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NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

Introduction to Genealogy: Where to Begin

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Try to answer these questions:

- When was my ancestor born?
- Where was he/she born?
- Who were their parents? Siblings?
- Who did they marry?
- Have children of their own?
- Names of children?
- When did they die?
- Where are they buried?

Good Starting Points

- Older family members
- Family Bibles
- Old Photographs
- Letters/Diaries
- Scrapbooks
- Earlier genealogy/family trees



Be Skeptical of:

- Family legends/tales
- Family Trees/Information without citations
- Online resources





Primary Sources

Primary sources are documents created during the lifetime of your ancestor.

Some examples:

Census Records

Naturalizations

Diaries

Birth/Death Registers

Photos/Portraits



Secondary Sources

Something created about a person later in time

Some examples:

Family/County Histories

Family trees that are not vetted on genealogy websites

Biographies



Organization

Five Generation Chart

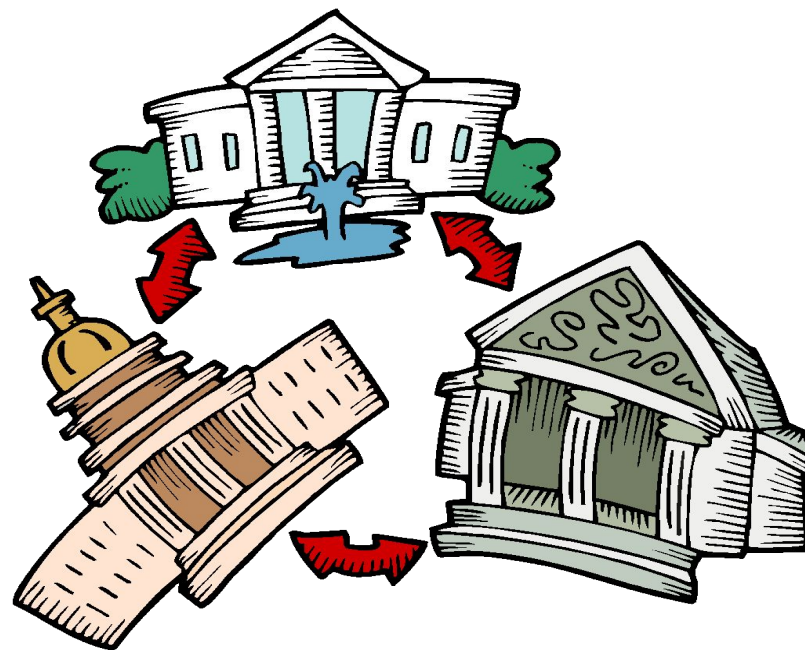
- You/Spouse
- Parents
- Grandparents
- Great-Grandparents
- Great-Great-Grandparents

Family Group Sheet

- One nuclear family unit
- Father, Mother, Children

Where to go for vital records

- County Court House
- State Archives
- Church/Synagogues





Birth Certificate

- Name of subject
- Place of Birth
- Date of Birth
- Maiden name (women)
- Mother's maiden name
- Father's name

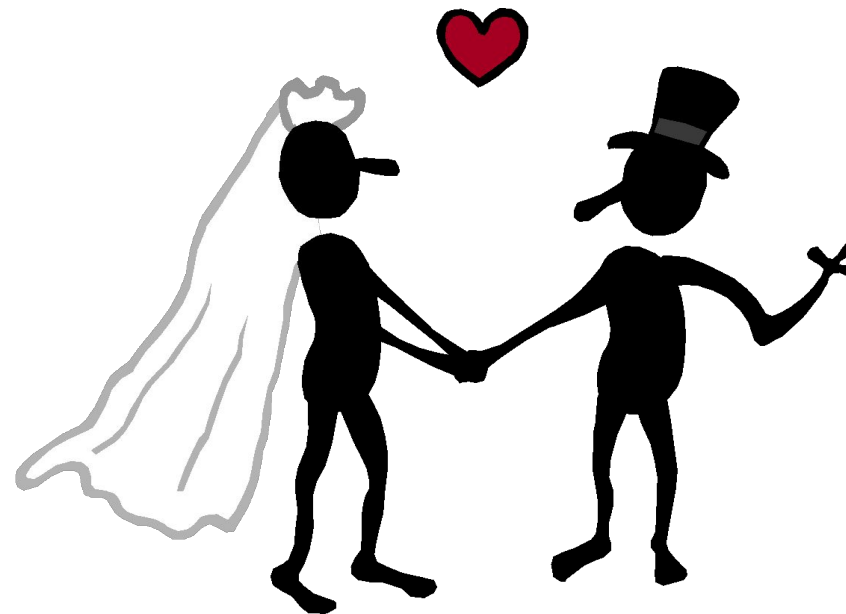


Death Certificate

- Name of Subject
- Date of death
- Cause of death
- Place of death
- Burial/Cemetery
- Maiden name
- Mothers maiden name
- Fathers name

Marriage Certificates/Licenses

- Name of Bride
- Name of Groom
- Date of Marriage
- Place of Marriage
- Officiant
- Ages/Birth Dates of Couple



Other County Resources

- Wills/Probate
- Land & Property
- *Naturalization

Other State Resources

- State Census
- Militia Records
- Naturalization
- Land
- Court Records





Federal

- U.S. Federal Census (Bureau of the Census, RG29)
- Military (National Personnel Records Center - Military)
- Civilian Files (National Personnel Records Center - Civilian)
- *Naturalization (U.S. District Courts is RG 21 at NARA - Naturalizations can also be found at county/other courts as well as state and local archives.)
- Land Grants (Bureau of Land Management, RG 49)
- Homestead Files (Bureau of Land Management, RG 49)
- Ship Passenger Lists (U.S. Customs Service, RG 36)
- Passport Applications (Department of State, RG 59 and Foreign Service Posts, RG 84)
- Court Records (U.S. District Courts, RG 21)
- And many, many more!



Tips

- Make copies (or scans)
- Always cite your source!
- Keep your information organized
- Double check conflicting information against primary sources
- Share with other genealogists
- Be skeptical of “floating” information, wild stories, and inconsistencies



Helpful Websites

- www.ancestry.com (Subscription required)
- www.familysearch.org (Free of charge)

Places to visit online or in person...

- U.S. National Archives
- State Archives/Historical Society
- County Historical/Genealogical Society
- County Court



Questions?

National Archives at Seattle

-Currently open for textual research on a limited appointment-only basis. Microfilm and public access computer room currently closed. *(Please keep an eye on our website for updates about the reopening of our microfilm room.)*

Normal Operating Hours:

Monday-Friday

9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

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