

Genealogy 101

If you are new to genealogy, you will soon find that tracing your family is challenging and exciting. Most genealogists believe that once you start looking for your family, you will be “hooked for life.” It can be one of the most interesting and enjoyable things you have ever done. If you are an experienced researcher, you already know the joys of finding your ancestors. As exciting as tracing your ancestors can be, there is not much that can compare to finding the origins of your immigrant ancestors, and their life stories.

A number of our readers have been asking, how do I research my family history. Where do I start, where do I look, how and what should be recorded. As you gather information on your family, you will want to record it in some way. The Medicine Hat Genealogical Society has available Pedigree Charts, Family Group sheets and Generational Charts etc. to help record your research.

So, where do we start? As you start your family research, the first name you enter on your family tree chart is your own name. Then record all your pertinent information, your birth date, where you were born, if married record marriage date, partner's name, and their info as well. Then do the same for your parents and grandparents.

Your next step, interview family members, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins etc. Also, visit and record information from your oldest living relatives. Record as much information from these interviews as possible, birth, marriage and death, which are referred to as BMD. These BMD's are the basic information to have, and record. Look for church records on your family. Birth, Baptismal, Marriage, Death, Church Membership, etc. If you can get copies of these certificates they will become your proof, this is referred to as a Source. Be sure to record your sources, include the name, location and date of the source, as well as the date you discovered it.

What do you know about your ancestors? How and where did your ancestors live? What were their occupations? What religion did they practice, and how did it influence their lives. Were they born outside of Canada? What country did they emigrate from, what port did they depart from, and what country and port did they arrive at. The more information you have, the easier it will be to identify your ancestor in records.

Recording the time period your ancestors lived in, will give you family history to examine. Was it during war time: The Civil War, Revolutionary War, or were they United Loyalists or was it WW1 or WW2, perhaps they were born in a work camp in some far off distant country. With this added information, you can add a story line to your ancestor.

Sometimes family stories are passed down through the generations. Adding stories of Life and Times will always make your family history more interesting. Remember within these family stories, there could be clues that could unlock new leads in finding more family history, or even break down a brick wall or two.

As you record your 3rd generation, which is your grand parents, this should put you back in time to start looking up Census records. The most recent Canadian Federal Census to view is the 1921 census, for those of us here in Alberta we have the 1916 Provincial Census as well as the 1911 Federal census. These Census records can be searched for free, by googling the *Library and Archives Canada* web site. For those that are on Face Book a great site is <http://socialmediagenealogy.com/genealogy-on-facebook-list/> this site has over 5300 links with a table of contents, updated as of 29 July2015.

As you continue to research your family roots, keep in mind there is no master plan that tells you how to conduct your genealogy. While some ancestral lines will be traced back with no trouble, others can only be discovered after painstaking research. One thing to keep in mind when researching your ancestors, genealogy is done in reverse, start at lifes end and work backward through time.

Good luck with your family research. The next meeting of MHGS is Sept. 2.
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