

Getting to Know Your Roots: An Introduction to Genealogy on the Internet"

A Seminar Presented by Charles Johnson

Introduction

Family history research involves 5 basic steps. Each step is briefly explained below.

Steps

Step 1. Identify what you know about your family.

Write what you know about your ancestors on the pedigree chart. Start with yourself (no.1). If you don't know exact dates or places, estimate them.

Gather more information from family members and relatives. Look at family bibles, journals, letters, obituaries, and other records. When you find new information, write it on your pedigree chart. A sample pedigree chart will be distributed to class participants

Step 2. Decide what you want to learn about your family.

Choose an ancestor from the pedigree chart about whom you would like to know more. If possible, select an ancestor who was born before 1900.

Identify questions you want to answer about your ancestor, such as "When and where did he die?"

Select one question as the objective. In general, find out about the ancestor's death before the marriage and the marriage before the birth. Write your ancestor's name, the objective [event], approximate date of event and the locality [place of event] on a research log [to be passed out in class]

Step 3. Select records to search.

There are two main types of genealogical records:

Compiled Records: Records of previous research by others, such as a biography, family history, or genealogy.

Original Records: Records created at or near the time of an event, such as birth, marriage, death, or census records.

Generally, when selecting records, search compiled records first, and then search original records.

Step 4. Obtain and search the record.

Records Selection Table

OBJECTIVE To obtain information about—	RECORD TYPES
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	First look for:	Then look for:
Age	Census, Vital Records*, Cemeteries	Military Records, Taxation, Obituaries
Birth date	Vital Records*, Church Records, Bible Records	Cemeteries, Obituaries, Census, Newspapers, Military Records
Birth date	Vital Records*, Church Records, Bible Records	Cemeteries, Obituaries, Census, Newspapers, Military Records
Birthplace	Vital Records*, Church Records, Census	Newspapers, Obituaries, Military Records
City or parish of foreign birth	Church Records, Genealogy, Biography, Obituaries, Naturalization and Citizenship	Emigration and Immigration, Vital Records*, History
Country of foreign birth	Census, Emigration and Immigration, Naturalization and Citizenship, Vital Records*	Military Records, Church Records, Newspapers, Obituaries
County origins and boundaries	History, Maps	Gazetteers
Death	Vital Records, Cemeteries, Probate Records, Church Records, Obituaries	Newspapers, Military Records, Court Records, Land and Property
Divorce	Court Records, Divorce Records	Newspapers, Vital Records*
Ethnicity	Minorities, Native Races, Societies	Church Records, Emigration and Immigration, Naturalization and Citizenship
Historical Background	History, Periodicals, Genealogy	Church History, Minorities
Immigration or emigration	Emigration and Immigration,	Census, Biography,

date	Naturalization and Citizenship, Genealogy	Newspapers, Church Records
Maiden Name	Vital Records*, Church Records, Newspapers, Bible Records	Military Records, Cemeteries, Probate Records, Obituaries
Marriage	Vital Records*, Church Records, Census, Newspapers, Bible Records	Biography, Genealogy, Military Records, Probate Records, Land and Property, Nobility
Occupation	Census, Directories, Emigration and Immigration, Civil Registration, Occupations, Probate Records	Newspapers, Court Records, Obituaries, Officials and Employees
Parents, children, and other family members	Vital Records*, Church Records, Census, Probate Records, Obituaries	Bible Records, Newspapers, Emigration and Immigration, Land and Property
Physical description	Military Records, Biography, Court Records	Naturalization and Citizenship, Civil Registration, Church Records, Emigration and Immigration, Genealogy, Newspapers
Place-finding aids	Gazetteers, Maps	Directories, History, Periodicals, Land and Property, Taxation
Place (town) of residence when you know only the state	Census, Genealogy, Military Records, Vital Records*, Church Records, Directories	Biography, Probate Records, History, Land and Property, Taxation
Places family has lived	Census, Land and Property, History	Military Records, Taxation, Obituaries
Previous Research (compiled genealogy)	Genealogy, Periodicals, History	Biography, Societies, Nobility
Record Finding Aids	Archives and Libraries, Societies, Genealogy	Periodicals
Religion	Church Records, History, Biography, Civil Registration	Bible Records, Cemeteries, Obituaries, Genealogy

*Outside the United States and Canada, see "Civil Registration" instead of "Vital Records."

Web Sites for Searching and Obtaining the Records:

Internet Genealogy Catalog,

<http://cyndislist.com>

Index to genealogical sites by state:

<http://tinyurl.com/2c3eqc>

Records available on microfilm:

[http://www.familysearch.org/Eng/Library/FHLC/frameset fhlc.asp](http://www.familysearch.org/Eng/Library/FHLC/frameset_fhlc.asp)

Fifty [50] Genealogy Web Sites

<http://genteach.com>

Step 5. Use the information.

Evaluate the information found. Did you find the information you were looking for? Is the information complete? Does it conflict with other information you already have?

Copy new information onto the pedigree chart and family group sheet [to be handed out at class.

Organize newly acquired records. File photocopies in a convenient, organized way, such as by family.

Share the information. Share your newly discovered information with interested family members.