START YOUR RESEARCH AT
Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research
PART OF THE HOUSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

**FIRST STEPS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP 1</th>
<th>GATHER WHAT YOU HAVE:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Search for documents at home.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ask family for any research or documents they may have.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP 2</th>
<th>ORGANIZE:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify your vital information (birth, death and marriage). Then identify vital information for your parents, grandparents and other generations in your family.</td>
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<td>• Fill out a pedigree chart.</td>
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<tr>
<th>STEP 3</th>
<th>DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT TO KNOW:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Who are you researching?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• What do you want to know about them?</td>
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<td>• Where and when are you researching?</td>
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Once you have completed these three steps, you can then review various sources that can help you learn more about your family history!

**SOURCES**

**GOVERNMENT**
Official government records are an excellent source for genealogy research. Some useful government records are listed below.

- Birth Records
- Marriage Records
- Divorce Records
- Death Records
- Tax Records
- Property Records
- Court Records

**CENSUS**
Since 1790, the United States provides a census of its population every ten years and this information can provide additional assistance in your research.

- Names of Other Household Members
- Ages and Birthplaces
- Residence or Occupation
- Immigration and Citizenship Details
- Marriage Information
- Military Service

**FAMILY DOCUMENTS**
Family or personal papers may include records that can span multiple generations. Ask your family if they have any of the documents listed below.

- Letters
- Legal Documents
- Photographs
- Memorabilia
- School Records
- Written Accounts
Interviewing your family is a great way to learn more about your family. Here is a list of some possible questions. A recording device is useful so that you don’t miss important information.

- Were you named after anyone?
- What were your parents’ names?
- What do you remember about your childhood home?
- What did your home look like?
- In which room did most family activities take place?
- What was your neighborhood like?
- What did you do for fun when you were growing up?
- Tell me about your parents.
- What kind of people were your ancestors?
- What do you remember most about them?
- Was anyone in our family famous or notorious?
- What do you remember about the family stories?
- How did the family earn money?
- Who worked?

The websites listed below provide additional genealogy information.

**WWW.FAMILYSEARCH.ORG**
The largest genealogy library in the WORLD offers name searches, digital records, online books and more!

**WWW.GENEABLOGGERSTRIBE.COM**
This web ring of genealogists and family historians features a genealogy “blog roll” with over 3,000 family history related blogs.

**WWW.CYNDISLIST.COM**
Don’t know where to look? Try Cyndi’s List; a directory to genealogy based internet sites. This family history directory has hundreds of categories to choose from!

**WWW.FACEBOOK.COM**
Believe it or not, Facebook can help you find family, in addition to friends! Search “genealogy” and click on “find all pages named genealogy”, find one applicable to you and join a group. You might find someone working on the same family!
Begin with what you know.
- Fill out the chart as completely as you can.
- Estimate dates and places, if necessary.
- If you do not have enough information, you may want to talk to a relative.

PEDIGREE CHART

Person Number 1 on this chart is the same as No. _____
On chart No. ______
Beginning a family history research project can seem overwhelming. Where to look? What to look for? Use this checklist as a starting point to understand what documents can help you find the answer to your family history research questions. Not every family will have every document listed, but many of these sources can be found for your family.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Family Records</strong></th>
<th><strong>Certificates/Vital Records (cont’d)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Immigration Records (cont’d)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address books</td>
<td>Confirmation</td>
<td>Naturalization certificate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizenship papers</td>
<td>Death</td>
<td>Oaths of allegiance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Club/Organization memberships</td>
<td>Social Security application SS-5</td>
<td>Passenger lists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Death announcements</td>
<td></td>
<td>Passport</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draft cards</td>
<td></td>
<td>Passport applications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family bibles</td>
<td></td>
<td>Visa</td>
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<td>Family correspondence</td>
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<td>Family interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heirlooms &amp; artifacts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journals/Diaries</td>
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<td>Legal papers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letters &amp; postcards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memoirs</td>
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<td>Memorial cards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newspaper clippings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral traditions</td>
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<td>Personal knowledge</td>
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<td>Photographs</td>
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<td>Scrapbooks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Telegrams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wedding announcements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wedding books/albums</td>
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</tbody>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Certificates/Vital Records</strong></th>
<th><strong>Marriage Records</strong></th>
<th><strong>Cemetary &amp; Funeral Home Records</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adoption</td>
<td>Annullments</td>
<td>Funeral programs, books, &amp; cards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baptism</td>
<td>Applications</td>
<td>Funeral home records</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birth</td>
<td>Banns</td>
<td>Monument &amp; tombstone inscriptions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bonds</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Divorce decrees</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Licenses</td>
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<td>Returns</td>
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</tbody>
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**Court Records**
- Adoption records
- Civil records
- Military discharges
- Name changes
- Sheriff’s records
- Sheriff sales
- Voter registration

**Church & Temple Records**
- Admission
- Baptism or Christening records
- Bar/Bat Mitsvah
- Burial records
- Church archives
- Church histories
- Deaths
- Marriages
- Meeting minutes
### Getting Started Source Checklist (cont’d)

#### Church & Temple Records (cont’d)
- Minister’s journals
- Minutes
- Ordination
- Removal records
- Seminary records
- Transfer
- Vestry records

#### Institutional Records
- Hospitals
- Police/jails
- Prisons
- State schools
- Work-farms

#### Military Records
- Draft records
- Enlistment records
- Military records
- Pension files/applications
- Selective Service Board
- Service records
- Vets, Admin. Records
- Veterans organizations
- Veteran records

#### Probate Records
- Administrations
- Estate records

#### Probate Records (cont’d)
- Guardianships
- Settlements

#### Employment Records
- Employment records
- Account books
- Apprenticeships
- Indentures
- Licenses
- Pensions
- Personnel files
- Railroad, mining & factory records
- Union cards
- Work associations

#### Newspapers
- Indexes
- Anniversary notices
- Biographies
- Births
- Convictions
- Death notices
- Engagements
- Ethnic newspapers
- Family reunion announcements
- Family stories
- Forced sales

#### Newspapers (cont’d)
- Gossip & advice columns
- Historical vignettes
- Legal notices
- Local news
- Marriages
- Milestones
- Obituaries
- Sheriff sales
- Ship arrivals
- Ship departures

#### Memberships
- Fraternal organizations
- Fraternities/Sororities
- Lineage societies
- Professional organizations
- Veterans organizations
- Work associations

#### Compiled & Printed Sources
- Biographies
- County & local histories
- Family group sheets
- Family histories/Genealogies
- Lineage society publications
- Prepared pedigrees
- Record abstracts & transcriptions