

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 |
| Chestnut 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 | |
| | | | | Hend Thomas | Boarder | M | W | 44 | M | | | Engl | English | Engl | English | Engl | English | 1908 | All | English | Mason | Cement | W | Yes | 0 | Yes | Yes | | |
| | 155 | 13 | 67 | Monahan Daniel | Head | M | W | 44 | M | 23 | | Engl | English | Ire | Irish | Ire | Irish | 1870 | Pa | English | Electrician | Gas Co | W | Yes | 0 | Yes | Yes | R | |
| | | | | Julia | Wife | F | W | 52 | W | 23 | 12 | 5 | Engl | 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 | Engl | English | Engl | English | | | English | Operator | Tobacco factory | W | Yes | 0 | Yes | Yes | Yes | |
| | | | | James | Son | M | W | 8 | S | | | | New York | Engl | English | Engl | English | | | | None | | | | | | | | Yes |
| | | | | Phillipson Edward | Head | M | W | 43 | M | 21 | | | New York | Engl | English | Ire | English | | | English | Foreman | Tunnel | W | Yes | 0 | Yes | Yes | Yes | R |
| | | | | Sarah E | Wife | F | W | 42 | M | 21 | 5 | 3 | 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 | 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 | 5 | 5 | 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 | Steampipe | I | Yes | 0 | Yes | Yes | | |
| | | | | Elizabeth | Daughter | F | W | 25 | S | | | New Jersey | Ger | German | Ger | German | | | English | Tipper | Candy factory | W | Yes | 0 | Yes | Yes | Yes | | |
| | | | | Imperia | Daughter | F | W | 19 | S | | | New Jersey | Ger | German | Ger | German | | | English | Checker | Pattern house | W | Yes | 0 | Yes | 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 | 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