

## Getting Started with your Family History

An outline of how you start:

1) Remember what you can - Take a few minutes to remember and write down what you already know about your relatives and ancestors.

Record information by family, then use it as a roadmap for the information you need to find.

2) Look for information in your own home:

- Attic, basement, storage areas
- Personal files, desk
- Closets, book shelves, drawers

Try to find:

- Letters, diaries, journals
- Certificates, legal documents
- Heirlooms, Family Bibles
- Obituaries, newspaper clippings
- Photographs (check the backs for information)

3) Interview your relatives, the oldest relatives first

- Contact relatives ahead of time and asked them to make copies of important documents
- Record your visits (paper, audio, or video), but don't make your relatives self-conscious
- Identify people in photographs or listed in documents
- Ask questions that will encourage relatives to share facts and stories

4) Then, you need to enter the data onto forms that will be easy for you (and for us) to interpret. The basic forms are called pedigree charts and family group sheets.

Get a blank pedigree chart: [www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/registrars/tree.pdf](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/registrars/tree.pdf)

or

<http://classic-web.archive.org/web/20070823034346/http://www.hamersleyfamily.com/5generationpedigreechart.pdf>

Print off multiple family group sheets: [www.notablekin.org/gbr/familygroupsheet.pdf](http://www.notablekin.org/gbr/familygroupsheet.pdf)

5) Get vital records – birth, marriage, death from the relevant agencies, usually the county in which the event occurred. Also look for cemetery records (try findagrave.com); Society Security Death Index; newspaper obituaries

6) Look for census records: [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com); [Heritage Quest](http://HeritageQuest.com); [familysearch.org](http://familysearch.org)

7) Look for local records in books and online ([USGenweb.org](http://USGenweb.org))

8) Visit libraries with genealogical collections either in person or online: Camarillo Library; [FamilySearch.org](http://FamilySearch.org) (the Salt Lake library of the Latter Day Saint (Mormon) church; Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, Indiana. And if traveling, look for libraries in the towns and counties where your family lived.

9) Join genealogical societies: Local – Ventura County Genealogical Society. Plus, almost every county in the United States has a local genealogical society or historical society with people acquainted with the history and the people of their locale.

10) Get a genealogical computer program in which to enter what you find, and back it up frequently: (these are free) **PAF** – [familysearch.org/products](http://familysearch.org/products); **Legacy** - <http://www.legacyfamilytree.com/> ; **RootsMagic** - <http://rootsmagic.com/Essentials/>

Have Fun!

