

YOUR FAMILY ROOTS

GETTING STARTED

WHERE DO I START ?

- Talk to family members
- Locate family documents particularly birth/death certificates and marriage licenses—start a tabbed 3 ring binder
- Utilize free online resources to start your tree
- Subscribe to online services as needed
- Call, write, visit vital records archives, cemeteries, churches
- Keep a journal of who you talked to and corresponded with
- Circle back and revisit your notes and documentation as you learn more to pick up details you missed
- Try to create a chronology of each branch of your parents/grandparents tree
- Write a narrative of the story of your family
- Preserve it with a publisher/bookbinder

Fee versus free

- Free

- www.familysearch.org- Church of Latter Day Saints (LDS) database
- www.findagrave.com – 112 million gravesite records
- www.castlegarden.org – 1820-1892 NY immigration records
- www.ellisland.org - New York from 1892 forward
- Various city , county, state, church, cemetery records-some are free
- Some international databases in Ireland, Germany and Italy
- Some newspaper archives

- Fee

- www.ancestry.com – the most comprehensive- costs \$99 for 6 month or \$19.99/month. International records are additional \$15/month
- www.fold3.com – great source of military and other records -\$80/year *
- US State archives will provide images of original documents for anywhere from \$3 to \$25.Takes about 4-12 weeks
- Various Historical/Genealogical Societies
- NARA- National Archives

Talking to Family Members

- Interview older family members
 - Use the voice recorder capability on your phone and make a transcript
 - Ask a few prepared questions and just let them talk
 - Some suggestions
 - What is your earliest memory as a child?
 - Tell me about your mother and father...what did they look like? Describe their personality?
 - What was it like for you as a child?
 - Do you remember your grandparents ? What stories can you remember that they told you
 - Where did you go to school ?

Locate Family Documents

- Almost every family had a photo album starting in the 1920's
 - Photography began around 1860 with “tintypes”, “cabinet photos” (1880-1920) and handheld cameras around 1920
 - Formal studio portraits were common and inexpensive by the 1890's.
- Many families had a “family bible” and in it was used as a chronology of family events
- Marriage, Birth , Baptism/Christening certificates, death certificates are all rich sources of information
- Personal letters and memoirs
- Most families have documents that they have forgotten that they have
- Military enlistment/discharge documents provide great detail

www.familysearch.org

- “LDS” (Latter Day Saints) database-- FREE !
 - Organized into “collections” and sorted by state or country
 - Billions of records across all US States and most countries including
 - All US Census records back to 1790
 - US Military records- Civil war, WWI, WW II
 - Some church registers in US and international
 - Birth, death, marriage records in some states and counties
 - Immigration and naturalization records
 - Most (not all) data is “indexed” –I.E.-you can search by text name
 - LDS will often provide you with summary data and the LDS “film number” you can order at any Mormon Church
 - “User submitted genealogies” (a.k.a family Trees can be posted)

What info is out there online ?

UNITED STATES

- US Census Records-every ten years starting in 1790 .
 - 1890 was lost in a fire!
 - US privacy laws limit census records access after 1940
- State Census records- many States did them often midway between Federal Census
- US Immigration/naturalization/passport Records
 - Prior to 1890 it was up to each State to decide what/how to document arrivals
 - Major arrivals NY, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, New Orleans, Charleston
 - Passports are great sources of information but were optional until 1920's
- Military Records
 - All young men had to register for the draft in the Civil War, WW I and WW II.
- US City Directories- most major cities are online from 1850's forward
- Birth Marriage and Death Records
- Tax, land and criminal records
- Newspaper archives
- Cemetery records

International Online Information

- Ireland/Scotland/United Kingdom
 - Irish Parish registers- births, marriages, deaths
 - Scottish census -1841-1891
 - UK census-1841-1911 ; Church, Land and Civil records
- Germany
 - Church, Census- inconsistent from province to province .
- Italy
 - Civil registration records by region
- Poland
 - Most Polish records are embedded in German and Russian archives
- FamilySearch and Ancestry have records for many countries

Should I subscribe to ancestry.com?

- What does ancestry.com cost
 - \$19.99/month or \$99 /year for 6 months US records access
 - International access is extra- \$34.99/mo. Or \$149 for 6 months
- Is Ancestry.com worth it ?
 - Create your tree online
 - Download and sync it to “Family Tree Maker “software on your PC
 - Attach/upload artifacts (photos, documents, records etc) to each person
 - Share your tree and communicate with other ancestry.com users
 - “Hints” automatically pop up !
 - You can sync Ancestry.com data with “Family Tree Maker (FTM) on your PC.

www.findagrave.com

- Over 112 million Cemetery records
- Documented by volunteers across the US
- Some include images of the headstone and obituaries!
- Another Cemetery source is
 - WWW.billiongraves.com

Some Tips For Searching Online

- Start with the present day and work backwards
- Note name spellings are frequently wrong
- Proceed slowly and be patient
 - You will quickly amass a lot of information
- Stay focused-research one ancestor at a time
 - Avoid the temptation to jump around from branch to branch on your tree as you learn new things
- Document everything
 - Keep an online tree either on ancestry.com, family tree maker(FTM) or on a simple spreadsheet
 - Save/attach documents as you go for later inspection
 - Note ages, occupations, in law's, and even neighbors
 - Be careful of mis-information on other's family trees
- Preserve/scan document images
 - Create an online library of your family tree artifacts (Dropbox, Skydrive, etc etc)
 - Census records, military records, birth/marriage/death certificates
 - City directories, etc

Reviewing US Census Records

- Each census asked more detailed questions than the one prior
- Before 1850 only the head of each household was listed by name
- Information recorded after 1850 includes name, age, place of birth, place of parents birth, occupation, address, etc
- Start with 1940 and work backward
- “Head of household” listed and others list their relationship to that person
 - E.G. –wife, son, nephew, father-in-law, boarder
- Note others living with a family and neighbors
 - Parents , in laws and siblings often all lived together or next door
 - Hint-In Laws will tell you maiden names of women
 - Step-children will indicate prior marriages
- Save the image of each record (“*Save image as*” on your PC)
- Challenges
 - Ages are often just estimates
 - Names are sometimes spelled phonetically or simply mis-spelled
 - Women’s maiden names are not listed
 - Note occupations as a way of confirming individuals

US Census Example 1910

STATE New Jersey
 COUNTY Hudson

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND LABOR—BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
 THIRTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES: 1910—POPULATION

(SUPERVISOR'S DISTRICT No. 8)
 (ENUMERATION DISTRICT No. 112)
 WARD OF CITY 4

TOWNSHIP OR OTHER DIVISION OF COUNTY _____
 NAME OF INSTITUTION _____

NAME OF INCORPORATED PLACE Jersey City
 ENUMERATED BY ME ON THE 20 DAY OF April, 1910.

STREET, AVENUE, ROAD, ETC.	LOCATION.			NAME	RELATION.	PERSONAL DESCRIPTION.						NATIVITY.			CITIZENSHIP.	OCCUPATION.						EDUCATION.	OTHER.						
	1	2	3			4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		13	14	15	16	17	18			19	20	21	22	23	24
Chapman Street	157	12	66	Hill Otto R	Head	M	W	34	S			Ger	German	Ger	German	Ger	German	1901	All	English	Iron worker	Structural	I	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	R	
				Hand Thomas	Boarder	M	W	44	M			Eng	English	Eng	English	Eng	English	1908	All	English	Mason	Cement	W	Yes	0	Yes	Yes		
	155	13	67	Monahan Daniel	Head	M	W	44	M	23		Eng	English	Ire	Irish	Ire	Irish	1870	Pa	English	Electrician	Gas Co	W	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	P	
				Julia	Wife	F	W	52	W	23	12	5	Eng	English	Ire	Irish	Ire	Irish	1846		English	None			Yes	0	Yes	Yes	
				Daniel	Son	M	W	22	S				New York	Eng	English	Eng	English			English	Teamster	Railroad	I	Yes	0	Yes	Yes		
				Nora	Daughter	F	W	16	S				New York	Eng	English	Eng	English			English	Operator	Tobacco factory	W	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	
				James	Son	M	W	8	S				New York	Eng	English	Eng	English				None								Yes
				Phillipson Edward	Head	M	W	43	M	21			New York	Eng	English	Ire	English			English	Foreman	Tunnel	W	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	R
				Sarah E	Wife	F	W	42	M	21	53		New Jersey	New York	New York					English	None			Yes	0	Yes	Yes		
				Charach	Daughter	F	W	18	S				New Jersey	New York	New Jersey					English	Stenographer	Wholesale	W	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	
			Mary E	Daughter	F	W	15	S				New Jersey	New York	New Jersey					English	None			Yes	0	Yes	Yes	Yes		
			Henrietta	Daughter	F	W	12	S				New Jersey	New York	New Jersey					English	None			Yes	0	Yes	Yes	Yes		
			Russ Susan A	Mother-in-law	F	W	64	W	3	8	3	New York	New York	New York					English	None			Yes	0	Yes	Yes	Yes		
			69	Christ Maria	Head	M	W	58	W	55		Ger	German	Ger	German	Ger	German	1881		English	Keeper	Boarding house	W	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	R
				Joseph	Son	M	W	31	S			Ger	German	Ger	German	Ger	German	1881	Pa	English	Longshoreman	Stevedore	W	Yes	0	Yes	Yes		
				Elizabeth	Daughter	F	W	25	S			New Jersey	Ger	German	Ger	German			English	Picker	Candy factory	W	Yes	0	Yes	Yes			
				Imperia	Daughter	F	W	19	S			New Jersey	Ger	German	Ger	German			English	Checker	Pattern house	W	Yes	0	Yes	Yes			
			70	Bells Henry M	Head	M	W	65	M	46		New Jersey	New Jersey	New Jersey					English	Elevator man	Railroad	W	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	R		

MILITARY RECORDS

– Revolutionary War

- National Archives (NARA)
- Fold 3

– Civil War

- NARA
- FOLD3
- All Volunteer armies at first
- Union records better than Confederate

– WW I

- NARA & Fold 3
- Three separate draft registrations
- 24 million men registered out of a population of 100 million

– WW II

- NARA + FOLD 3
- Six separate draft registrations- only 4th (“Old Man’s”) is available online –Privacy Laws
- Forms from 7 states destroyed

– Vietnam and later

- Limited due to privacy laws

www.fold3.com

- “The world’s premier collection of military records”
- NARA and Fold 3 are in a partnership to enable all appropriate Military records to be made available to the public.
 - 500 million records- original images in 184 record files
 - Revolutionary War to Vietnam War
 - Cost- → \$11.95/month or \$79.95/year

National Archives (NARA)

- How to Access
 - Visit in person (free)
 - By mail-→ search fees are typically about \$20
- Regional Facilities
- Records Management Center
- Federal Register
- National Personnel Records Center-some records classified
 - Civilian
 - Military
- Very few NARA records are online

LOCATE VITAL RECORDS

- Vital records consist of Birth, Marriage and Death records
- Families often kept birth certificates , and marriage licenses
- Available from every State's Archive Department or Department of Vital Records
- Also available from every State's County records
- States and Counties may require proof of your relationship. Adoption records are usually closed
- Some states (e.g. Massachusetts) have records back to the 1600's
- Birth records have the most reliable information
- Marriage records (if complete) have detailed family info.
- Death Certificates can have the most detailed information but fields are often left blank or filled with "D.K." (don't know)
- Many churches have very good records
- Many rural families had family cemeteries until the mid 1800's
- FINDAGRAVE and BILLIONGRAVES volunteers do a great job

Experience with States

- **New York**
 - New York City –Online system \$15 –records back to 1850 -excellent service
 - Upstate-you need to contact each County Vital Records office. Some on familysearch
 - **New Jersey**
 - NJ Vital Statistics Registry- rec. from 1913 -\$30 /request-service is slow—8-12 weeks!
 - Prior to 1913-NJ State Archives- \$15/request
 - Catholic Church records archived at Seton Hall University—visit in person or by mail
 - **Pennsylvania**
 - Div. of Vital record –Birth/Death from 1906 → \$15
 - Birth and death “indexes” online (not searchable)
 - Philadelphia archives and State archives both are very good
 - **North Carolina**
 - Excellent resources at the County level. Some online
 - **Massachusetts**
 - Outstanding resources and service
- * Note - with all of these you need to know the approximate date of the event

Immigration records

- Start with online resources –familysearch, ancestry, castlegarden.org, ellisisland.org
- NARA is an excellent source also
- No Passenger records prior to 1820. After that Ship Captain's recorded only Name, Age and Nationality
 - **Some published lists exist for 1530-1820**
- Fathers would often come alone and send \$\$ for the family in about a year once he was established
- Major ports of entry for immigrants in the 1800's
 - New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, New Orleans, Canadian Border
- In 1906 INS required more info on each immigrant
 - Name, Date/place of birth, last address, closest relative, US destination, \$\$, etc.

Naturalization Process

- Immigrants were never required to become citizens .Even by the early 1900's, about 25% had not started the process
- Until 1922, women acquired citizenship “by right of” their husband or father’s naturalization. This was true for children until 1940
- Pre 1906 Naturalization records contain much less information
- Steps in the Process (had to be a resident for 2 years to start the process)
 - “Declaration Of Intention” first papers
 - Petitions
 - 2-4 witnesses to attest
 - Certificate of Citizenship Issued
- Many documents are online at ancestry or familysearch
- Starting in 1900 US Census Citizenship status would be asked
 - “NA” -→ naturalized citizen
 - “PA” --→ citizenship papers had been submitted
 - “AL “ -→ the individual is still an alien
- Passports were not required until the 1920's
 - Tremendous sources of information

Birth/Marriage Certificates

- Many vital records are available online at ancestry and familysearch
- Churches recorded all baptism/christening/marriages
 - They will often provide you with a copy for free
 - Most are not online
- State/county/town vital records are often available (for a fee) but not online
 - In some cases an “index” is available online but if you want to get a copy of the original you have to send away
- Marriage and birth certificate are great sources of information
 - In particular –they list mother/spouse maiden name
 - Marriage licenses list names and places of birth of parents

Cemetery records/death certificates

- Start with online records
 - Findagrave, billiongraves, familysearch, ancestry etc
- Call/write cemetery to get a copy of their record
 - E.G-who else is buried with that family member?
 - Who paid for the plot ?
- Try to get a copy of the actual death certificate not just a summary
 - State/county/municipality

SUMMARY

- Ask yourself “Why Am I doing This?”
- You need to be passionate and patient
- Stay organized
- Preserve artifacts
- Document the story