

Let us talk about the basics.

Randy Ray, MPAFUG April 9, 2025

Using what you know.

Put it on paper if you are not a computer person.

Use Family Group Sheets to document your ancestors.

Look at and organize any old photos or documents you may have from Ancestors.

Ask cousins, Aunts, Uncles etc. what they know, and do they have any documents or photos you could copy.

Look at ways to preserve your photos and original documents if you have them.

If you are going paper.

Create separate folders for each family. Mom, dad, and children. Put all your notes and documents for that group in that folder.

Three ring binders also help.

If you can. Scan and digitize your old photos.

Keep a note page of what you find for each person and when and where you find it.

This will help you not to duplicate your work.

Using Ancestry.com.

Ancestry is FREE at your local library. Or by paid subscription.

Yearly it is \$300 for US records.

There are other sources on the Web that are free for records. Be aware of bait and switch tactics like FREE TRIAL for 7 days.

If you are going to a cemetery to research a burial, be sure and stop in the office for a map and ask for a copy of the burial card.

The card will show you who is in the plot and where in the plot.

Also, there may be other family members.

Using Family Search.

FS is the Church of the LDS. They are the original records scanners.

They control, for free, a massive database. Free online.

The last time I looked they had some fifteen billion images. They also store film and data for many other organizations and even other countries and churches.

It is stored in Granite Mountain Records Vault in Utah. Under a granite mountain. Only a few people have access to the vault.

I do 80% of my research on FS. I do not have my tree on their site though.

You should know that each of our Family Trees is different.

Some people just want the basics of their parents and grandparents.

Some add in aunts and uncles. Some just add everyone they can find. We call them name collectors.

You should start with what you know and with what you are comfortable. And work backwards. Do not try and start in the 1500's and work forward. It never works.

Use Family Group Sheets to keep track and stay focused. Take Notes.

Census records are a great and effortless way to track your ancestors. Ancestry (\$\$) and FS have them for free. They are all over the Internet for free at other sources.

Do not get caught up in spelling of last names. Use their formal name or the name they used on official records. The computer can tell the difference between Smith and Smyth.

Do not get caught up in sourcing if you do not want to. Professionals say, "Oh you must have sources and research notes." NO, YOU DON'T. There are no rules in genealogy.

► CENSUS RECORDS

Read them carefully.

A lot of very good information.

Let's look at one.....

<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/110894700:2442>

► NAMES

Stay with the person's formal name and spelling.

If they immigrated as Johann Wilhelm Tiegs. I use Johann Wilhelm Tiegs not John Tiegs.

I have a huge Lux group that has twenty spellings of Hintgen. Hingtgen. Hengtgen. Etc. I changed all of them to HINTGEN. The most common and, I decided I just was not going to fight it. It also keeps them all in the same rows in the index.

Women should always use their maiden name.

Don't do this. https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/73210772/person/102304953714/facts?_phsrc=Bjn56&_phstart=succesSource

► SOURCES

The average person's tree does not site sources.

I know a person that has their tree on post it notes. Another has a whole baggy pack full of flash drives with no labels.

Most just put down that "I found this info in the 1940 census.

Do what you want.

Research notes are optional.

Here is a sample of "sources."

<https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/195642639/person/192553030251/facts>

Keep it simple to your level of experience.

Be sure and tell cousins what you are doing and ask them for stories, photos, and documents. Make sure you tell them that you will return them after you copy them.

You do not need to spend a lot of money on this.

Ancestry is free at your local Library; Family search is free anywhere on any computer. And google and other web genealogy sites can be free.

The Family Search Library on Grange Ave. in Hales Corners is free. It is an extension of the massive Salt Lake City Library. I volunteer there on the Thursday evening shift from 6-9. They are now organizing a starter class also.

Make it fun.

There are many Polish and German websites out there. Most are overseas PAY sites. Be careful. Google Translate will translate then for you. They are all very clicky to get to the info.

To really get to the European records you must have the name of the civil village or religious parish. Then you go to the FS site and search under IMAGES. This is not easy. The civil and church records are handwritten and NOT searchable.

<https://www.familysearch.org/records/images/>

There is NO one website that has everything you need. You should make a search strategy to help you.

Some of my favorite websites for research.

Danish Records

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Denmark>
Online Genealogy Records

FS search WIKI

[https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Main Page](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Main_Page)

US GENWEB

<https://www.usgenweb.org/>

Library of Congress Newspapers

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>

Immigrant ship Transcribers Guild

<https://www.immigrantships.net/>

YouTube has hundreds of videos on Ancestry for free.

You can find a video for everything you want to do
.You can find a video for every topic you want.

All for free.

One of the best sources of help is to join a local
Genealogy Group or Club.

The MPAFUG Group meets every month on the 2nd
Wednesday at 7 pm until 9pm at the New Berlin
Ale House. One dollar a month is our annual fee.

Come and join us.

There are many local sources for you. And I am
happy to help.

I am at the Ozaukee Historical Archives on
Tuesdays from 9-3pm.

I host two sessions each month at the Cedarburg
Library. Check their calendar for day and time.
One is after lunch, and one is 6pm.

The Family Search Library has hours on Thursdays
and Saturdays. I am there Thursday evenings from
6-9pm.

Thank you, are there any questions?