



Main Menu – Genealogy A Beginner’s Workshop

Class 1 – In the Beginning

If you are unable to attend class, please call. You may leave a message at the Special Collections Center at the library, phone (563) 326-7902.

1. What is your research goal?

Who do you want to research? What is your research goal?

If you or a family member is adopted, decide if you want to research the adoption family, the biological family, or both.

2. Keep track of your information.

Keep track of your finds (names, dates, etc) but also where you found it. Keeping track of your source is as important as keeping track of your facts.

Decide how you want to keep track:

- paper copy
- computer copies
- on-line copies

We recommend keeping duplicate records, such as a paper copy and a computer copy, or a computer copy and a flash-drive copy.

Purchase a genealogy program (*optional*)

<https://www.smarterhobby.com/genealogy/best-genealogy-software/>

This website compares five programs.

- Family Tree Builder – Not familiar with this program. Appears to be owned by My Heritage. Free.
- Family Tree Maker 2017 – I use an older version of FTM. \$80 and up depending upon how it is downloaded and the program
- Legacy 9 – Not familiar with this. \$35 - \$80.
- Family Historian 6 – Not familiar with this. \$47.
- RootsMagic 7 – Several of the people at the Family History Center use this program. About \$30.
- Other programs are available.

You can use on-line storage:

- Ancestry.com – not free
- FamilySearch.org – free, but they use a universal tree exception available
- MyHeritage – not free
- other sites

3. Start

Complete a pedigree chart and family groups sheets.

- Traditionally, the man / husband goes on the top line and the woman / wife goes on the bottom line.
- Surnames can be spelled a variety of ways. Decide how you want to spell the name. It does not have to be spelled the same for all generations. For example, for 4 generations my grandmother's family name was spelled Alleman, but for the newest 6 generations the family name is spelled Allman.
- List a woman by her maiden name, not her married name.
- First names may be abbreviated or a nickname. When you record the name, use "proper" name for your records, but note nicknames.
- Consider listing the surname in capital letters.
- For dates, professionals recommend day-month-year. You may choose to use month-day-year. This is acceptable as long as you use a month name, not a number (Jan or January, not 1 or 01).
- Do not abbreviate locations. List the city if there is one, county, state, country. If you abbreviate, you may skip listing USA or America. When recording countries, list the name of the country it was when your ancestor lived there. You may list "West Germany (now Germany)" if you want to include the name of the current country. You may want to include the Township if your ancestor lived in a rural area.

First, start a pedigree chart, also known as an ancestor chart.

- Davenport Public Library 5 Generation Ancestor Chart
<https://blogs.davenportlibrary.com/sc/forms/>
- National Archives Ancestral Chart
<https://www.archives.gov/files/research/genealogy/charts-forms/ancestral-chart.pdf>
- FamilySearch.org
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/img_auth.php/8/80/Pedigree_Chart_Blank.png
- Computer program

Second, complete a family group sheet using the information you know.

- Davenport Public Library Family Group Sheet
<https://blogs.davenportlibrary.com/sc/forms/>
- National Archives Family Group Sheet
<https://www.archives.gov/files/research/genealogy/charts-forms/family-group-sheet.pdf>
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/bc/content/shared/content/images/gospel-library/manual/34824/31827_000_000.pdf
- Computer program
- Start with yourself, then work backwards.
- Fill out a family group sheet for each couple/family.
- Do not skip generations.

Always keep track of your failures as well as your successes.

4. Interview a family member.

Check with your family. Does anyone in your family do genealogy? If so, can you meet with that person and/or copy their records?

reminder: A cousin who has done family research has researched only one part of your family. Only a full sibling has the same ancestry as you do.

Who is available to interview? Parent? Grandparent? Aunt/Uncle? Sibling? Cousin? Is there more than one relative available to interview?

See FamilySearch.org, Search, Research Wiki, Creating Oral Histories
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Creating_Oral_Histories

There are several possible questions. If you ask all of the Family Search questions, you'll be there a very long time. A shorter list is:

1. Where did you live when you were growing up?
2. How did your family come to live there?
3. Were there other family members in the area? What were their names?
4. What older relatives do you remember, and what do you remember about them? What were their nicknames and where did they live? Do you remember any traditions associated with them?
5. What was your family religion?
6. What family stories have you heard about your parents? your grandparents? more distant relatives?
7. What stories have you heard about your family members in the "old country" prior to immigrating to America and their immigration trip to America?
8. Is there a naming tradition in the family?

If a relative gives you a photo, make sure it is labeled as to who is in the photo. Use a post-it note attached to the back of the photo for the name, date and/or event. We will discuss photos in class 6.

GENERAL GENEALOGY NOTE:

Whenever doing research, especially when you are not at home, carry with you:

- paper
- pencil (pen optional but always keep a pencil)
- magnifying glass
- coins

This applies if you are interviewing family members or visiting a library. (OK – so you probably won't need coins to visit with a relative, but the others items will come in handy.)

HOMEWORK:

Check with your family members to determine if anyone has done the family genealogy. If there is someone, contact them to share information.

If there is a family member available to interview, interview the person (people).

Complete 4 or 5 generations on the pedigree / ancestor chart to see who you have and who you need.

Complete family group sheets for as many of your ancestors who you know.

Define your first goal.