

## HOW DO I BEGIN?

New to family history? Start the easy way using easily obtained information.

What better place to start doing your family history than right in your own home. Where do you start looking? A box in the basement or corner of the garage, the old chest in the attic, old letters and records in a bag on the top shelf of the hall closet, old family Bible on the book shelf, and where is grandma's old genealogy book and all those ancient family picture albums?

Some tools that help. Many things are available at your local Family History Center.

Good reference book or "How to Book,"

The Handy Book for Genealogists, published by Everton Publishers.

The Researchers Guide to American Genealogy, by Val D.Greenwood.

Map Guide to U. S. Federal Census, by William Dollarhide & William Thorndale.

Good guide book for looking up towns and counties.

Atlas or maps where researching.

Family History GETTING IT RIGHT by Mary H. Slawson The definitive guide to recording family history accurately.

Will you keep you records on paper or computer? To be organized you will use four forms.

1. Family Group Record. Record identities and events on individual and family.
2. Pedigree Chart. Summarizes information from FGR and arranges relationships.
3. Research Log. Record of where you looked and information you found.
4. Correspondence Log. Who you talked to or contacted and information you received.

As you obtain information you will be constantly entering and updating and documenting your sources on your FGR.

Family history research involves 5 basic steps.

1. Identify what you know about your family.
2. Decide what you want to learn about your family.
3. Select records to search.
4. Obtain and search the record.
5. Record the information.

Now you are ready to start recording your family history.

Record what you know about your ancestors on the Pedigree Chart and Family Group Record. Start with yourself and go back.

Look through the information you have found around home. It will probably include certificates for birth, marriage and death, invitations and announcements, newspaper articles, obituaries, journals, old letters with family information, and pictures from photo albums. Enter the information into your records. Be sure to enter your sources at the same time. Additional information you want in your record can be put into notes. To keep an organized record of what you have done make entries in your research log.

Talk to immediate family members and get all the information from them that you can. Contact distant relatives by phone, Email, or write letters. Enter your contacts on your correspondence log.

Find out if there is a family genealogist and what records are available. Is there a published family history book or surname book written by a family member? These books are a good way to start adding names to your record. Try to get dates and places for any names you add. Some dates can be estimated.

Look at your record and decide what information you need next and where to find it.

If you use a computer you can do a lot of research at home. If you need help a good place to start would be your local Family History Center. There are staff members available to help you. Take advantage of the reference and other books and maps. You can order in microfilm to search. Also learn how to do research and census search on the computer.

Do a search on the internet at [familysearch.org](http://familysearch.org). using these options to search.

- All Resources
- Ancestral File
- Census
- International genealogical Index
- Pedigree Resource File
- Social Security Death Index
- Vital Records Index
- Search Family History Web Sites

Also on the right side of the page you have a choice of more options. Try them.

Start Your Family History

- Get started with family history
- Research guidance by location
- Forms, maps & guides
- Birth, marriage, and death vital records
- Record search (pilot) with view U. S. & U.K. census indexes
- U. S, British & Canadian Census index
- Free online resources

Visit the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah using the library catalog online.

On [familysearch.org](http://familysearch.org) click on the library catalog and choose any of the following.

- Place Search
- Surname Search
- Keyword Search
- Title Search
- Film/Fiche Search
- Author Search
- Call Number Search

As you collect information add it to your record and also to your Research Log. Always watch for errors in records and try to have several sources to verify the accuracy of your information.

Find your family on the United States Federal Population census. The census was taken every 10 years starting in 1790. It listed only head of household and a number breakdown of family members until 1840.

1850 was the first census to list names of all living in the household.

1860 was the first census to list value of personal estates.

1880 was the first census to list relationships.

1890 was destroyed by fire however some states have compiled substitute files to help you find your family during that time. (Probably found at state library and archives.)

1900 & 1910 lists number of children born alive and number now living. This is important information because of the loss of the 1890 census.

Marital status lists married, single, widowed, divorced, and married how many years.

Birth place of parent may be listed, either state or country and language spoken.

Look for occupation or trade.

Street names and house numbers may be written in sideways on the margin.

Names were not always spelled correctly. Look for variant spellings.

Look for census on: [familysearch.org](http://familysearch.org)

[ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com)

[heritagequest.com](http://heritagequest.com)

Watch for errors when using census for documentation. Find your family on at least 3 different census enumerations and compare information and note differences.

Other sources you can go to find help and information.

State Library, archives, and historical society

City and county library

College library

Don't have time for genealogy? You'll have more time when the baby gets older, the kids are in school, when you are retired, it's something "old" people do. Make time for genealogy. Move it near the top of your TO DO list. People with the information you need may be gone before you get started. Leave your book out where you see it and spend just a short time recording information or deciding what you need to do next.