



Plano Public Library

Getting Started in Genealogy

WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT MY FAMILY?

Begin with yourself on number one of the pedigree chart. Your dad is number two, your mother is number three, your dad's dad is number four and dad's mom is number five, etc. Try to complete everything you know about each person even if it's a guess.

To acquire the information, you may need to ask family members and friends, use home records (Bible, old letters, scrapbooks, diaries, birth, marriage, and death certificates, etc.), obituaries, deeds, wills, and military records.

When you fill out the chart, there are some steps to keep in mind. You should write the surname in all caps. Use the maiden name for females. The dates are written by the day, month, and year. Ex. 23 June 1961. The places should be written in this order: city/township, county, state, country. Ex. Plano, Collin, Texas, United States.

WHO DO I WANT TO RESEARCH?

Select an ancestor you would like to learn more about. Work on one ancestor at a time. Identify what you want to learn, such as where and when he was born, married or died, whether he had military service, etc. Try to stay focused on one ancestor at a time. It can get confusing if you are working on three or four at one time. Work from you toward your great-great-great grandfather. Do not work from your great-great-great-grandfather down to you.

HOW DO I FIND THE RECORDS?

Visit libraries and archives like the Genealogy Center of Plano Public Library. They have many sources available for documenting your ancestors. There are print materials, periodicals, microfilm, and databases on the Internet. These materials have census records; county, state, and federal records; military records; passenger lists; family histories; and archives for most states and some foreign countries. Visit county courthouses for original vital records. Use the Internet for databases, family history websites, and many other sites available for genealogy.

THINGS TO KNOW

Evidence is divided into two categories -primary evidence and secondary evidence. Primary evidence is created at or near the time of the event and is based on firsthand knowledge. Secondary evidence is based on primary evidence and/or hearsay. It is less reliable and used as a guide to the primary or original evidence. A single document can be both primary and secondary evidence. A death certificate lists the name of the deceased with date and place of death written by the attending doctor at or near the time of death. This is primary evidence. The secondary evidence is the information about the deceased's date and place of birth and names of parents because the person who might provide this information did not have firsthand knowledge of these facts.

- Don't rely on published sources that cannot be verified. Check your sources
- Always evaluate the compiled information you find published online or in books
- Keep a checklist of all the records you look at and make copies of the documents
- As you evaluate your documents and records, it will lead to other information and resources
- Read the introduction/information about the source to understand what it provides
- Make a copy of the title page of your source. This helps you keep track of what you have reviewed
- Always cite your source

WHAT QUESTIONS DO I ASK FAMILY AND FRIENDS?

Ask specific questions...

- When was grandma married?
- Where did they get married?
- How many kids did they have?
- What are their names?
- Where did they live?
- Why did they move so many times?

Help them know what you want to know. Record the interview on camera and/or take many notes. Some stories they will tell will be worth keeping an oral interview of for a lifetime.

TIPS

- Use pencil on the forms
- Permanent records should be kept on clean acid free paper and kept from dust and dirt
- Plan in advance what you will research / Try to stay focused
- Keep your records organized / Label your pictures
- Remain open minded to errors
- Think outside the box for research or finding a surname
- When you photocopy from a book, do not forget to copy the title and verso pages
- Always read the information about the source
- Before you visit a library or courthouse, find out their hours and rules
- Take change and small bills when you go to a library, archives or repository
- Join a local or state genealogical society
- Cite your sources!!!

CENSUS

Census records can give valuable information about your ancestors and surnames in your genealogy research. The first U.S. Census was in 1790 and there has been one every ten years since then. Census records can provide the names of family members, years of birth, location of birth, profession, and much more. In keeping with the Census Bureau's commitment to confidentiality, the Census Bureau information collected in the Decennial Census does not become available to the public until after 72 years. The 1940 Census became available in 2012. The census records from 1790-1930 are available in many formats—microfilm, digital images on the Internet, or transcribed and on the Internet, or in books. Your local library will have various ways to view them. The census provides information or clues to your genealogical research.

SOCIAL SECURITY DEATH INDEX

The SSDI contains basic information about persons with social security numbers whose deaths have been reported to the Social Security Administration. The index does not include living people. This is not an index to all deceased individuals who have held social security numbers. It is not a database of deceased individuals who have received social security benefits, or whose families have received survivor benefits. The SSDI contains the following information: Social Security number, surname, given name, date of death, date of birth, last known residence, location of last benefit, and date and place of issuance. Ordering the application can lead to a discovery of a birthplace, a maiden name, or parents' names. It can provide clues to the person's residence when he or she first received a Social Security card, or to a possible last residence.

VITAL RECORDS

This includes birth and death certificates, marriage licenses and divorce decrees. Many databases are available online with birth and death indexes and certificates. Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org are two to begin your research. Many libraries and societies have information they may assist you. The state library or archives also may have information. The County Clerk's Office is the best place to get a certified copy once you know where to go.

Certified copies of marriage licenses are requested from the County Clerk's Office in which the event occurred. Certified copies of a divorce decree are requested from the District Clerk's Office in which the event occurred.

INTERLIBRARY LOAN

Plano library provides interlibrary loan services. Patrons will be charged \$2.50 postage/courier fee for each ILL item requested and received. ILL allows you to request books and media from other libraries across the United States and other countries as needed. Special genealogy items may cost when borrowing them from other libraries. The lending library will determine the charge if any. Ask at the Reference Desk how to request and other information for locating these items.

INTERNET SITES

Available at the library only

- Ancestry Library Edition
- HistoryGeo

Available through the library website

- TexShare Databases--Heritage Quest Online and Texas Sanborn Maps
- Dallas Metro News Collection & Dallas Morning News Historical Archive
- Fold3

Free sites

- Familysearch.org
- Usgenweb.org
- Cyndislist.com

LOCAL SOCIETIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Collin County Genealogical Society (CCGS)

P. O. Box 865052

Plano, TX 75086

rootsweb.ancestry.com/~txcolcgs/index.htm

Genealogy Friends of Plano Libraries, Inc.

(Gen. Friends)

P. O. Box 860477

Plano, TX 75086-0477

genealogyfriends.org



A Service of the City of Plano

**Plano
Public
Library**

Genealogy Center

Haggard Library

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Plano, Texas 75075

972-769-4240

planolibrary.org

Hours:

Monday-Thursday 9am - 9pm

Friday 9am - 6pm

Saturday 10am - 6pm

Sunday 1pm - 5pm