Introduction to Genealogy

Getting Started

Ancestral Chart
- Write in Pencil

- Keep consistent data formatting (i.e. day month year or month day year / first middle last name or last name, first middle)

- Keep a blank copy as a master to make additional copies when needed

Family Group Record
- Write in pencil

- Keep consistent data formatting (i.e. day month year or month day year / first middle last name or last name, first middle)

- Keep a blank copy as a master to make additional copies when needed

- Corresponds to Ancestral Chart

Who, What, When

Who
- Organize your data

- Analyze your data

- Decide who you want to find

- One name at a time

- Identify what you want to learn

- Cite your sources!

Organizing Your "Who"
- Paper and Notebooks

- Online photos, notes, family trees

- Ancestry.com

- FamilySearch.org

- LegacyFamilyTree.com

- FamilyEcho.com

What

- Full name

- Birth date and location

- Marriage date and location

- Death date and location

- Military records

- Occupation

- School education

Where (& When)

Note: We are talking generally about the fact that the information you may be looking for can likely be found in these types of resources. We are not necessarily talking about how to find these resources at the moment. Each type of source is a likely candidate to find family information and each is likely to contain different (and sometimes conflicting) information.

- Family & Friends

- Birth certificates

- Death certificates or Obituaries

- Marriage certificates

- Military records

- Bible records

- School records

- Cemeteries

- Deeds, Wills

- Pictures

- Newspaper articles

- Old letters or Scrapbooks

Why

- What is my ancestry

- What are my family origins

- Finding family

- Family stories

- Medical history

- Am I related to…?

Genealogy Research

Tips for Searching

- Have your Ancestral Charts, Family Group Records, and other information on the Surname you will be searching
- Pencil and Paper (Notebook)
- Thumb drive/Flash drive and Money (small bills and/or coin)
- Create a plan for searching
- Remember names are misspelled – Keep a list of different spellings you find
- Dates are wrong – Search a range of years
- Track where you have searched
- Keep notes organized
- Protect and preserve your information
- Not everything is on the internet
- Take breaks
- Cite your sources!

How

Look for these items/records potentially containing information about your family members:

- Census records
- Birth, marriage, and death records
- Military records
- Legal records (i.e. probate, deed, and courts)
- Naturalization and immigration records
- Medical records
- Church records
- Education or Occupation records
- Newspapers
- Libraries, museums, or archives
- Internet or Books
- Historical and Genealogical Societies

Sources

Things to remember:

- Primary evidence – created at or near time of event and is based on firsthand knowledge
- Secondary evidence – based on primary evidence and/or hearsay. It is less reliable.
- Check your sources and Evaluate the information (i.e. is the source reliable or accurate?)
- Read the introduction and information about the source
- Make a copy of the title page of your sources
- Information found will vary greatly from state to state and even between counties within the same state in some cases

Example – Primary Source

Presentation slide shows the Selective Service forms (draft cards) of an individual for both WW1 and WW2. The images show discrepancies in the date of birth between the two documents completed decades apart. It should also be noted that the transcription of the WW1 document made an error in the spelling of the first name. There was a transcription error with the WW2 document that stated an age of 40 when the age is clearly written as "44" on the form.

Database Resources

Ancestry

- Ancestry.com – Individual subscription (or use Ancestry Library Edition – available only within the library)
- For profit company owned by investor group
- Find Census, Birth, Marriage, and Death records
- Immigration and Naturalization
- World Tree
- City Directories, school yearbooks, etc.
- Access to some international records with the Ancestry Library Edition available through PPL

Family Search

- Non-profit, family history organization
- Search the digitized information by country, state, or county
- Find Census, Birth, Marriage, and Death records
- Search Catalog, Books, Genealogies, or Family Tree
- Over 4 Billion names from around the world

The USGenWeb

- Database run by volunteers
- Collections of resources collected by societies, or individuals, pertaining to genealogy resources

OCLC WorldCat

- Use to explore options to locate books that could be requested through Interlibrary Loan (ILL)
- Search for books held in participating libraries throughout the world

Texas State Library and Archives Commission

- Website: https://www.tsl.texas.gov/
- Great resource for County Records (Texas)
- County records available on Microfilm
- Note: many states may have similar governmental organization at the state level providing a range of information. Some research may be in order to determine what archive collections are held, and by whom, on a state by state basis

Additional Texas Resources
- Website: https://texashistory.unt.edu/
- The Portal to Texas History – created and maintained by the University of North Texas; provides a gateway to many rare, historical primary resources provided by content partners throughout the state

Plano Public Library – Genealogy Center
- Genealogy Center – https://www.plano.gov/907/Genealogy-Center
- Many databases supporting Genealogy research
- Collin County and other Texas county histories
- Local archives collection – historical books, yearbooks, pictures, papers, and other archive items on Collin County, Plano, and Texas
- Texas State and County Histories
- Family histories
- Newspapers
- Maps
- Books

Other Resources

Consider These Other Sources
- Visit and/or joining Genealogical or Historical Societies, Organizations, or Museums
- Join Social Media: blogs, Twitter, Facebook groups, online message boards/forums, etc.
- Free genealogy sites on the internet, such as Cyndi's List (www.cyndislist.com)
- Church records
- Gazetteer / Yearbooks
- City Directories

Museums, Archives, and Historical Collections
- Potentially housing many special collections for a specific area with many documents or records like we've already talked about, which might help fill holes in your research
- Original documents or books
- Marriage, birth, or death certificates
- Land records, court records
- Military records, Oath of Allegiance
- Family histories, city directories

Final Thoughts

- Cite your sources!

- Keep organized records

- Keep permanent records on clean, acid-free paper

- Remain open minded to errors

- Join a local or state genealogical society

- Always read information about the source

- Do not forget to photocopy/scan/photograph the title and verso pages for a printed source

- Write in pencil

- Label your pictures / documents

- Create a strategy for searching

- Be prepared before you go to a library, museum, or archives repository

- NOT EVERYTHING is on the computer

Additional Information

Explore additional resources on our website and blog Plano Library Learns, including information about library databases

PLANOLIBRARY.ORG

Ancestral Chart

No. 1 on this chart is
the same person as No. _____

On Chart No. _____

Chart No. _____

1
BORN
PLACE
MARRIED
PLACE
DIED
PLACE
NAME OF SPOUSE

2
BORN
PLACE
MARRIED
PLACE
DIED
PLACE

3
BORN
PLACE
DIED
PLACE

4
BORN
PLACE
MARRIED
PLACE
DIED
PLACE

5
BORN
PLACE
DIED
PLACE

6
BORN
PLACE
MARRIED
PLACE
DIED
PLACE

7
BORN
PLACE
DIED
PLACE

8
CONT. ON CHART _____

9
CONT. ON CHART _____

10
CONT. ON CHART _____

11
CONT. ON CHART _____

12
CONT. ON CHART _____

13
CONT. ON CHART _____

14
CONT. ON CHART _____

15
CONT. ON CHART _____

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Family Group Record

Prepared By _____

Address _____

NOTE=Direct Ancestor

Relationship to Preparer _____

Date _____

Ancestral Chart # _____

Family Unit # _____

Husband

	Date—Day, Month, Year	City	County	State or Country	Religion
Born					
Christened					Name of Church
Married					Name of Church
Died					Cause of Death
Buried		Cem/Place			Date Will Written/Proved

Father

Mother

Other Wives

Occupation(s)

Wife maiden name

					Religion
Born					
Christened					Name of Church
Died					Cause of Death
Buried		Cem/Place			Date Will Written/Proved

Father

Mother

Other Husbands

Occupation(s)

Children Given Names	Sex MF	Birth			Birthplace			Date of first marriage/Place Name of Spouse			Date of Death/Cause			Computer I.D. #
		Day	Month	Year	City	County	St./Ctry.	City	County		Date	State/Country		
• 1														
2														
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