

[Family History for Beginners, Part 1](#)

Guiding entry-level individuals can be a daunting task. Getting started can be frustrating and getting organized first on what needs to be accomplished can be a paramount issue. Fortunately, FamilySearch.org has put together an excellent outline to begin ones outreach for developing their family history pursuits. Knowing what resources are available and where to utilize them is the magical question that needs to be addressed. Each link cited below is “hot” and waiting for self-study and/or working with a ward consultant. Wish I had this kind of infostructure when I began my family history endeavors 50 years ago! But computers were non-existent and the Internet wasn’t even a pipe dream to the general public. The technology at that time was the typewriter, paper and pencil and the clumsy legal-sized Book of Remembrance binders.

You can also view this outline at https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Family_History_for_Beginners



Contents for Getting Organized

- 1Getting Started in Family History Research
- 2Deciding Where to Start Looking
- 3Research Analysis
- 4Organizing your Research and Files
- 5Glossaries that help

Getting Started in Family History Research

Numerous articles are available on FamilySearch Wiki to help you get started in family history. This page provides links to articles about basic [principles of family history research](#).

1. [New to Genealogy? \(critical steps!\)](#)
2. [Identify What You Know](#)
3. [Decide What You Want to Learn](#)
4. [Select Records to Search](#)
5. [Obtain and Search the Records](#)
6. [Use the Information](#)
7. [Websites for Family History Beginners](#)

Deciding Where to Start Looking

Wondering where to start with a challenging name or date in your family history research? One of the following articles can help you [decide where to look first](#) for a puzzling:

- [Name Variation](#)
- [Date](#)
- [Place](#)
- [Easiest to Research Person and Event](#)
- [Record Type to Use](#)

Research Analysis

There are several articles in FamilySearch Wiki that explain how to correlate, corroborate, interpret, and evaluate research, records, and information to determine their relevance, authenticity, reliability, and accuracy, and how to deal with contradictory evidence:

- [Family group record: roadmap for researchers](#)
- [Evaluate the Evidence](#)
- [Research a Family in Community Context](#)
- [Genealogical Proof Standard](#)
- [Analyzing Census Data *](#)

In addition to the articles listed above, the following articles may provide additional ideas for participating in family history activities:

- [A Guide to Research](#)
- [Burned Counties Research](#)
- [Civil Government Birth, Marriage, and Death Certificates](#)
- [Family group record: roadmap for researchers](#)
- [Genealogical Proof Standard](#)
- [How to Begin a Search for Your Ancestor](#)
- [How to Find Descendants in the United States](#)
- [How to Get the Best Research Advice](#)
- [How To Start Your Family History](#)
- [Introduction to Family History](#)
- [Locating Genealogical Websites](#)
- [Major Databases for Beginning United States Research](#)
- [Research a Family in Community Context](#)
- [Rookie Mistakes](#)
- [Sharing: a good way to FIND ancestors](#)
- [Solving Tough Research Problems—Overcoming Brick Walls](#)
- [Spelling of Surnames and Given Names](#)
- [Spelling Substitution Tables for the United States and Canada](#)
- [Start Family History by Writing What is Known](#)
- [Surname Research](#)
- [Traditional Nicknames in Old Documents - A Wiki List](#)

Organizing your Research and Files

Organizing and documenting the research that you do is a key concept for both beginners and seasoned family history researchers. The following articles will help you understand this important process:

- [Organizing Your Files](#)
- [Document AS YOU GO!](#)
- [Cite Your Sources \(Source Footnotes\)](#)
- [Copying Sources](#)
- [Research Logs](#)
- [Keeping a Research Log](#)
- [Research Compass Description](#)
- [Research Analysis](#)
- [Analyzing Census Data](#)

- [What to do with the genealogy and family history I collected](#)

Glossaries that help

Three glossaries to help with your research and understanding of the Wiki:

- [Genealogical Terms](#)
- [Genealogical Dictionary of Legal Terms](#)
- [Help:Wiki Terminology](#)

*Links to **Principles of Family History Research** articles*

Introduction [Using This Article](#) • [New to Genealogy? critical steps!](#) • [Your Genealogical Quest](#) • [The Research Process](#)

Step 1. Identify What You Know [Use Appropriate Forms](#) • [Recall Information](#) • [Gather Family Information](#) • [Gather Low-Hanging-Fruit Sources](#) • [Record Useful Information](#) • [Organize Your Records](#)

Step 2. Decide What You Want to Learn [Identify Candidate Families for Further Research](#) • [One Family at a Time](#) • [One Research Objective at a Time](#) • [Select the Easiest Research Objective](#) • [Prepare a Research Log](#)

Step 3. Select Records to Search [Creation of Records](#) • [Identify a Category of Sources](#) • [Choose a Record Type](#) • [Select Specific Records](#) • [Describe the Records on a Research Log](#)

Step 4. Obtain and Search the Records [Obtain the Records](#) • [View the Records](#) • [Search the Records](#) • [Record the Results](#)

Step 5. Use the Information [Evaluate the Evidence](#) • [Transfer the Information](#) • [Organize the New Records](#) • [Share the Information](#) • [Restart the Research Cycle](#) • [For Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](#) • **Further Reading**
When you think you are done - what to do!