



Genealogy 101

Presented by Alise White

How to Get Started

- Start with yourself, and work backward.
- Gather "home sources" for yourself and your family, such as vital records (copies of birth, marriage and death certificates), school, health, employment, religious or other records.
- When you have completed this information for yourself and your family, work backwards one generation at a time.
- Gather the same type of information for each person as you work backwards. **Don't worry about people you don't know or information that you don't have. Gather what you have.**

How to Get Started

- You will end up with a lot of paper in the beginning. A great way to organize is to get a portable scanner so you can upload all of the documents into your computer.
- While you are looking find some good resources to read to guide you.

Beginners Resources

- Basic beginners' books include:
- *Family History Made Easy* by Loretto Dennis Szucs (Salt Lake City, UT: Ancestry Inc., 1998)
- *Finding Your Roots: How to Trace Your Ancestors at Home and Abroad* by Jeane Eddy Westin (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 1998)
- *First Steps in Genealogy: A Beginner's Guide to Researching Your Family History* by Desmond Walls Allen (Cincinnati: Betterway Books, 1998)
- *Unpuzzling Your Past: A Basic Guide to Genealogy* by Emily Anne Croom (Cincinnati: Betterway Books, 1995. Now in its third edition)
- Several others are available at amazon.com or at your local library.

Beginners Resources

- **Classes, Conferences and Seminars**

- **Classes** are offered at libraries, colleges, park districts or through local Family History Centers (operated by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints). Genealogical societies offer meetings and classes.

Conferences and seminars are sponsored by many local societies and almost all state societies. These may run anywhere from one to four days. For instance, the week-long Genealogical Institute of Mid-America is offered by the Illinois State Genealogical Society and the University of Illinois-Springfield.

National conferences are presented by the National Genealogical Society, the Federation of Genealogical Societies, GENTECH, Palatines to America and other organizations. These are hosted in different cities each year.

Online classes, as well as a home study course, are offered by the National Genealogical Society. RootsWeb also offers online genealogy lessons. Check our page of Internet links for addresses of many of these groups.

Beginners Resources

- **Genealogical Societies**
- **ANCESTOR ORIGIN:** You may find your ancestors in that society's facilities or publications
- **ETHNIC/RELIGIOUS GROUP:** These sometimes offer maps and sources not widely available.
- **SURNAME:** If your surname is uncommon, you may link up with someone searching your name
- **COUNTY OR STATE:** If you have ancestors in many counties of a state, or if the society offers benefits useful to you, or if there is no society in the geographic area you are interested in..
- **How do you find these groups?**
- **ONLINE SOURCES:** Cyndi's List of Genealogy Sites on the Internet <www.cyndislist.com> and Juliana's Links, accessed through <www.ancestry.com>.

Basic Types of Records To Search

- Census Records
- City Directories and phone books
- CD's, Microfiche and Microfilm
- Newspapers
- Obituaries
- Family History books and Files
- Pictures
- Maps
- Marriage, death, church and real estate records

TIPS

Don't assume you are going to find all of this information online. You have to get out into family trunks, and libraries to find valuable information as well.

It takes time to research your family tree even if you already know a lot.

Websites

- ancestry.com
- Familysearch.org
- RootsWeb.com
- Heritage Quest
- South Suburban Genealogical Society
(Hazel Crest, IL)
- geni.com
- National Archives
- National Genealogy Society

QUESTIONS

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