Record What You Know & Get Organized

Building and Researching Your Family Tree, a Twelve Part Series

Prepared by Hannah Kubacak & Ron Dearth

Tools for Getting Organized

- Genealogy forms
- Family Tree software
- Online tools

Ethics or Standards for Sharing Genealogy

- Only share information about living people if granted permission.
- Fact check information you find online or in other people's research.
- Cite your sources. Know where you find information.
- Respect copyright. Do not plagiarize or use information without permission.

Genealogy Forms

Common forms used in genealogy research include:

- Ancestor/Pedigree Chart
- Family Group Sheet

Ancestor/Pedigree Chart

Tips for filling out the chart:

- Fill in the information about yourself in the far-left position. Note that each position on an ancestor sheet is numbered. You are at position #1, your dad is at #2, etc. Look at position #16, your paternal great-great-grandfather. If his parents are known, a second ancestor chart can be filled out with your great-great-grandfather in the #1 position.
- Men are recorded in even numbered positions. Women are recorded in odd numbered positions (except for position #1).
- When recording a woman's name, use her maiden name.
- Record dates in standard genealogical format. (DD MON YEAR – 29 OCT 1929)
- Places should be recorded by smallest jurisdiction to the largest, starting with the town. Locations within the United States should list the town, the county, the state, and then the nation. (Sweet Lips, Chester, Tennessee, USA)

The following standard abbreviations for vital statistics are used in most charts:

- b   birth date
- pb   place of birth
- m   marriage date
- d   death date
- pd   place of death

Family Tree Software

- Helps you get organized
- Gives you the ability to share your findings
- Gives others the ability to contribute
- One-time purchase price and subscription service available
- User support groups (search under brand name and phrase "user group")
- GEDCOM – file type used by *most* major brands to transfer family tree data between programs
- Many offer a free trial or "lite" version to test features
- Plan for how people will access your digital genealogy records after you pass away

Software Purchase	*Subscription Service*
• One time fee • Some offline; some cloud based • Typically have more features and capabilities	• Monthly, or yearly fee • Cloud based • Often tied to a research database • Can choose to make tree viewable by those using the research database
• *Examples:* RootsMagic, Family Tree Maker, Legacy Family Tree, Brother's Keeper, Family Historian, Ancestral Quest	• *Examples:* Ancestry, FindMyPast, MyHeritage

Shared Family Tree	*Individual Family Tree*
• Multiple users can edit information • Benefit of shared research • Be cautious that not all research is correct • Cannot export GEDCOM file	• Only edited by those you give permission • Can be made public or private • Keep track of your own research progress
• *Examples:* FamilySearch, WikiTree	• *Examples:* Legacy Family Tree, Ancestry, RootsMagic

Mobile Trend

- More software is becoming available as a mobile app
- Apps have fewer features than desk top counterparts, but are increasingly gaining popularity
- What does this mean for the future of genealogy?
- Apps for iPhone, Android, and Chromebooks are available for most major genealogy software.
- Apps typically lack certain features available on the desktop or web versions.

Record Your Story

- Family stories come in many forms. Recording these stories is important, and so is looking for the "truth."
- Put the facts of your story in chronological order and search for resources to verify.
- Reviewing historical context can help you understand the records that might be available to you.
- Never present a guess/hypothesis as a fact.
- Every clue should lead you to a new record.
- Recording your research makes it easier for others to understand what you have found.

Creating a Timeline

- Use Excel (or equivalent) to create a spreadsheet.
- Use the following column headings (adjust as needed):
- Year – Date – Age – Life Events – Place – Historic Evens – Source/Notes
- Color code as need to help identify information.
- In "Source/Notes" list enough detail to be able to find the information again.
- Use the system that works best for YOU
- Goals of a timeline:
  - Visualize ancestors' lives.
  - Identify gaps in information.
  - Add historical context.

Names, Date, and Place (NDPs of Genealogy Research)

These are the core tenants of genealogical research, and the main points of reference in your family tree.

- Know the historic and modern names of locations.
- Thinking about first names…
  - Did they use their middle name? What about initials?
  - What were nick names?
- Keep a surname log, and an alternative spellings log.

Naming Patterns

Angus Baxter in "In Search of Your British and Irish Roots" describes a pattern that was popular in England in the 1700-1875 period:

- The first son was named after the father's father
- The second son was named after the mother's father
- The third son was named after the father
- The fourth son was named after the father's eldest brother
- The first daughter after the mother's mother
- The second daughter after the father's mother
- The third daughter after the mother
- The fourth daughter after the mother's eldest sister

Genealogy Links

Free Forms

support.ancestry.com/s/article/Free-Charts-and-Forms

misbach.org/pdfcharts

www.mymcpl.org/genealogy/family-history-forms

Reviews of Software

genealogyresearchguide.com/compare-genealogy-software-programs/

www.americanancestors.org/education/learning-resources/read/genealogical-software-programs

www.toptenreviews.com/best-family-tree-maker

Other

Passing on Your Passwords: blog.csa.us/2014/10/passing-on-your-passwords-as-part-of.html

FamilySearch (build a tree, find records): www.familysearch.org

Naming Patterns: www.genealogy.com/35_donna.html