



I Want to Discover My Family Story, Where Do I Start?

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Many people don't know how to start their family history. Remember this, it's never been easier to start than right now! In this class we'll help you understand what to do and why, what help is available, and what you can do now.

Benefits of family history

Ask yourself, what do I want to get from family history? Or, why did I come to this conference? There are many different reasons people start but most people start because they want to discover something about their family. Some start and begin to see ancestors as people with hardships, triumphs, shortcomings, etc. Others start and find a sense of healing. Some feel pride in family and in their homelands and experience a sense of belonging. Some connect with other living relatives and start to share what they've learned. Learning about our ancestors helps us better understand who we are—creating a family bond, linking the present to the past, and building a bridge to the future.

What is FamilySearch?

FamilySearch is a nonprofit family history organization dedicated to connecting families across generations and is the largest genealogy

organization in the world. The services provided at familysearch.org are free and allow access to historical records, a community building a public tree, volunteer opportunities, cloud storage for family memories, mobile applications, and much more. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the primary benefactor for FamilySearch services.

Getting started

There are many ways to get started. One of easiest ways is to answer the following question, “Who do I want to learn more about?” Once you know, then remember the following.

1. The first few generations matter. Once you’ve created a free FamilySearch account you can started building your tree. Build your tree out based on what you know. The more details (birth/marriage/death dates and places, maiden names, etc.) you add will help. Connecting your first 3-5 generations in your family tree enables FamilySearch to open collaboration opportunities, send historical records, and build discovery experiences for you.
2. Remember to collaborate with others. Once you add what you know, you can work with others. You’ll see what they have done to build out your family.
3. Each ancestor in the tree is unique and has an ID number. Deceased people can be seen by anyone with an account. Living people can only be seen by the person who added them.
4. Historical records can help. As you incorporate record hints into your tree, you will fill in details and verify facts. New information and relationships will start to appear. You can attach historical records too.
5. You can document what you know and what you find. The system will allow you to attach photos, stories and documents for a person. What you add, for those who are deceased, will be seen by those related to those individuals. This information will be preserved for generations to come.

Do not despair!

If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again. If you are just getting started, that is ok. The technology has never been better and the best time to start is now. Remember, others are often willing to work together. There is help available at RootsTech, online at familysearch.org and in family history centers around the world.

A few things you can do now

1. Create a free account. There is no charge to use the services provided by FamilySearch.
2. If your foundation (first few generations) is not in place yet, add it. Talk to your family and gather as much information as you can. The more details the better. If you don't know, give it your best guess.
3. Pick a deceased ancestor you care about. Make sure this person is in your family tree. Once this person exists:
 1. FamilySearch will start trying to help by sending historical record hints. If you see the blue hint icon, compare the information from the record to the information in your family tree. If it matches the person, attach it and see if there is additional information on the record. If there is, add the information and any additional ancestors it may contain.
 2. You can add information to this person. Start by adding a photo. Once you add a photo, you can easily write a story about that person. You can also record an audio story.
4. Share what you have built with someone else. Sharing is easy. Just copy the link can share it through text or social media. If those who you share it with are related to this individual, and have FamilySearch accounts, they can add information as well.

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