

## What is Genealogy?

Genealogy is the study of your family history. That history includes you and your brothers and sisters (siblings), your mother and father (parents), your grandparents, great grandparents and so forth.

Sometimes a chart is used to show family relationships. This chart is called a Family Tree or a Pedigree Chart. When you place the members of your family in a Family Tree (Pedigree Chart) you can now see the different generations. A generation is a group of people born and living at the same time. Some examples of Family Tree and Pedigree Charts can be found below:

- **Family Tree for Children**
- **3-Generation Pedigree Chart**
- **4-Generation Pedigree Chart**
- **5-Generation Pedigree Chart**

To find this information you can ask your parents, your aunts and uncles or your grandparents. You can also be a detective and search through family records like a Family Bible where births, marriages and deaths may be listed, church records like baptismal, confirmation and marriage records and, civil records. Civil records are created by the government to keep track of who owned land, who voted, who was born, married or died. Census records show where someone was living when the census was taken, who the members of their family were and where a person and his/her parents were born. Research can also mean studying the area where your family members lived. This could include local histories, county, state and even country histories.

## What do I need to get started?

Start with:

- Three Ring binder
- Three Hole Paper
- Page dividers
- Pencil
- Pencil sharpener
- And, maybe an eraser.

As you start collecting copies of official documents and photos you may want to get a plastic box to keep them safe.

There are many types of forms available that you can use but sometimes they don't have enough room on them to write in all your information. It's okay to develop your own way to record your information in your notebook as long as you follow the same format when you record it.

## How do I get Started?

Take your notebook and on the first page print your first name, middle name, and last name (surname) at the top of the page. Underneath your name, enter your birthday including the year you were born. On the next line, enter where you were born, including city, county, state, country.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
First name, Middle name, Last name

Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_  
Month – Day – Year

Location Born: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, County, State, Country

Next, talk with your mother and father and ask them the same questions about themselves.

Your mother had a different last name (maiden name) before she married your father. Make sure you write down her maiden name when you enter her information. At the top of a new sheet of paper in your notebook, complete the following information for your mother.

Mother's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
First name, Middle name, Last name

Mother's Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_  
Month – Day – Year

Location Born: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, County, State, Country

At the top of a new sheet of paper in your notebook, complete the following information for your father.

Father's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
First name, Middle name, Last name

Father's Birth date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Month – Day – Year

Location Born: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, County, State, Country

Another piece of information that you want to ask about is the day your mother and father got married. Enter that information on your mother's page.

Marriage Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Month – Day – Year

Location Married: \_\_\_\_\_  
Church, City, County, State, Country

With the information you have entered, you now have two generations in your family tree.

To support the information that you have gathered, ask your parents for copies of your birth certificate, your parents' birth certificates and their marriage license. These papers or documents are proof that the events that you are reporting happened.

You will want to continue climbing your family tree by talking with other family members. You can start new pages in your notebook with your brothers and sisters' names, birth dates and where they were born. Ask your grandparents the same three questions you have asked yourself, your parents and your siblings and write down their answers in your notebook. Use your notebook to record all the wonderful stories you will hear from your parents.

## My next step: Research

You've asked your mother and your father about when you were born and where. You asked them about themselves and you've carefully entered this information into your journal. You may even have grandparents that you have sat and talked with about their lives and have heard many interesting stories. But now you'd like to know more about your ancestors who are no longer living. Where do you start your research?

Here is where you become an Ancestor Detective. First, ask if there is a Family Bible that your parents or grandparents have that contains a written record of when and where family members were born, married and died. Keeping paper records was not required many years ago. Families relied on their Bible to track when children were born; couples married and loved ones buried after their death. If your family doesn't have a Family Bible, ask your mother and father about starting one for your family.

The Vital Records Department is another place to find this information. Ask your parents to work with you. The records should be found in locations where your ancestor was born, married and died.

Be sure to visit your local library where they may have copies of old newspapers from your local town or city on microfilm. By reading the birth notices and obituaries, you can learn names of family members you'll want to include in your family tree. Sometimes an obituary will also tell where that relative was living at that time.

Many libraries today also have access to electronic databases that hold information on your ancestors. You can find census records from 1790 through 1930 on the Internet today. The U.S. Federal Census has been taken every 10 years since 1790.

## Questions I Can Ask

### Your parents:

- Was I named after someone in our family or a family friend?
- What was I like as an infant?
- What foods did I like?
- What toys did I play with?

### Your mother:

- Were you named after someone in our family or a family friend?
- Did you have a nickname
- How did you meet my father?

### Your father:

- Were you named after someone in our family or a family friend?
- Did you have a nickname
- How did you meet my mother?

## Genealogy Definitions

<b>Ancestor</b>	A person from whom one is descended.
<b>Census Record</b>	A counting of population and related statistics done by the government occurring at regular intervals.
<b>Document</b>	An official or legal piece of paper used as proof of an event such as a birth.

<b>Family Bible</b>	A Bible in which may be written the birth, marriage and death dates of a family.
<b>Family History</b>	Family history is the study of many generations of people who appear to be related.
<b>Genealogy</b>	Genealogy is the study of your family history.
<b>Generation</b>	A generation is a group of people born and living at the same time.
<b>Maiden name</b>	The surname of a female's father.
<b>Parents</b>	Your mother and father.
<b>Pedigree Chart</b>	A record of ancestry, usually shown on a chart.
<b>Proof</b>	Documents or other evidence, which makes you believe a statement or claim, is likely to be true.
<b>Research</b>	The careful study and collection of information about a subject.
<b>Siblings</b>	Brothers and/or sister with the same parents.
<b>Surname</b>	A person's last name or family name.
<b>Vital Record</b>	A document that sets down in writing a past event such as a birth, marriage or death.



- [Books We Recommend](#)

Below is a list of books that may help Youth in their family history research. We suggest that you check your local library to see if they have a copy of the book you are interested in. If not, you can use the links below to purchase the book at Amazon. Any book ordered at Amazon by using our links supports our Society's Youth Genealogy Education program.

**Let's Plant a Family Tree: How To Start Your Genealogy Research** by Ruth Emmel

**Start Climbing Your Family Tree Workbook** by Ruth Emmel

**A Student's Guide to African American Genealogy** by Anne E. Johnson and Adam Merton Coope

**A Student's Guide to British American Genealogy** by Anne E. Johnson

**A Student's Guide to Chinese American Genealogy** by Colleen She

**A Student's Guide to Irish American Genealogy** by Erin McKenn

**A Student's Guide to Italian American Genealogy** by Terra Castiglia Brockman

**A Student's Guide to German American Genealogy** by Gregory Robi

**A Student's Guide to Japanese American Genealogy** by Yoji Yamaguch

**A Student's Guide to Jewish American Genealogy** by Jay Schleife

**A Student's Guide to Mexican American Genealogy** by George Ryskamp and Peggy Ryskamp

**A Student's Guide to Native American Genealogy** by E. Barrie Kavasch

**A Student's Guide to Polish American Genealogy** by Carl Sokolnicki Rollyson and Lisa Olson Paddock

**A Student's Guide to Scandinavian American Genealogy** by Lisa Olson Paddock and Carl Sokolnicki Rollyson

**African Names: Names from the African Continent for Children and Adults** by Julia Stewar

**Black Genealogy** by Blockson

**Black Roots: A Beginners Guide To Tracing The African American Family Tree** by Tony Burrough

**Climbing Your Family Tree: Online and Off-line Genealogy for Kids** by Ira Wolfman

**Climb Your Family Tree: A Genealogy Detective's Kit** by Anne Depu

**Coming to America - The Germans (The Immigrant Experience)** by Anne Galicich

**Creating Jr. Genealogists: Tips and Activities for Family History Fun** by Karen Frisch Denne

**Do People Grow on Family Trees?: Genealogy for Kids and Other Beginners, The Official Ellis Island Handbook** by Ira Wolfman

**Dozens of Cousins; Blue Genes, Horse Thieves, and Other Relative Surprises in Your Family Tree** by Lois Horowitz

**Family History On The Move: Where Your Ancestors Went and Why** by Roger Kershaw and Mark Pearsall

**Immigrant Kids** by Russell Freedman

**Irish Names for Children** by Patrick Woulfe and Gerard Slevin

**Island Of Hope: The Journey To America And The Ellis Island Experience** by Martin Sandler

**German Immigrants in America: An Interactive History Adventure** by Elizabeth Raum

**Let's Plant a Family Tree: How to Start Your Genealogy Research** by Ruth Emmel

**The German American Family Album** by Dorothy Hoobler and Thomas Hooble

**The Orphan Of Ellis Island** by Elvira Woodruf

**Through the Eyes of Your Ancestors: A Step-by-Step Guide to Uncovering Your Family's History** by Maureen Taylor

**You Wouldn't Want to Sail on an Irish Famine Ship!: A Trip Across the Atlantic You'd Rather Not Make** by Jim Pipe