ Most governments are less restrictive with death records than marriage or birth documents.

To locate death records:

Often a county or state website will have information about obtaining local vital records. Be aware that access to vital records varies greatly depending on record type, year, and location.

Other Genealogy Resources:

Cyndi's List

<http://cyndislist.com/>

A gateway to selected genealogy websites.

FamilySearch.org

A wealth of genealogy materials along with many tutorials to help you improve your genealogy skills (check out the "Help" section at the very top of the page).

To search their catalog:

1. Go to: <https://www.familysearch.org/>
2. Click on Search and then Catalog (toward the top of the page).
3. Use the Place Name (default search) and type in the name of the county (or location) you are researching.

The USGenWeb Project

<http://www.usgenweb.org/>

A portal to genealogy resources by state.