



Beginning Genealogy

www.Midwestgenealogycenter.org

mgc@mymcpl.org

816-252-7228

Getting Started

- Begin in the present and progress to the past
- Collect names of family members and their relationship to one another plus key dates/places
- Always note the source of any information you acquire
- Interview family members, recording the interviews whenever possible
- Embrace the challenges – such as changing data, missing records, and the occasional “brick wall”
- Commit to good research practices
 - Start/stay organized
 - Take advantage of available family history forms such as pedigree and family unit charts, research logs, etc.
 - For MGC forms, go to <https://www.mymcpl.org/genealogy/resources/family-history-forms>
 - Develop a plan for storing your discoveries -- paper files vs digital storage
 - Standardize recordkeeping
 - Names: First name, middle name, LAST NAME (caps) with nicknames in quotes, list women with their MAIDEN NAMES
 - Dates: Day Month Year → 12 Oct 1913
 - Places: City, County, State → Independence, Jackson, MO

Extending Your Research

- U.S. Federal Census records
 - 1790 – 1950+ (restricted from public access for 72 years)
 - Maintained by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)
 - Accessible in numerous publications, on microfilm/fiche, and in many online databases
 - For more information, go to
 - NARA – www.archives.gov/research/genealogy/census/online-resources
 - FamilySearch United States Census Research Wiki - https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Federal_Census
 - Cyndi's List - <https://www.cyndislist.com/us/census>
 - Tips for using the U.S. Federal Census for genealogy
 - Avoid filling out all search fields when performing an online search
 - Expect inconsistencies – be flexible!
 - Always review the original census page to see any information not included in the indexed version and to note the names of the families who lived nearby
 - Document your findings – always cite your sources!
- State, county, and local records
 - Other censuses – state/territorial, Indian, federal non-population schedules

- For a list of state census years, go to the U.S. Census Bureau website - https://www.census.gov/history/www/genealogy/other_resources/state_censuses.html
- Vital records – birth, marriage, and death
 - *Missouri Digital Heritage* – <http://www.sos.mo.gov/mdh>
- Legal records – deeds, wills/probate, other court documents
- For more information, go to
 - The *FamilySearch.org* Research Wiki for your country, state, county, and/or city
 - Eichholz’s *Red Book: American State, County, and Town Sources* – access online at https://wiki.rootsweb.com/wiki/index.php/Red_Book:_American_State,_County,_and_Town_Sources
- Newspapers – obituaries, news articles, notices, advertisements
 - Found at local libraries, archives and historical societies – hardcopy and/or microfilm
 - Online newspaper databases
 - Library of Congress – <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>
 - Subscription services like *Access NewspaperARCHIVE*, *Newspapers (.com / LE)*
- Other records – see MGC’s [Research Checklist](#) for a more comprehensive list of “other” records
 - Military
 - City directories, phone books
 - Church and cemetery records
 - Passenger lists and immigration/naturalization documents
 - Tax and property records

Locating Resources

- Offline
 - State, county, and local libraries and archives
 - County courthouses
 - Church archives
 - Local genealogical and historical societies
 - College/university libraries, presidential and other special-collection libraries
- Online
 - *Internet Archive* – <http://www.archive.org>
 - *Cyndi’s List* – <http://www.cyndislist.com>
 - *Family Search* – <https://familysearch.org> or https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Online_Genealogy_Records_by_Location
 - *Find a Grave* – <http://www.findagrave.com>, *BillionGraves* – <https://billiongraves.com>
 - *Joe Beine’s Genealogy Branches* – <https://www.genealogybranches.com/>
 - *U.S. Genealogy Records Directory* – <https://ldsgenealogy.com/dir/>
 - *RootsWeb* – <https://home.rootsweb.com/>
 - *USGenWeb Project* – <https://www.usgenweb.org/> – and other county genealogy websites
 - MGC – <https://www.mymcpl.org/genealogy/resources/resources-for-genealogy>

Next Steps

- Connect with other family historians through message board, social media, etc.
- Host a family reunion to gather others to work on your family’s history “in committee”
- Improve your genealogy skills with a (free) class or two such as those found in the ONLINE LEARNING section of the GET STARTED tab on the MGC website – <https://www.mymcpl.org/genealogy/get-started/online-learning>
- Sign up for another MGC class/event at <https://www.mymcpl.org/genealogy/events>