

Beginning Genealogy

with Kathy Huber

Tulsa City-County Library Genealogy Research Center

Family History Month 2020

Outline

- I. Begin with yourself
 - A. Check records you have at home
 - B. Talk with family members
 - C. Ancestor charts/family group sheets

- II. Records
 - A. Local
 - B. State
 - C. Federal

- III. Local Records
 - A. County courthouse
 - B. Local libraries
 - C. Cemeteries
 - D. Church records
 - E. Genealogical societies/historical societies

- IV. State records
 - A. Birth/death records
 - B. State archives/libraries

- V. Federal records
 - A. Immigration
 - B. Military
 - C. Census
 - D. National archives

Chart #

4 Generation Pedigree Chart

No. 1 on this chart is
same as #___ on Chart
#___.

1 _____
Birth
Place
Married
Place
Death
Place
SPOUSE _____
Birth
Death

2 _____
Birth
Place
Married
Place
Death
Place

3 _____
Birth
Place
Death
Place

4 _____
Birth
Place
Married
Place
Death
Place
5 _____
Birth
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Death
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6 _____
Birth
Place
Married
Place
Death
Place
7 _____
Birth
Place
Death
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8 _____
Birth
Place
Death
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9 _____
Birth
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10 _____
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11 _____
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12 _____
Birth
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13 _____
Birth
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Death
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14 _____
Birth
Place
Death
Place
15 _____
Birth
Place
Death
Place

Cont. on Chart _____

Cont. on Chart _____

Cont. on Chart _____

Cont. on Chart _____

Cont. on Chart _____

Cont. on Chart _____

Cont. on Chart _____

Cont. on Chart _____

Cont. on Chart _____

Cont. on Chart _____

Cont. on Chart _____

Cont. on Chart _____

Cont. on Chart _____

Cont. on Chart _____

Cont. on Chart _____

Immigration Records

Passenger lists and naturalization papers can be located for many of our ancestors. A passenger list was created by the captain of each ship that came to the US. Names of each passenger were recorded as they boarded the ship. These lists were given to the officials at the port of entry in the US. If a person died during the passage, it was recorded on the ship list. If a child was born during the voyage, their name was added to the list. Most of these lists start about 1820. The originals are located at the National Archives. Some have been digitized and indexed on ancestry.

Not all of the passenger lists are indexed. They are arranged by port and by date. There is no index for NY for the years 1850-1890. You will need to know the date of arrival, port of arrival and name of ship to access these records.

Naturalization records are also available. The Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization was created in 1906. Prior to 1906 naturalization records will be located at the county courthouse. Records created after 1906 will be located at the federal courthouse. There are no national indexes for naturalizations but indexes are available on a county level for those created before 1906.

The first step in the naturalization process was to make a declaration of intent. After a waiting period of at least 5 years, the immigrant could apply to become a naturalized citizen. These two records could be filed in different locations because during the waiting period, families usually moved around. Therefore, you may have to check a number of locations to locate the record.

Attempt to locate the naturalization records first. Once you have found it, the location of the declaration of intent will be noted on the papers as well as the date of arrival, place of arrival and country of origin.

Women became naturalized citizens when their husbands were naturalized. Only after women were allowed to vote were they able to apply individually for naturalization. Men who arrived as children could apply once they reached age 21. They were not required to go through the waiting period.

The 1900 census asks the immigrant what year they arrived and if they were naturalized or alien. Use this information to back track to locate the naturalization record.

Military Records

US military records began with the Revolutionary War. Records have been created for every war since then. The records are located at the National Archives. Some are available on ancestry and Fold3.

There are two main types of military records, service and pension records. Another type of pension record was available for veterans of the Revolutionary War and War of 1812. In lieu of a pension, veterans of the Revolutionary War and War of 1812 could apply for bounty land. After the Louisiana Purchase, the federal government had more land than money. To encourage settlement in this new land, the government decided to offer free land to the veterans in lieu of having to pay them pensions. So many veterans made application for this land that they ran out of land by the end of the War of 1812 pension time period.

Service records consist of information on the soldier starting with his enlistment. It follows him through his military career and contains rank, unit information, place of enlistment, discharge information, injuries, illness and even death information if he was killed in action. If a soldier was held as prisoner of war or if he deserted, that information is also included. These records are filed by state.

Veterans could apply for pensions when they became available. If the veteran died before pensions became available, his widow could apply as long as she had not remarried. If she remarried and became widowed the second time, she could apply.

If the soldier applied, he would need to prove his service and give reason why he needed a pension. He would usually ask his military "buddies" to vouch for him and would sometimes get his doctor to testify that his war injury kept him from working. The pension board made the final decision as to who was awarded the pension.

The widow had to also prove her husband served and that she was married to him. Usually the widow had children to support and could easily explain her need.

The applications are available whether the pension was granted or not. These records are full of genealogy information including marriage dates, children's names, where the family lived after the war, and even the death date of the soldier. Locating pension records can be a great help in discovering family information. These records are filed by state. Digitized copies of the Revolutionary War pensions are available on Fold3.

Some exceptions to the rules:

Confederate pensions were not paid by the US government but by the individual state governments. Therefore, they will not be located at the National Archives. Contact the state archives for these records. Because the south didn't have any money (or anything else) after the war, most states didn't begin to pay their confederate soldiers until 1900 or later. You will need to know what county your Confederate soldier lived in when he applied for a pension. Some of the pensions have been digitized and are available on ancestry and Fold3. Those states not found on ancestry or Fold3 might be found on the state's archives website.

Union Pension Records are available at the National Archives. They have not been microfilmed or digitized and are only available at the Archives in Washington, DC. You can order them via mail or online. You can also visit the Archives and make copies of them. Fold3 is beginning to digitize the records, but it will take a while for all of them to show up there. An index for Union pensions is available on ancestry.

World War I records burned on a federal level. Contact the state archives to get copies of these records. There was a draft for World War I. However, not everyone who registered was drafted. Copies of the draft cards have been indexed and are available on ancestry. To locate your ancestor's draft registration card, you will need to know where he was living in 1917/1918 when the draft was taking place. Cards are filed by county. Those in large cities were filed by draft boards. Most cities had more than one draft board. Use old city directories to locate addresses of families who lived in large cities.

Census Facts

Why was the census created?

- 1790-1940
- 72 year privacy law
- Census taken by state and divided by county—state/county history
- Names of head of household only 1790-1840
- 1850 every name in family listed
- 1850/1860 slave schedule
- 1880 relationships, birth place of parents
- 1890 census burned
- 1900 month/year of birth, number of years married, immigration/naturalization information
- all census available online with subscription
- index available online

Search Tips

- Be creative when spelling names.
- Nicknames, initials
- Incorrect information—who answered the questions??