

## Getting started with genealogy:

### Continuing your education:

- National Archives: <https://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy/start-research>
- Ancestry Learning Hub: <https://www.ancestry.com/c/family-history-learning-hub>
- Family Search Family History for Beginners: [https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Family\\_History\\_for\\_Beginners](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Family_History_for_Beginners)
- **Whose story do you want to tell?:**
  - o Pedigree charts V. Family Trees– Deciding who to prioritize can help your research.
    - Pedigree charts
      - Benefits of this method: It can be less overwhelming than focusing on the entire family. You are more likely to research more quickly, and you may not have to have active subscriptions as long.
      - Drawbacks: If you hit a wall in your research, you have less resources to help you easily break through. You may miss important details about your family that are documented with another family member.
    - Family tree focuses on all members of the family, including siblings, cousins, aunts, and uncles.
      - Benefits of this method: it is fun to learn about distant relationships, and you may find more enjoyment with research when it prioritizes exploration rather than finding a direct branch.
      - Drawbacks: it is easy for trees to resemble bushes, and it requires more time verifying resources and connections.
- **Gather all the facts from family members:**
  - o First names, last names, surnames, alternative spellings to names (most common if an ancestor has immigrated), year of birth and death, and location(s) that an ancestor has lived.
  - o Family members: Gather information and relationships of the family members as you work your way back through history.
- **Common Records:**
  - Indexes: Birth, Death, and Marriage. Generally, lists of information or issued licenses that has been transcribed from county/ state records.
  - Birth records: Birth certificates, birth registries, Baptism & Christening Records, or synagogue/ Shul records.
  - Death: Social Security Death Index (American Specific), death certificates.
  - Census Records
    - U.S. Federal Census records taken every 10 years starting in 1790. State Census records are trickier. Taken randomly and depends on date of statehood.
    - Each country will have their own census records:
      - o German first census was taken 1769.
      - o United Kingdom is 1081 for tax purposes.

- **Common Records continued**
  - Alternative records:
    - Newspapers, marriage certificates, family bibles, gravesites.
    - War Pensions, Military rolls, city directories.
- **There's a pattern to records:**
  - Most common records to expect: Birth records, two census records covering ages 0-10/10-20 (this will include their parents, family members, and maybe a spouse), Marriage Index, Death Index
    - There may not be a third census, especially if your ancestor was born in the latter half of the decade.
- **Learn a little bit of history (example):**
  - 1765–1783 American Revolution: important for those interested in associating with Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) est 1890 or Sons of the American Revolution (SAR)
  - 1790 Federal Census starts.
  - 1801-1861 (Western Expansion including Gold Rush)- United States Census Bureau has a “Following the Frontier Line, 1790 to 1890 chart <https://www.census.gov/dataviz/visualizations/001/>.
  - Civil War: 1861-1865
  - 1906: San Francisco Earthquake and resulting fires damage all records prior to 1906
  - 1921: US Department of Commerce Building in Washington DC catches fire, 1890's census records lost
  - WWI: European (1914-1918), American (1917-1918)
  - WWII: European (1939-1945; American (1942-1945)
  - 1950: Most recent Federal Census available. April 2032 is when we can expect the 1960 census.
  - Ours is simple, other's not so much:
    - Unification of Germany in 1871, country in 1939
    - Poland was invaded three times throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Prussia, Russia, and Austrian Empires) and became a country again in 1918.
- **Common Follies:**
  - Go for primary source material when available.
  - Review the material yourself (cursive is a lost art)
  - Check your material before adding them to your tree, don't hoard.
  - Primary sources can be wrong (but .... didn't you just say...?), you will have contradictory information somewhere on your tree.
  - Documenting your documents:
    - When online, include notes to yourself while you're saving documents to your tree.
    - I encourage you to include the relevant date when saving the document to your computer. Exp: 1940 Federal Census – Smith or 1922 10 05 Marriage Certificate – Smith Johnson
    - Printed material should include the bibliographic information including the date you printed off the document.

- **Tough research**

- Adoptions: in the U.S., access to sealed documents may be restricted.
  - <https://gfo.org/learn/search-for-a-birth-parent.html>
  - [https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/United\\_States\\_Adoption](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/United_States_Adoption)
- Slavery:
  - Enslaved- Peoples of the Historical Slave Trade <https://enslaved.org/>
  - NARA, National Archives in the UK, Ancestry
- There are support groups online to help with this specific research.

- **Last Notes:**

- International Research:
  - Family Search & Ancestry have free guides on how to conduct research in specific countries.
  - Online translation tools are great, but not perfect.
  - There are support groups online to help tackle specific regions of research.