



# Beginning Family History Research



- **What is your goal?**
- **Identify what resources you may have** – living family members, family documents & photos, historical documents, websites, cemetery information, Family History Center resources
- **Start with YOURSELF** – then build the next generation – then the next; when you start to have gaps, make notes of where the holes are so that you can come back to the list as your research targets
- **Where will you compile your research?** Paper files? Online tree?
- **What are you missing?** Assemble what you do know and this will help you realize what you don't know and will want to research
- **Build your tree** – online or paper
- **Places to research to fill in gaps:**
  - [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) (free)
  - [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com) (free)
  - [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) (free to LDS church members; free access at FHC)
  - [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) (free)
  - [www.newspaperarchives.com](http://www.newspaperarchives.com) (free at FHC)
  - [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov) (free access to military service records)
  - [www.fold3.com](http://www.fold3.com) (free at FHC)
  - Many other websites can be used free at the FHC
  - Local church records – many can be found online
- **What is on...**
  - **Birth Certificate:** full maiden name, birth date, birth location, parents' names, parents' birth locations, gender, race
  - **Death Certificate:** Full name (name at death), birthdate, birth location, age at death, parents' names, parent's birth locations, death date, death location, cause of death, location of burial, "informant" that may be a family member
  - **Marriage Certificate:** Name of bride and groom, sometimes birthdates, most of the time ages, witnesses (possible family members), date and location of marriage, sometimes occupation, parents' names, whether it is a first or second marriage (words like "miss" or "spinster" or "widow" can help you find prior marriages for a female)
  - **Census Records:** Family members, ages, birth locations, birth of parents, current street address, sometimes in-laws are living there, occupation, handicaps, property values, etc
- **Verify and Document**
  - Verify oral or family member stories/memories by looking for documents to verify the information that they have given you
  - Actual records may give you clues beyond what a family member has remembered (ex: other than the date of a wedding, by finding the certificate, you can find parents, the location, etc)
  - Records do not change like memories sometimes do
  - [www.recordseek.com](http://www.recordseek.com) is a website to create an online source/citation for information found on your family tree on either Ancestry or FamilySearch
- **Basics:**
  - Always use a woman's maiden name or leave the surname space blank
  - Date format: day/month/year ex. 7 Feb 1876
  - Don't use the word "unknown"
  - Child's birth location/date give you the location of the mother and possibly father at that time

## Favorite websites to try out:

[www.recordseek.com](http://www.recordseek.com) [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com) [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)