Foundations of Genealogy, Part 1

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Introduction

You are about to embark on a journey that is both rewarding and frustrating, sometimes deceptively easy but often achingly difficult. You should be prepared to spend more time than you ever imagined working on your computer and for endless trips to libraries, courthouses, and archives. Get used to late dinners, huge stacks of papers and folders all over your house (dining room tables are especially vulnerable), and long walks in cemeteries clutching a legal pad (or your smart phone) and your digital camera. You will be susceptible to carpal tunnel syndrome and computer eye strain not to mention headaches, neck aches, and stomach aches (for those times you get so busy you forget to eat).

Why work on your family's history if it is hard, painful, and time-consuming? The satisfaction you will get from putting together the pieces of your family's puzzle will be exhilarating. The history, art, language, and research skills that you will learn will be utterly stimulating. You will find yourself traveling, reading, attending workshops and classes, and meeting many wonderful similarly frenzied people interested in their family history, too.

Ultimately, you will breathe life back into the people who came before you. They will not be merely names, dates, and places on yellowing documents, but individuals who had dreams, worked to better themselves (or were content with what they had), went on adventures (or just lived peacefully), brought pride (or shame) to those who cared about them. You will provide the connection between the present and the past. Because of what you do, the struggles of those who came before you will be more meaningful to those who come after you. You will give your children, your grandchildren, your nieces and nephews a sense of who they are and where they came from. It's heady stuff, this genealogy!

Getting Help After You Start

How fortunate you are to be in metropolitan St. Louis, where there are so many genealogical resources. Once you are up and running, the first thing you will want to do is learn more. Here's where to go:

St. Louis Genealogical Society, 4 Sunnen Drive, Maplewood, Mo.
314-647-8547   https://stlgs.org
Monthly meetings at St. Louis County Library Headquarters
Yearly genealogy conference   Free genealogy classes to members   Ever-expanding website

St. Louis County Library History & Genealogy Dept., temporarily at Daniel Boone Library.
314-994-3300   https://www.slcl.org/genealogy
History & Genealogy Dept. in temporary quarters until new building on Lindbergh is constructed;
permanent collection is rich in southern & ethnic resources (Jewish/African American)
Contains the 20,000+ volume collection from St. Louis Genealogical Society
and the National Genealogical Society's lending library as well as a large European collection

St. Louis Public Library, 1301 Olive St., St. Louis, MO
314-539-0385   www.slpl.org
History and Genealogy Dept. with extensive map collection
Microfilm area with passenger ship, census, and newspaper records
St. Louis and rare books collections

Record Selection Table
Most Helpful for Post-1800 Research

If You Need	Look First In	Then Search
Age	Census, vital records, cemeteries	Military records, tax records
Birthdate	Vital records, religious records, Bibles	Cemeteries, obituaries, census
Birthplace	Vital records, religious records, census	Newspapers, obituaries
Country of foreign birth	Immigration records, census, naturalization, religious	Military, vitals, newspapers, obituaries
County origins & boundaries	County histories, maps	Gazetteers
Death	Vital records, cemeteries, probate, religious, obituaries	Newspapers, Bibles, military
Divorce	Court records, vitals	Newspapers
Ethnicity	"Minorities," "Native races," ethnic societies	Religious, immigration, naturalization
Historical background	History books, periodicals	Minority groups
Immigration date	Immigration records, naturalization	Census, newspapers, biographies
Living relatives	Directories, court records, obituaries	Census, biographies, societies, religious, probate
Maiden name	Vitals, religious, newspapers, Bibles	Cemeteries, military, probate, naturalization, land & property
Marriage	Vitals, religious, census, newspapers, Bibles	Cemeteries, military, probate, naturalization, land & property
Occupation	Census, directories, immigration	Newspapers, court
Other family members	Vitals, religious, census, probate, obituaries	Bibles, newspapers, immigration
Physical description	Military, biography	Naturalization, vitals, immigration
Place-finding aids	Gazetteers, maps	Histories, periodicals
Place (town) of residence	Census, military, vitals	Biographies, probate, histories
Places family has lived	Census, land & property, histories	Military, tax records, obituaries
Previous research	Surname files, periodicals, societies	Histories, biographies
Religion	Religious records, histories, biographies	Bibles, cemeteries, surname files
Social activities	Histories, biographies, newspapers, societies	Town records, court records, cemeteries, directories, obituaries

Important Genealogical Websites
General Genealogy

www.ancestry.com (fee to use many databases; some free; free at many libraries)
> New databases and maps added daily
> Most popular databases include: SSDI, census records, immigration records, military records, and many state records
> Family trees available, **but use with caution**

www.cyndislist.com
> Thousands of links to genealogy sites; site is maintained beautifully

www.familysearch.org
> Official site of the Family Search Library in Salt Lake City
> Contains the Family Search Library catalog, many how-to videos and classes, free worksheets and guides in the wiki, and information on using the library in Salt Lake City. In the process of digitizing and indexing millions of records. Site contains many actual digitized records from around the world. Family trees available, **but use with caution**.

www.fold3.com (fee to use many databases; some free; free to use via St. Louis Co. Library)
> Another subscription site; this one specializing in military records. They are working with the National Archives at digitizing federal records and are now owned by Ancestry.

www.usgenweb.org
> Links to county projects throughout the U.S.
> Ongoing census and tombstone projects

www.google.com
> Most powerful of all the search engines; use maps and books for your research.

www.findagrave.com
> Thousands of cemeteries, burial information, and photographs from across the world. **Use with caution as content is user-submitted, and quality varies.**

chroniclingamerica.loc.gov
> Library of Congress; free digital newspapers from across the U.S.

Additional Resources for St. Louis Area Genealogy

www.mohistory.org/library
Missouri History Museum Library & Research Center

www.umsl.edu/mercantile
St. Louis Mercantile Library

www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/resources.asp
Missouri State Archives in Jefferson City

https://www.ilsos.gov/departments/archives/databases/home.html
Illinois State Archives in Springfield, Illinois

Genealogy Basics to Remember

- Work from the present to the past, one generation at a time.

- Work from the known to the unknown.

- Names, dates, relationships, and places are the four elements of genealogical identification.

- Prove everything! Don't rely on "facts" others give you.

Citing Sources

Without knowing where information comes from, all you have are stories. Every fact in your genealogy should be proven as best you can. Yes, you will find contradictions. That's why citing your sources is so important.

- Use a citation guide so you know exactly what information is important to capture for each source.

- Free guide available on the StLGS website: **Resources/On This Site/Citations: A Guide** https://stlgs.org/resources/on-this-site/citations-a-guide-to-creating-proper-source-citations

- NEVER use online family trees as sources. They are often filled with errors and copied endlessly without any proof.

You may want to invest in a copy of Elizabeth Shown Mill's citation guides. Her master guidebook is called *Evidence Explained: History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace*, 3rd edition, 2017. She has also written some smaller citation guides that are widely available.

National Organizations to Know About

The Board for Certification of Genealogists (BCG): www.bcgcertification.org

The National Genealogical Society (NGS): www.ngsgenealogy.org

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Hints for Success

- ✍ Consider joining a local genealogical society in the area you are researching. Even if you can't attend the meetings, the publications and assistance provided by fellow researchers can be very helpful.
- ✍ Join the National Genealogical Society for the same reason. National publications and conferences are an outstanding way to improve your skills and learn from others.
- ✍ Remember to document everything! Citing your sources on each fact you gather will give your work legitimacy and value.

Kinds of Records You Will be Searching

Family histories

Birth, marriage, and death

Census

City and county directories

Phone books

Cemetery

Religious

Military

Land

Wills and probates

Court (general, divorce, criminal)

State, county, city histories

School

Medical

Tax

Business

Insurance

Social Security

Newspaper

Obituaries

Diaries

FBI

Occupational

Fraternal organizations

Immigration and migration

Naturalization/citizenship

Maps

Photographs

Manuscripts and Letters

Places Where You Will be Searching

Your home

Homes of relatives

Family reunions

Libraries

Courthouses

City halls

State and national archives

Historical societies

Genealogical societies

National and regional genealogy conferences

Cemeteries

Coroners' offices

Newspaper offices

Boards of education

Houses of worship

Funeral homes

Military record centers

Civil record centers

Museums

Businesses

Union offices

Flea markets

Book stores

Map shops

Antique shops

Highway departments

Anywhere else you can think of where your family might have left a trail

Four Generation Chart

Please, print or type

b. = birthdate
w. = where
m. = married
d. = died

Name

_____

b.

w.

m.

w.

d.

w.

Spouse

_____

b.

w.

d.

w.

Parents of Spouse

_____

_____

Parents

b.

w.

m.

w.

d.

w.

b.

w.

d.

w.

Grandparents

b.

w.

m.

w.

d.

w.

b.

w.

d.

w.

c.

b.

w.

m.

w.

d.

w.

b.

w.

d.

w.

Great Grandparents

_____
b./w.
m./w.
d./w.

b./w.
d./w.

_____
b./w.
m./w.
d./w.

b./w.
d./w.

_____
b./w.
m./w.
d./w.

b./w.
d./w.

_____
b./w.
m./w.
d./w.

b./w.
d./w.

Name of Submitter:	_____
Address:	_____
	_____
Phone No.:	_____
Email address:	_____
Date of Submission:	_____

Family Group Sheet

No. _____ Surname: _____

Husband's Full Name:				
Vital Data	**Day Month Year**	**Town**	**County**	**State/Country**
Birth				
Christening				
Marriage				
Death				
Burial				

Father's Full Name:	Mother's Full Name (Maiden):

Other Wives:

Wife's Full Name:				
Vital Data	**Day Month Year**	**Town**	**County**	**State/Country**
Birth				
Christening				
Death				
Burial				

Father's Full Name:	Mother's Full Name (Maiden):

Other Husbands:

Children
(Arrange in Order of Birth)

Sex	Full Name	Vital Data	Date	Place
	1.	Birth		
		Death		
		Marriage		
			To:	
	2.	Birth		
		Death		
		Marriage		
			To:	
	3.	Birth		
		Death		
		Marriage		
			To:	
	4.	Birth		
		Death		
		Marriage		
			To:	
	5.	Birth		
		Death		
		Marriage		
			To:	
	6.	Birth		
		Death		
		Marriage		
			To:	
	7.	Birth		
		Death		
		Marriage		
			To:	
	8.	Birth		
		Death		
		Marriage		
			To:	
	9.	Birth		
		Death		
		Marriage		
			To:	

Research in the Home

Most of us have more genealogical information around our homes than we would have believed. It's a rare family indeed that doesn't have some old boxes of "valuable papers," such as old holiday cards, letters from relatives, newspaper clippings, photographs, etc., just waiting to be examined. So the first thing to do is to get busy and see what you can find in your own home and the homes of your relatives, keeping in mind that the kind of information you are looking for is the kind that it takes to fill out the Pedigree Charts, Family Group Sheets, and Timeline Sheets, as well as to "flesh out" those family stories.

Among the many sources found in the home that can be of great genealogical value are the following:

1. Books and manuscripts: family bibles, diaries, scrapbooks, baby books, journals and account books, biographies, and old county histories

2. Newspaper clippings: birth announcements, christenings, engagements, marriages, divorces, death notices and obituaries, memorial articles

3. Certificates: birth, christening, baptism, confirmation, graduation, marriage, memberships, Social Security card, apprenticeship, union, military, death

4. Land and property records: abstracts of title deeds, mortgages, tax records, wills, letters of administration, petitions, grants

5. Military records: enlistment and induction notices, orders, service records, discharge papers, pension applications and records

6. Miscellaneous records: letters, holiday cards, portraits and photos, citizenship and naturalization documents, passenger ship records, passports, organizational memberships, plantation records, bank records, address and phone books, maps of cities, counties, and states

Timelines

Why use them?

Timelines are a wonderful genealogical tool. They provide a way to:

- Place your family in historical context
- Place them in a particular location at a particular time
- Sort out people with similar names
- Trace migration

What goes in them?

When you construct a timeline, you want to include

- Events that you can prove by documentation
- Events that include other immediate family members
- Dates, ages, and sources for all events
  - These are especially important for helping you to prove your assumptions.
  - Did your uncle really get married at age eleven?
  - Was it your John Williams who graduated high school in 1912 in Lewis County or was your John Williams the one who was in fourth grade?
  - If your grandfather naturalized in 1897, is it likely that a man with the same name on a passenger list for 1897 is really your grandfather?

How do you construct a timeline?

- Most computer software programs have a built-in timeline feature that will allow you to use data you have already typed in. Check the manual for your program for instructions.
- It is very simple to make a basic timeline in Excel or Microsoft Word.
  - Use columns for:
    - Date
    - Age
    - Event
    - Location
    - Source
- To make an individual timeline, typically, start with the year the person was born and create a line for each year of his/her life.
- To make a family timeline (like the one on the next page), begin with a defining event and continue with as many events as possible in chronological order.
- Intersperse historical events with family events as appropriate or keep a separate timeline for historical events that occurred at the same time.
- Check the Internet for websites with timeline templates and more suggestions.

World Events	Date	Smith Family Events
	1879	Harry and Sue (Jones) Smith married in St. Louis
U.S. census	1880	Tom Smith born in Cuba, Crawford Co., Missouri
	1883	The Smith family appeared in the census.
	1884	Mary Smith, Tom's sister, born in Cuba, Missouri.
	1885	Harry Smith, Tom's father, purchased farm, Crawford Co., Mo.
	1886	Harry Smith received a Civil War pension.
	1888	Tom attended school in Cuba.
U.S. census	1890	Rose Smith, Tom's sister, born in Cuba.
	1891	Tom and family counted for the census.
	1897	Harry Smith died, Crawford County, burial Kinder Cemetery.
	1898	Tom graduated from Cuba High School.
U.S. census	1900	Tom moved to Galveston, Texas.
Galveston hurricane	1900	Tom enumerated in census in a boarding house in Galveston.
	1901	Tom survived the September hurricane.
	1902	Tom living in St. Louis in 1901.
St. Louis World's Fair	1904	Tom married Mary Murphy and attended the World's Fair.
	1905	Tom and Mary lived in St. Louis at 579 Green Street.
	1907	Helen Smith born to Tom and Mary in St. Louis.
U.S. census	1910	Harry Smith born to Tom and Mary in St. Louis.
	1915	Smith family included in the census.
WWI draft registration	1917	Sue Smith, Tom's mother, died, buried Kinder Cemetery.
WWI	1917–1918	Tom registered for WWI draft like all men his age.
U.S. census	1920	Tom's draft number was not called.
	1921	Tom's family lived in St. Louis at 1234 Brown Street.
	1925	Tom worked for the post office.
Stock market crash	1929	Harry Smith graduated from Beaumont High School.
U.S. census	1930	Smith family included in the census.

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Individual Timeline for _____

Year	Age	Location	Event	Source

Research Record

Name: _____   ID #_____

Record	Have	Date Found	Need	Date Searched	Found	Not Found	Look Again
Birth:							
Certificate							
Family/Religious Record							
Religious Ceremonies:							
Baptism							
Confirmation							
Bar/Bat Mitzvah							
Marriage:							
Application/License							
Certificate							
Family/Religious Record							
Religious Record							
Divorce							
Federal Census:							
Year:							
Year:							
Year:							
Year:							
Year:							
Year:							
Year:							
State Census:							
Year:							
Year:							
Year:							
City Directories:							
Tax Lists:							
Land Records:							
Deed(s)							
Patent(s)/Grant(s)							
Title(s)/Abstract(s)							
Military							
Pension Record							
World War I Draft Card							
Immigration							
Arrival date/ship/port (printed)							
Passenger Ship Manifest							
Information on ship /photo							
Naturalization							
Declaration of Intent							
Petition for Naturalization							
Certificate of Arrival							
Citizenship Certificate							
Death:							
Certificate							
Obituary							
Tombstone/Cemetery Record							
Family Record							
Religious Record							
Will/Probate							
Miscellaneous							

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