



# Introduction to Family History

*a guide for beginners*



Medina County District Library

Virginia Wheeler Martin Family History & Learning Center  
330-725-0588 x5017 • [mcdl.info/Genealogy](http://mcdl.info/Genealogy)



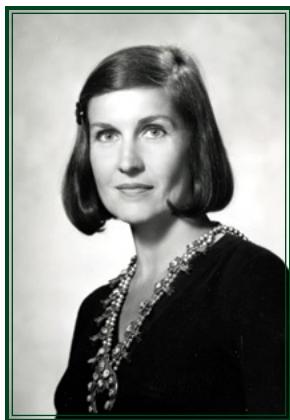
# Family History & Learning Center

The Virginia Wheeler Martin Family History & Learning Center at Medina Library was made possible through a generous donation by namesake, Virginia Wheeler Martin.

## What is the Family History & Learning Center?

Located on the second floor of Medina Library, the FHLC includes a Local & Family History Collection of books, periodicals, newspapers, and databases ideal for researching your family history and the history of the Medina community.

The FHLC also includes a Digital Lab and Makerspace. The Digital Lab is stocked with equipment and software for digitizing your family's home movies, pictures, slides, and audio recordings. The Makerspace has technology for creative expression, including a laser engraver, sewing machines, 3D printers, banner printer, and more.



## Who was Virginia Wheeler Martin?

Virginia Wheeler Martin (1928-2016) graduated from Medina High School, then Miami University, and became Medina's first airline stewardess. She married Navy Captain Barney Martin, traveled the world with his career, and settled in California.

Upon her death at age 88, she returned to Mound Hill Cemetery in Seville, along with five generations of her family, for burial. Virginia was active in many organizations; however, family history was her passion.



Photo Credit: CBLH Design, Inc./Wetzler Studios, Inc.

# Introduction

Congratulations on your decision to start researching your family history! Family history research (also called genealogy) is a rewarding hobby that will help you learn more about yourself, your ancestors, and the communities in which they lived. Along the way you'll also learn how to be a savvy researcher and develop a better understanding of history.

This booklet will help you start your journey. It includes six easy steps to get started, some essential tips to keep in mind, and more resources where you can continue to learn and research. If you have any questions or need additional help, contact the MCDL Genealogy Team at [me-team.genealogy@mcdl.info](mailto:me-team.genealogy@mcdl.info) or 330-725-0588 x5017. We love family history and we're happy to help!

## genealogy noun

jee-nee-ol-uh-jee, -al-, jen-ee-

- 1: an account of the descent of a person, family, or group from an ancestor or from older forms
- 2: regular descent of a person, family, or group of organisms from a progenitor
- 3: the study of family ancestral lines
- 4: an account of the origin and historical development of something

### ORIGIN

*Middle English: via Old French and late Latin from Greek genealogia, from genea ‘race, generation’ + -logia.*

## genealogist noun

a person who traces or studies lines of family descent

## genealogical adjective

relating to the study or tracing of lines of family descent: genealogical research.

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# Step 1 Getting Started

## Start With Yourself

You are the latest link in your family's chain of ancestry. You don't want to break the chain or skip any of the links, so begin with what you already know – YOURSELF! – then work back into the past, generation by generation.

## Stay Focused

Select one family surname to research at a time.

## Set a Goal

For beginning genealogists a good first goal is to complete an Ancestral Chart.

This includes researching:

1. You and your spouse
2. Your parents
3. Your grandparents
4. Your great-grandparents
5. Your great-great-grandparents

For each of these people, you'll answer questions about where and when they were born, married, and died (if applicable). You will also answer questions about their spouses, parents, children, and siblings.

These questions may include:

- Where was my mother born?
- Who were my grandfather's parents?
- How many siblings did my great-grandmother have?

Write or type the answers on Ancestral Charts and Family Group Sheets (page 4). Also write down the sources that provided the answers on Research Logs (page 12).

## Use This Booklet & MCDL Resources

The Introduction to Family History: A Guide for Beginners booklet will walk you through the steps and direct you to the records that can help answer these questions.

If you get stuck, ask the MCDL Genealogy Team for help. One-on-one appointments can be held in-person at the library or virtually with Zoom. Email [me-team.genealogy@mcdl.info](mailto:me-team.genealogy@mcdl.info) or call 330-725-0588 x5017 to schedule an appointment.

As your research skills grow, you will start to ask more complex questions about your family history.

MCDL's Intermediate Family History: Further Your Research booklet will provide you with the next steps in your research journey.

# Step 2 Search Your Home

You likely have more documents to start researching your family than you realize. Common sources like birth records and obituaries chronicle the events of our lives and those of our ancestors. Search your home for information you already have.

## Look for These Records

- Birth Certificates & Announcements
- Marriage Records & Announcements
- Death Certificates & Obituaries
- Diaries
- Family Bibles
- Family Photographs
- Family Stories
- Heirlooms
- Land Records
- Letters
- School Records
- Tax Records
- Yearbooks



### Example: Catherine Crawford Obituary

From this obituary we learn a lot of information about Catherine (Moore) Crawford, including her maiden name, her birth date and place, her death date, when she moved to Medina County, who her husband was, who their children were, who her sister was, what church she attended, and where she was buried.

These details help fill in the blanks on Ancestral Charts and Family Group Sheets. Other records may verify the accuracy of the obituary's information or expose errors.

this valuable publication.  
**Another Pioneer Gone.**

Catherine Moore was born in Bristol, Trumbull county, Oct. 16, 1811, passed from this life March 16, 1907, at the age of 95 years and 5 months. At the age of seven years she came with her parents to Guilford township, Medina Co.

She became the wife of Josiah Crawford, Feb. 24, 1831, who died Oct. 1, 1880, at the age of 75 years. To them were born ten children, three of whom survive her, being Mrs. Rebecca Owen, Mrs. Amy Taylor and Mrs. Lydia Frazer. Also by one sister, Mrs. Maria Rice, 14 grandchildren, 39 great grandchildren, and 2 great-great grandchildren. She united with the M. E. church thirty years ago at Seville.

The funeral was held at the M. E. church, her pastor, Rev. Palmer, conducting the services, assisted by Rev. Leith of the Presbyterian church, and Rev. Hart, the Baptist pastor. A large concourse of friends attended the last sad rites of her, whom all loved and respected. Her six grandsons were pall-bearers.

"Grandma" Crawford, as she was called by those who knew and loved her, was a remarkable woman, retaining her mental faculties until a short time before her death. Her life has been an unselfish one, doing for others in a kind and gentle manner, all that was required of her. She saw many changes in and about Seville, coming here as a child when all was woods. She was the last one to pass away of those who witnessed the first burial in our Mound Hill cemetery, at that time covered with woods.

Her daughter, Mrs. T. E. Taylor, and husband, had anticipated much pleasure in her companionship the coming summer, as she was to live with them, but God took her and she is sweetly resting with her Saviour, whom she loved and trusted.

**O. E. S. Entertainment.**

Unknown newspaper (c. 1907), no page, Catherine Moore Crawford, accessed at Medina County District Library, in the Virginia Wheeler Martin Collection, Curtis Family Series, 2021.

Unknown Photographer, photograph of Catherine Moore Crawford (c. 1904), accessed at Medina County District Library, in the Virginia Wheeler Martin Collection, Curtis Family Series, 2021.

# Step 3 Write Down What You Find

Enter the information you know or find in sources around your home into Ancestral Charts and Family Group Sheets. A starter packet of forms is available at your library. When you need more, download them at [mcdl.info/HistoryGuides](http://mcdl.info/HistoryGuides), then print or fill in electronically.

## Ancestral Charts

An Ancestral Chart, also called a Pedigree Chart, is a simple family tree.

- On your first Ancestral Chart, you'll write down details about your life next to Person 1.
- Details about your father will be entered for Person 2.
- Details for your mother will be entered as Person 3.
- Continue the process for your grandparents, with individuals 4-7, and so on.
- Start additional charts for each of your great grandparents, entering each of them as Person 1 and continuing from there.

Ancestral Chart # _____	
1	Born _____ Place _____ Married _____ Died _____ Place _____  Spouse _____
2	Born _____ Place _____ Married _____ Died _____ Place _____
3	Born _____ Place _____ Married _____ Died _____ Place _____
4	Born _____ Place _____ Married _____ Died _____ Place _____
5	Born _____ Place _____ Married _____ Died _____ Place _____
6	Born _____ Place _____ Married _____ Died _____ Place _____
7	Born _____ Place _____ Married _____ Died _____ Place _____
8	Continued on Chart # _____ Born _____ Place _____ Married _____ Died _____ Place _____
9	Continued on Chart # _____ Born _____ Place _____ Married _____ Died _____ Place _____
10	Continued on Chart # _____ Born _____ Place _____ Married _____ Died _____ Place _____
11	Continued on Chart # _____ Born _____ Place _____ Married _____ Died _____ Place _____
12	Continued on Chart # _____ Born _____ Place _____ Married _____ Died _____ Place _____
13	Continued on Chart # _____ Born _____ Place _____ Married _____ Died _____ Place _____
14	Continued on Chart # _____ Born _____ Place _____ Married _____ Died _____ Place _____
15	Continued on Chart # _____ Born _____ Place _____ Married _____ Died _____ Place _____

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Download at [mcdl.info/HistoryGuides](http://mcdl.info/HistoryGuides)

## Family Group Sheets

Family Group Sheets are used to track all members of a family.

- A Family Group Sheet should be prepared for each couple.
- Write down information about parents at the top.
- Enter information for all children of the parents' in the list at the bottom.
- Additional Family Group Sheets should be prepared for each child on the sheet.

Family Group Sheet				
Parent 1	Relationship _____			
Given names/Ak. Spellings _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Spouse <input type="checkbox"/> Partner <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Other			
Born _____	Married _____			
Place _____	Died _____			
Deceased _____	Occupation _____			
Holiday _____	Military Service _____			
Serviceman _____	Religion _____			
Father _____	Father _____			
Mother _____	Mother _____			
Other Partners _____	Other Partners _____			
Children				
Child #	Full Name	Born _____ Place _____	Died _____ Place _____	Spouse/Partner _____ Married _____ Place _____
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

Medina County District Library • Family History & Learning Center • Download at [mcdl.info/HistoryGuides](http://mcdl.info/HistoryGuides)

## General Tips

### Write down everything

Do not rely on your memory! Write down what you learn on Ancestral Charts, Family Group Sheets, and Research Logs (page 12).

### If you don't know something, pencil in your best guess

That could be a decade instead of a precise birthdate, a state instead of a town where someone was born, or leave it blank. As you research, you'll find information to help fill in details or refine guesstimates.

### Use standard genealogy formats for recording your information

- Capitalize surnames: John Allen SMITH
- Identify women by their maiden names
- Dates are written day, month, year: 15 February 1978
- Location names should be ordered smallest to largest: Brunswick, Medina County, Ohio, United States
- Avoid abbreviations or provide a key to the abbreviations you use



Visit [mcdl.info/HistoryGuides](http://mcdl.info/HistoryGuides) for video demonstrations of completing Ancestral Charts and Family Group Sheets.

# Step 4 Interview Your Relatives

Relatives can be an excellent source of family history information – take the time to interview them! Prioritize your interviewees: start with your oldest or most frail relative, in order to not miss an excellent opportunity.

## Interview Guidelines

- **Be considerate.** Schedule a time and place to meet.
- **Ask to record the interview, either with video or audio.**  
If you aren't recording it, write or type notes. Come prepared with any equipment or supplies you need.
- **Write down who you are interviewing.**  
Include the location, date, and time of the interview, and the interviewee's relationship to your family.
- **Have a set of questions ready, but let the conversation flow.**  
Don't interrupt. If a topic seems sensitive or uncomfortable, move on to something else.
- **Bring along a photo or family artifact to share.** It may spark conversation.
- **Keep interviews a reasonable length.** No more than 45 to 60 minutes; shorter for someone in poor health.
- **Compare details from your interview,** with those in official/written records (pages 6-11).
- **Remember:** Not everyone will look upon your family research as the wonderful adventure that you see it as!
- **Don't alienate your relatives.**
- **Thank them!** Thank them again!

## Suggested Questions

Has anyone else worked on the family history? Do they have any old documents or photographs to show you?

### Ask for details to add to your Ancestral Charts and Family Group Sheets:

- |                    |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|
| • Full Given Names | • Parents        |
| • Birth Dates      | • Siblings       |
| • Marriage Dates   | • Children       |
| • Death Dates      | • Aunts & Uncles |

### Ask about details that capture your ancestors' lives:

- |                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| • Careers           | • Schools          |
| • Hobbies           | • Military Service |
| • Family Traditions | • Income           |
| • Holidays          | • Religion         |

Mrs. Barney "Jinny" Martin, telephone interview by Robert J. Schneller, 27 September 1996. Her husband Barney Martin, USNA Class of 1947, roomed with Howard A. Weiss, Stanley J. Schiller, and Leroy G. Stafford during his first class year at the Academy. Weiss was Wesley A. Brown's first classman. Robert J. Schneller prepared this transcript.

Schneller: The tape's started now. Can you hear me?  
Martin: Yes I can.  
Schneller: OK.  
Martin: You wanted to know where my husband was reared.  
Schneller: That's right.  
Martin: That was your first question.  
Schneller: Yes ma'am.  
Martin: All right. He was born in Barnes Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri, but he was the only one of the three children who was born in a hospital. The mother and father couldn't agree on a name. The father wanted to name him after his father and the mother after her father, so they just called him Barney for the hospital and that stuck with him because he was never christened until the day before we were married. But he was reared in a little town his great, great grandfather pioneered called Salem, Illinois, which is in southern Illinois, 70 miles east of St. Louis, Missouri. going to the Naval Academy. I spoke Schneller: Is that a farm community?  
Martin: I would say yes. There isn't much around there. It's pretty flat. It was a little bitty town of about five thousand when he was growing up. His father was a politician and



Visit [mcdl.info/HistoryGuides](http://mcdl.info/HistoryGuides)  
for interview questions and prompts.

Robert J. Schneller, transcript of telephone interview with Virginia Wheeler Martin regarding Barney Martin's military service (27 September 1996), accessed at Medina County District Library, in the Virginia Wheeler Martin Collection, VWM Series, 2021.

# Step 5 Search the U.S. Census

The U.S. Census has been taken every 10 years since 1790. The records are sealed for 72 years before becoming available to the public.

## Why Census Records?

Census information reveals where your ancestors were living at a specific time and location. It can show family relationships and approximate birth years. The information collected has varied greatly over the years. See the chart below for the type of information you may find.

Information Found in the U.S. Census		
	Adds	Drops
1790-1840	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name of the head of the household</li><li>• Headcounts by sex and age group for everyone else</li></ul>	
1850-1860	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name, age, and gender of each household member</li><li>• Occupation</li><li>• Birthplace</li></ul>	
1870	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Whether father and mother are of foreign birth</li></ul>	
1880	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Marital status</li><li>• Relationship to head of household</li><li>• Birthplace of father and mother</li></ul>	
1890	<i>Mostly destroyed by fire. Surviving records for some Union veterans.</i>	
1900	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of years in current marriage</li><li>• Month and year of birth</li><li>• Mother of how many children and number of children living</li><li>• Home ownership</li><li>• Naturalization status: alien, papers submitted, or naturalized</li><li>• Year of immigration to U.S.</li><li>• Number of years in U.S.</li><li>• Employment status</li></ul>	
1910	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Whether Civil War Veteran</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Month and year of birth</li><li>• Number of years in U.S.</li></ul>
1920	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Year of naturalization</li><li>• Native language</li><li>• Native language of father and mother</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of years married</li><li>• Mother of how many children and number of children living</li><li>• Whether Civil War Veteran</li></ul>
1930	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Age at first marriage</li><li>• Military veteran, which war</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Native language of father and mother</li></ul>
1940		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Age at first marriage</li><li>• Birthplace of father and mother</li><li>• Military veteran, which war</li><li>• Year of immigration to U.S.</li><li>• Native language</li></ul>
1950		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Home ownership</li></ul>

# Step 5 Search the U.S. Census

# Where Can I Find Census Records?

Most genealogy databases offer access to U.S. Census Records.

The following databases can be used for free through [mcdl.info/OnlineLearning](http://mcdl.info/OnlineLearning).

- **Ancestry Library Edition** – access at any MCDL location for free
  - **FamilySearch** – access from home, for free, when logged in with a free account
  - **Fold3** – access from home, for free, with your library card
  - **HeritageQuest** – access from home, for free, with your library card

## Example: 1930 U.S. Census, Medina County, Ohio

Census records provide more information than just names, birthdates, and birthplaces. For example, this page of the 1930 census shows 14 families living in the village of Medina, one of which is the family of Reuben J. Hyde. From the census, it can be determined that Reuben was born around 1871 in Ohio. Other details on this census include the following: Reuben married at age 23 and his wife's name is Bertha. Both of his parents were born in the United States. He can read and write and was presently employed as a supervisor with a state highway project. He and Bertha owned their home, but did not own a radio.

1930 U.S. census, Medina County, Ohio, Enumeration District 15, page 10-A, Reuben J. Hyde, accessed on Ancestry, 30 August 2021.

# Step 6 Search for Vital Records

Vital records are the foundation on which family history is built. The dates and locations of our ancestors' deaths, marriages, and births are the essential facts we collect for each individual. When acquiring vital records for your ancestors, work from the most recent death, to the earliest birth.

## Birth & Death Records/Certificates

The words *records* and *certificates* are used interchangeably, but there are differences. Records are older and contain less information. Birth/death records were entered into a book, with details for many individuals on the same page. Certificates are more recent and contain more detail, with one document per individual.

Birth records may contain the infant's name, birthdate/place, sex, race, parents' names and residence. Certificates may add parents' occupations and birthplaces, the informant for the event, name of physician or midwife, the number of children born to the mother, and more.

Death records may provide the deceased's name, age, sex, race, marital status, occupation, cause of death, date/place of death, birthplace, last residence, and parents' names. Certificates may include the informant's name, the physician's name, if an autopsy/inquest was conducted, and cemetery.

Records/certificates can be found with the government office that created them. Initially, records were kept by a city or county court. Later (see the chart below), certificates were held by state health departments. Some documents may be available online; others are only available through the department that holds them. Some certificates have limited access due to privacy laws; these laws vary by state.

### Dates Statewide Registration of Births & Deaths Began

In some states it took several years to reach 90% compliance with registration laws.  
Registration might be at the county or town level prior to these dates.

1908	Alabama	1907	Indiana (births)	1910	Missouri	1906	Pennsylvania
1913	Alaska	1900	Indiana (deaths)	1907	Montana	1853	Rhode Island
1909	Arizona	1880	Iowa	1904	Nebraska	1915	South Carolina
1914	Arkansas	1911	Kansas	1911	Nevada	1905	South Dakota
1905	California	1911	Kentucky	1901	New Hampshire	1914	Tennessee
1907	Colorado	1914	Louisiana	1848	New Jersey	1903	Texas
1897	Connecticut	1892	Maine	1920	New Mexico	1905	Utah
1881	Delaware	1898	Maryland	1880	New York	1857	Vermont
1899	Florida	1841	Massachusetts	1913	North Carolina	1912	Virginia
1919	Georgia	1867	Michigan	1907	North Dakota	1907	Washington
1896	Hawaii	1900	Minnesota (births)	1908	Ohio	1917	West Virginia
1911	Idaho	1908	Minnesota (deaths)	1908	Oklahoma	1907	Wisconsin
1916	Illinois	1912	Mississippi	1903	Oregon	1909	Wyoming
<b>District of Columbia</b>		1874	DC (births)	1855	DC (deaths)		

# Step 6 Search for Vital Records

Keep in mind, some births and deaths were never reported. To find these birth/death dates/places, look for alternative sources.

## Alternatives to Birth Records/Certificates

- Baptism or Christening Records
- Census Records
- Delayed Birth Certificates
- Family Bibles
- Military Pensions or Muster Rolls
- Newspaper Announcements

## Alternatives to Death Records/Certificates

- Cemetery Records & Gravestones
- Family Bibles
- Funeral Cards & Records
- Mortality Schedules
- Obituaries
- Probate Records
- Social Security Death Index

Record of Births, Probate Court, in and for										
Date of Record.	Number.	NAME IN FULL.		DATE OF BIRTH.	PLACE OF BIRTH.	SEX.	COLOR.	FATHER'S NAME.	MOTHER'S NAME.	PARENTS' RESIDENCE.
		Year.	Month.	Day.	State.	County.	City or Town.	Male. Female.	White. Colored.	
	8712	John	Bennett	27	Ohio	Medina	Wadsworth			
	8713	Eliza	Bennett	10	July	1857		Henry Davis	Ella Smith	Wadsworth Ohio
	8714	Franklin	Sylvester	28	Oct.	Medina		Philip Orley	Lelia Hiltzner	Medina
	8715	John	Bennett Jr.	28	Oct.	Medina		Sam Bruley	Lelia Hiltzner	Medina
	8716	George	Bennett	27	July	Medina		George A. Butler	Mary Moore	
	8717	Anna	Bennett	28	Oct.	Medina		Scott Bennett	Eliza Hiltzner	
	8718	Franklin	Sylvester	29	Jan.	Medina		Frank Gaird	Lucy Bright	
	8719	John Ruth	Reed	29	Jan.	Medina		Sam Bruley	Gille Rely	
	8720	Emerson	Bennett	29	Jan.	Medina				

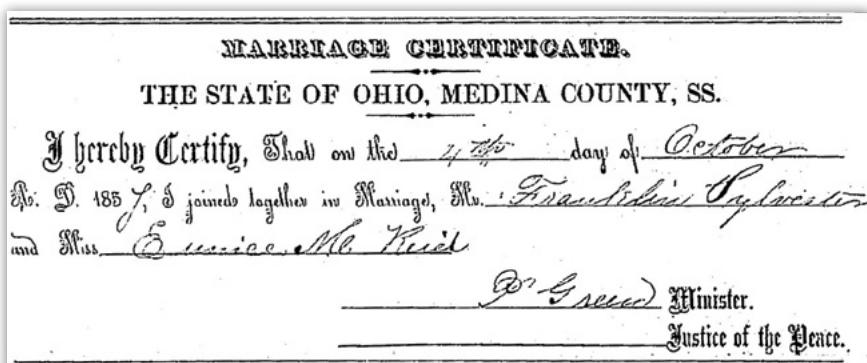
## Marriage Records

Marriage records may provide the spouses' and officiant's names, marriage date and location. More recent records may include spouses' ages, birthplaces, occupations, residences, witnesses' names and parents' names. Marriage records are filed in city or county courts. As a rule, marriages were required to be registered much earlier than births and deaths.

Some marriages were never registered. Information about these marriages might be in alternative sources.

## Alternatives to Marriage Records

- Applications/Licenses\*
- Court Marriage Bonds\*
- Church Marriage Banns\*
- Church Records
- Family Bibles
- Newspaper Announcements



\*These records were a first step to becoming married and don't necessarily confirm that the marriage occurred.

Probate Court of Medina County, Ohio, "Birth Record vol. 2" (Medina, Ohio, 1889), pp. for "B" surnames, no. 8717, Baby [Girl] Bennett, accessed on FamilySearch, 30 August 2021.

Probate Court of Medina County, Ohio, "Marriage Record vol. C-1" (Medina, Ohio, 1857), p. 135, Franklin Sylvester and Eunice Reed, accessed on FamilySearch, 28 August 2021.

# Step 6 Search for Vital Records

## Vital Records for Ohio Ancestors

- For FamilySearch websites, log in to view, print, and save certificates.
- Certified copies must be obtained through Health Departments.
- Some Ohio counties offer the option to buy copies online through **VitalChek.com**.

### Ohio Death Certificates

1953 - Present	Only available through the Health Department with jurisdiction over the death.  For Medina County, visit Medina County Health Department, 4800 Ledgewood Dr., Medina
1954-1970	Available from Ohio History Connection at <a href="http://ohiohistory.org/death">ohiohistory.org/death</a> .
1908-1953	Available for free through FamilySearch.

### Ohio Birth Certificates

1908 - Present	Available at any Health Department in Ohio.
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### Ohio Birth & Death Records

1867-1908	Before the state of Ohio began statewide certification of births/deaths, county Probate Courts kept registers of this information.  For Medina County, see FamilySearch or MCDL microfilm (page 11).  For other Ohio counties, visit FamilySearch.
c. 1800-1866	Ohio did not require births/deaths to be registered before 1867. To research a birth/death in Ohio before 1867, look for alternatives to vital records.

### Ohio Marriage Records

c. 1790 - Present	In Ohio, marriage records are kept by the county Probate Court. Copies can be obtained through the Probate Court where the marriage was filed.  Some records are available for free on FamilySearch.  Medina County marriages for 1818-1965 are also available on microfilm at MCDL (page 11).
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Visit [mcdl.info/HistoryGuides](http://mcdl.info/HistoryGuides) for specific collections of Ohio vital records on FamilySearch.

# Step 6 Search for Vital Records

## Vital Records for Medina County Ancestors

MCDL owns microfilm containing Medina County birth and death records (1867-1909) and marriage records (1818-1965). These reels are exact copies of the volumes at the Probate Court. They are also available digitally on FamilySearch.

### Medina County Birth & Death Records (1867-1909)

<b>Reel #</b>		
3	Index to Births, Volume One (1867-1882)* Births, Volume One (1867-1882) Index to Deaths, Volume One (1867-1882)* Deaths, Volume One (1867-1882) Births, Volume Two (1882-1897)** Births, Volume Three (1898-1909)**	* Arranged alphabetically by first letter of surname.  ** Not indexed. Records arranged by surname's first letter, then by year. Example: all infants with a last name starting with "A" and born in 1882, are listed together.  Note: If the recorder ran out of room for entering data for a letter, they would continue the list elsewhere in the volume and note the location at bottom of the page.
4	Deaths, Volume Two (1883-1902)** Deaths, Volume Three (1903-1909)**	

### Medina County Marriage Records (1818-1965)

I7-31	Marriage Records Card File Index, 1867-1980 This is the most complete index for Medina County marriages. Arranged alphabetically.
I6	Marriage Record General Index, 1835-1869 Arranged alphabetically by initials.
I4-15	Early Marriage Bonds of Ohio, Medina County, 1818-1865 by DAR (also available as a book) This two-volume index (one volume each for grooms and brides) is arranged alphabetically by initials.
32-36	Marriage Licenses Affidavits, 1833-1881 Sworn statements by the groom or a third party, attesting to no obstruction to the marriage. For example, the bride and groom were of legal age to marry, they were not first cousins, neither had a spouse living, etc. No index. Arranged chronologically.
32-38	Marriage Records, 1818-1898 After 1868, the license application/affidavit information is included with the record.
39-52	Marriage Records, 1899-1965

# Tip 1 Cite Your Sources

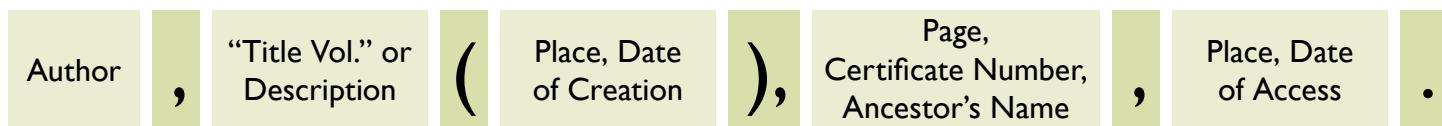
At some point in the future, you or another researcher will want to retrace the steps in your research. Use the Research Log and cite your sources to make that possible. A starter packet of forms is available at your library. When you need more, download them at [mcdl.info/HistoryGuides](http://mcdl.info/HistoryGuides), then print or fill in electronically.

## Research Log

Write down what you find online and in libraries. This will serve as a record of where you've looked and what you've found, so you don't duplicate your efforts.

## Citations

Write citations on all your sources, whether they are printed copies or digital files. Citations may have five elements; connect them with punctuation and end with a period.



A screenshot of a Microsoft Word document titled "Research Log". The form is designed for tracking research sources. It includes sections for "Objective" (Author, Title Vol. or Desc., Place, Date of Creation, Page, Cert. #, Ancestor, Place, Date of Access, Results), "Author" (Author, Title Vol. or Desc., Place, Date of Creation, Page, Cert. #, Ancestor, Place, Date of Access, Results), and "Results". At the bottom, there is a note: "Write citations on all your sources, whether they are printed copies or digital files. Citations may have five elements; connect them with punctuation and end with a period." Below the note are fields for "Author", "Title Vol. or Description", "Place, Date of Creation", "Page, Certificate Number, Ancestor's Name", and "Place, Date of Access". The footer of the page reads: "Medina County District Library • Family History & Learning Center • Download at mcdl.info/HistoryGuides" and "mc-1021".

## Examples

Book	N. B. Northrop, "Pioneer History of Medina County" (Medina, Ohio, 1861), p. 3, accessed at Medina County District Library, 2021.
Census	1860 U.S. census, Medina County, Ohio, Granger Township, p. 24, Franklin Sylvester, accessed at FamilySearch, 22 June 2021.
Newspapers/ Obituaries	"Medina County Gazette" (Medina, Ohio, 21 October 1904), p. 7, article titled "Northwest Guilford," Catherine Crawford, accessed at Medina County District Library on microfilm, 2021.
Vital Records	Ohio Health Department, Death Certificate (Medina County, Ohio, 18 July 1935), certificate no. 44585, George C. Frazier, accessed at Medina County Health Department, 2021.
Interviews	Robert J. Schneller, transcript of telephone interview with Virginia Wheeler Martin regarding Barney Martin's military service (27 September 1996), accessed at Medina County District Library, in the Virginia Wheeler Martin Collection, VWM Series, 2021.

## Additional Reading

- **Mastering Genealogical Proof by Thomas W. Jones**  
Discusses the basics of citing sources. Includes other topics for better understanding records.
- **Cite Your Sources by Richard S. Lackey**  
Another style of source citations. Includes examples and guidelines.
- **Evidence Explained by Elizabeth Shown Mills**  
The bible of source citations for genealogists. Best if you want to publish information about your family history.

# Tip 2 Evaluate Sources

While researching, it's natural to start comparing and contrasting the information in the sources. Sometimes two or more sources will disagree. Other times all sources will have the same information – but it still might all be incorrect. You might wonder how that could be possible; keep in mind these three statements:

- Just because the information is in a document, book, or on the Internet, it doesn't necessarily make it accurate.
- Research conducted by others – especially if it's lacking sources – should only be treated as a hint.
- Misinformation can be repeated over and over – quantity does not equate to correctness.

So how do you know what information to trust? Every time you find a document for your ancestors, you need to evaluate its reliability. Use the criteria below to assess your source's potential for accuracy or errors. Look at the original records with your own eyes and make your own judgements.

## Criteria for Evaluating Source Reliability

Criteria	More Accurate	More Potential for Error
Physical Condition	Condition/handwriting is appropriate for the document's age	Old document has been damaged and the damage obscures some information Document appears to have been deliberately altered to change its meaning
Originality	Original record	Photocopy, microfilm, or digital image Index, transcript, or translation
Arrangement	Arranged chronologically	Arranged alphabetically
Timeliness (Record Creation Date)	Created hours/days after event	Created months/a year after event Created years/decades after event
Timeliness (Handwriting)	Handwriting changes, with different pressure/weight, ink colors, or writing implements	Handwriting stays exactly the same, regardless of the passage of time
Informant's Knowledge	Participated in or witnessed the event firsthand	Heard about the event from someone else
Informant's Motivation	Reporting the information to a court or government office	Gaining status or money by misrepresenting the information
Recorder's Training	Created records professionally for a court, spelled words correctly, completed all parts of the record	Created the record for themselves, misspelled many words, omitted information

## Tip 2 Evaluate Sources

1. I was born Thomas Heighton Eddingtonburgh Sept 19 1790	2. Sarah Heighton September 13 1810 a gift to my dear wife Ebe. and born Feb 17 1789
Thomas Heighton was. Married to Sarah Goods April 10th D 1814 and unto them were born children viz.	6th John Heighton was born January 8th A 1825.
William Heighton was born January the 8th D 1815.	7th Joseph Heighton was born February 4th D 1827.
2nd of Thomas Heighton was born December the 7th D 1816	8th of Hannah Heighton was born April 30th D 1829.
3rd Sarah Heighton was born December the 14th D 1818.	9th Lydia Heighton was born July D 1831
4th Elizabeth Heighton was born May 13th D 1821.	
5th Ann Heighton was born February 8th D 1823.	

### Example: Heighton Bible Record

Examine the handwriting in this family Bible. Notice that the handwriting is the same throughout, suggesting that the information was written at a later date by the same person, all at one time.

Now, imagine that the Bible record had events recorded in different handwriting, using different writing implements. This would suggest that the Bible was added to as the events occurred.

Consider the criterion of timeliness. Which Bible record would be likely more accurate?

Heighton Family Bible (place and date of creation unknown), p. Marriage and Births, Sarah Heighton, accessed copy in researcher's personal collection, 2021.

# Tip 2 Evaluate Sources

## Example: Frazier Death Certificate

One source can contain many facts. This death record includes George Frazier's date of death and his date of birth. The information was provided by his daughter.

How quickly was the record created after George's death? How quickly was it created after his birth? Would his daughter have eye-witness knowledge of his birth? What if the informant had been George's mother – would that change your answers?

Consider the record in terms of the criteria of timeliness and the informant's knowledge. Is this record as reliable for documenting George's birth, as it is his death, or is it a better source for one of those facts?

STATE OF OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH DIVISION OF VITAL STATISTICS CERTIFICATE OF DEATH				44585
Registration District No. 827				File No. 50
Primary Registration District No. 2867				Registered No.
(If death occurred in a hospital or institution, give its NAME instead of street and number)				St., Ward
Length of residence in city or town where death occurred, yrs. mos. ds.				How long in U. S., if of foreign birth? yrs. mos. ds.
Did Deceased Serve in U. S. Navy or Army				
(a) Residence, No. 409 W. Court St. (Usual place of abode)				St., Ward. (If nonresident give city or town and State)
<b>PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS</b>				
3. SEX Male	4. COLOR OR RACE white	5. Single, Married, Widowed, or Divorced (write the word) Married		
5a. If married, widowed, or divorced Husband (or wife) Mildred Peetz				
6. DATE OF BIRTH (month, day, and year) Nov. 19 - 1861				
7. AGE 73	Years 7	Months 2	Days 29	If LESS than 1 day, hrs. or min.
8. Trade profession, or particular kind of work done, as spinner, sawyer, bookkeeper, etc. Salesman				
9. Industry or business in which work was done, as silk mill, saw mill, bank, etc. Airway Chancy				
10. Date deceased last worked at this occupation (month and year) 11. Total time (years) spent in this occupation				
12. BIRTHPLACE (city or town) (State or country) Westfield, N.Y. Medina, Ohio				
13. NAME Edwin Frazier				
14. BIRTHPLACE (city or town) (State or country) Ohio				
15. MAIDEN NAME Hannah Crawford				
16. BIRTHPLACE (city or town) (State or country) Medina, Ohio				
The Signature of 17. INFORMANT Mildred Frazier and (Address) Medina, Ohio				
18. BURIAL, CREMATION, OR REMOVAL Place Seneca Falls Date July 20, 1935				
19. UNDERTAKER H. A. Wall & Son (Address) Medina, Ohio				
19a. Was body embalmed yes Embalmer's No. 2867				
20. FILED 7/19/1935 J. E. M. Standard Registrar				
<b>MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH</b>				
21. DATE OF DEATH (month, day, and year) July 18, 1935				
22. I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from July 17, 1935, to 16, 1935, I last saw him alive on July 17, 1935, death is said to have occurred on the date stated above at 6:30 a.m. The PRINCIPAL CAUSE OF DEATH and related causes of importance in order of onset were as follows:				
Cause coronary occlusion Date of onset 7/17/35				
CONTRIBUTORY CAUSES of importance not related to principal cause:				
Name of operation Date of What test confirmed diagnosis? Was there an autopsy?				
23. If death was due to external causes (violence) fill in also the following: Accident, suicide, or homicide? no Date of injury 19 Where did injury occur? (Specify city or town, county, and State) Specify whether injury occurred in industry, in home, or in public place.				
Manner of injury Nature of injury				
24. Was disease or injury in any way related to occupation of deceased? If so, specify J. Beach (Signed) M. D. Date 7/18/1935 Address Seneca Falls				



Visit [mcdl.info/HistoryGuides](http://mcdl.info/HistoryGuides) to see an evaluation of this source and others.

Ohio Health Department, Death Certificate (Medina County, Ohio, 18 July 1935), certificate no. 44585, George C. Frazier, accessed at Medina County Health Department, 2021.

# Tip 3 Get Organized

Organization is essential to researching efficiently. Everyone has a slightly different filing system to keep their Ancestral Charts, Family Group Sheets, Research Logs, and family documents organized. Select one that works for you and follow through with it.

## Create a Filing System

### Hard Copies

- **Binders** – One for each surname with tab dividers for each family. Each tabbed section has the above charts, sheets, logs, and documents.
- **Hanging File Folders** – Arrange folders alphabetically by surname and store them in file boxes or file cabinets. Color code folders for each of your four grandparents.

### Digital Files

- **Computer Storage** – File folders, organized by surname, containing scans of all of your documents.
- **Software** – Use basic programs like word processing and spreadsheets. Specialized software for genealogy is also available.
- **Back Up Your Data** – Make sure you back up your data with hard copies, an external backup drive, and cloud storage.

## Digitize Your Files

As you research your family tree, the documents you discover will include a mix of hard copies and digital files. Digitizing the hard copies is beneficial for many reasons:

- Digitizing generates a backup copy, in case the hard copy original is ever lost or destroyed.
- If stored in the cloud, digitized documents become accessible from anywhere with internet access.
- Digital files can be edited and manipulated to reveal faded text and images.
- Digitized records can be easily shared online in family trees, social media, and email.

Digitizing your files and photographs does take time, so you will want to prioritize carefully. You'll likely want to digitize all of your unique family documents, but you may be able to reduce the number of photographs that you need (for example, you can eliminate out-of-focus images and duplicates). Even after you have digitized your files, plan to hold on to your hard copies and store them in archival-quality storage – you never know when better technology will be developed that can produce an even higher-quality scan.

If you live in the vicinity of Medina Library, take advantage of the resources in the Digital Lab. Equipment in the Digital Lab includes scanners for oversized documents, photographs, and slides/negatives/transparent media. The lab also includes video capture devices for transferring your home movies from VHS and camcorder tapes, as well as 8mm and Super8 films. If you're interested in learning more about the Digital Lab, visit [mcdl.info/Makerspace](http://mcdl.info/Makerspace) or call 330-725-0588 x5017 for more information.



Visit [mcdl.info/HistoryGuides](http://mcdl.info/HistoryGuides) for a presentation on the best practices for digitizing and vendors for archival products.

# Tip 4 Writing & Sharing Conclusions

At the beginning of this guide, your goal was completing an Ancestral Chart. Filling in the chart, with your ancestors' names, dates, and places, can be a satisfying way to document your roots, but it's just the start of tracing your family history. While researching, you may have come across amazing stories about your ancestors, too. You may have found some sources with information that disagrees.

**Writing about your findings is beneficial for many reasons:**

- It helps identify areas of your family's history that need more research.
- When finding conflicting information in sources, writing can help with source evaluation and convince others why your conclusion is correct.
- Writing creates a record of your discoveries and prevents you from re-researching a question you've already answered.
- Writing down family stories makes it easier to share them with relatives – and get them interested, too.
- Written research can be donated to libraries and archives, which helps preserve your ancestors' legacies while making it available to other family historians researching the same or related people.

## How to Write About Your Ancestors

You don't have to write a novel-length family history (unless you want to). In some cases you might not need to write at all. Here are a few ideas about how you can share your family history research.

- Write a one-page biography about one ancestor.
- If you have an ancestor who didn't have an obituary, write (a belated) one from them.
- Share a family photo. Send copies to family members or share on social media. Make sure you label the people you know, date it, and write a caption.
- Create a website for your family.
- Start a blog to write about your ancestors.

## A Few Ethical Considerations

When sharing information about your family, keep in mind these ethical considerations:

- Information about living individuals should be considered private and shouldn't be shared online.
- Photographs taken by others are copyrighted to the photographer. These items shouldn't be duplicated and shared, online or off. Copyright lasts the photographer's lifetime, plus 70 years.
- Be sensitive to other people in your family. If you make a shocking discovery about your biological ancestors, be considerate of how such news might affect your family members. Be thoughtful before sharing with others.



Visit [mcdl.info/HistoryGuides](http://mcdl.info/HistoryGuides) for writing prompts and more information on ethics in genealogy.

# Special Topic DNA Testing & Genealogy

In recent years, DNA testing for family history has become increasingly popular. Before you test, you should carefully consider the benefits and concerns with DNA testing. You should also consider which type of DNA test and DNA testing company is best for your research problem.

Benefits	Concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can give you a snapshot of your ethnicities</li><li>• Can connect you with living relatives</li><li>• Can help adoptees find biological parents</li><li>• May break through a barrier in your research</li><li>• May provide you with a better understanding of your health risks</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can reveal unexpected family relationships</li><li>• May bring long-held family secrets to light</li><li>• Can invalidate family stories/lore</li><li>• May result in a loss of privacy</li><li>• Can be costly</li></ul>

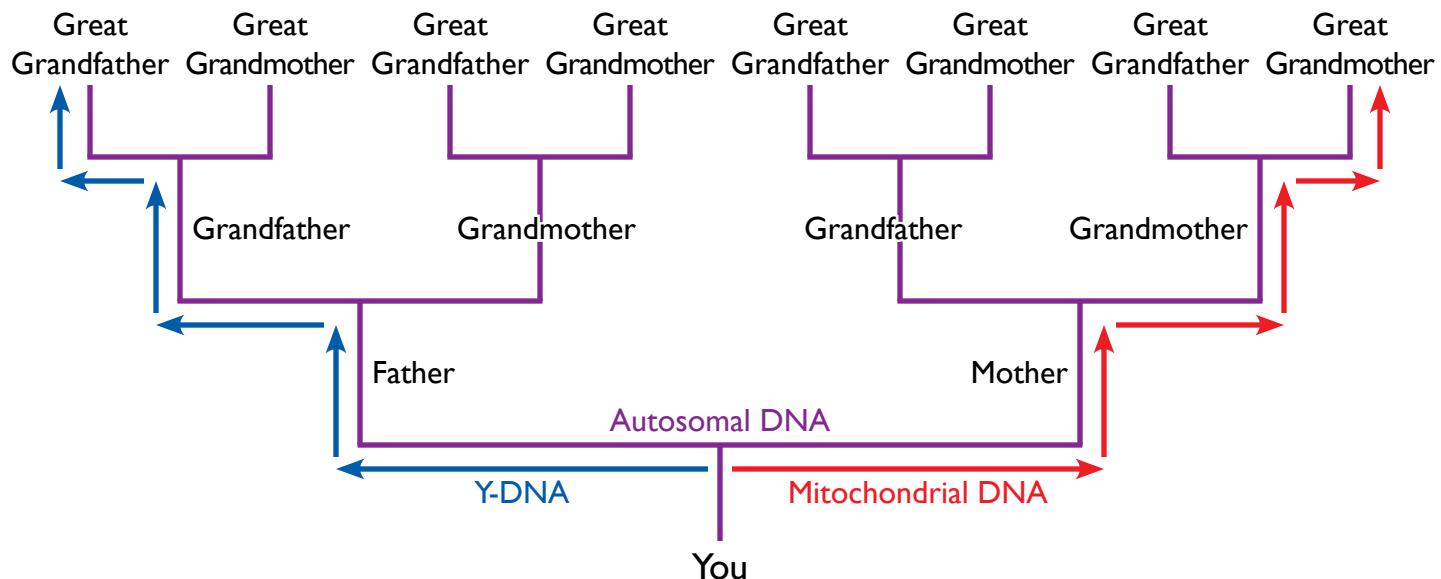
DNA testing can be a useful tool, but it isn't without concerns. Before you test, ask yourself:

- What do I want to get out of this test / what research problem am I trying to solve?
- How would I feel if the test produced surprising results?
- How would I feel if I had to tell a family member that testing revealed they were / weren't a biological relative?
- How would I feel if my test result was used by law enforcement to make an arrest?

## Types of DNA Tests

There are three types of DNA testing for genealogy:

- **Autosomal DNA (atDNA) Testing** – for both male and female line, results include "cousin" matches
- **Y-DNA Testing** – only for males, results pertain to father's father's father (etc.)
- **Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) Testing** – for female line, results pertain to mother's mother's mother (etc.)



## Testing Companies

Several companies offer DNA testing for family history purposes. Some of the most popular include:

- 23andMe – pioneered at-home testing for health information.
- Ancestry – has the largest data pool – which results in the most DNA matches.
- FamilyTreeDNA – offers the most test type options.
- Living DNA – is the most specific for British Isles ancestry.
- MyHeritage – is popular in Europe – which results in European cousin matches.

All five companies offer **atDNA** testing. Only FamilyTreeDNA offers **Y-DNA** and **mtDNA** testing. Before testing, read policies carefully. Each company has their own privacy policies and policies for law enforcement using their databases. Review these policies each time there are updates. For a more detailed comparison of **atDNA** tests, visit the International Society of Genetic Genealogy Wiki at [isogg.org/wiki](https://isogg.org/wiki).

## What to Expect With Your DNA Test

The 23andMe and Ancestry's tests involve collecting a sample of saliva. FamilyTreeDNA, Living DNA, and MyHeritage's test involve swabbing the inside of the cheek. Follow the directions carefully: most tests prohibit eating, drinking, chewing gum, smoking, etc. for a period of time before taking the test.

All test kits will include directions on how to access your results. Keep in mind that your results will evolve over time. Your DNA doesn't change but, as more people test, the interpretation of DNA and ethnicity becomes more refined. Consider attaching a family tree to your DNA profile.

After your test results are complete, you have the option to download your raw DNA data file. FamilyTreeDNA, Living DNA, and MyHeritage allow you to upload raw files from other test companies into their databases. Fees may apply, but it is more cost-effective than buying an additional test kit.

## Make the Most of Your Results

To make the most of your results, here are some tools/tips:

- **DNA Painter** – DNA Painter is an easy-to-use tool that helps genealogists make sense of DNA testing through chromosome mapping. [dnapainter.com](https://dnapainter.com)
- **GEDmatch** – GEDmatch provides applications for comparing your DNA test results with other people, regardless of testing company. [gedmatch.com](https://gedmatch.com)
- **Genetic Affairs** – Genetic Affairs includes an "AutoCluster" tool, which can help you visualize groups of DNA matches who descend from common ancestors. [geneticaffairs.com](https://geneticaffairs.com)
- **The Leeds Method - DNA Color Clustering** – This simple and quick method helps you easily visualize how your close cousins are related to you and each other. [danaleeds.com/the-leeds-method](https://danaleeds.com/the-leeds-method)

## Additional Reading

- **Family Tree Guide to DNA Testing and Genetic Genealogy** by Blaine Bettinger
- Covers all the basics of genetic testing, including types of DNA tests and what you can learn from the results.
- **Your DNA Guide: the Book** by Dianah Southard
- Includes common questions with step-by-step directions. Useful for people who have already tested.

# Special Topic Cousin Chart

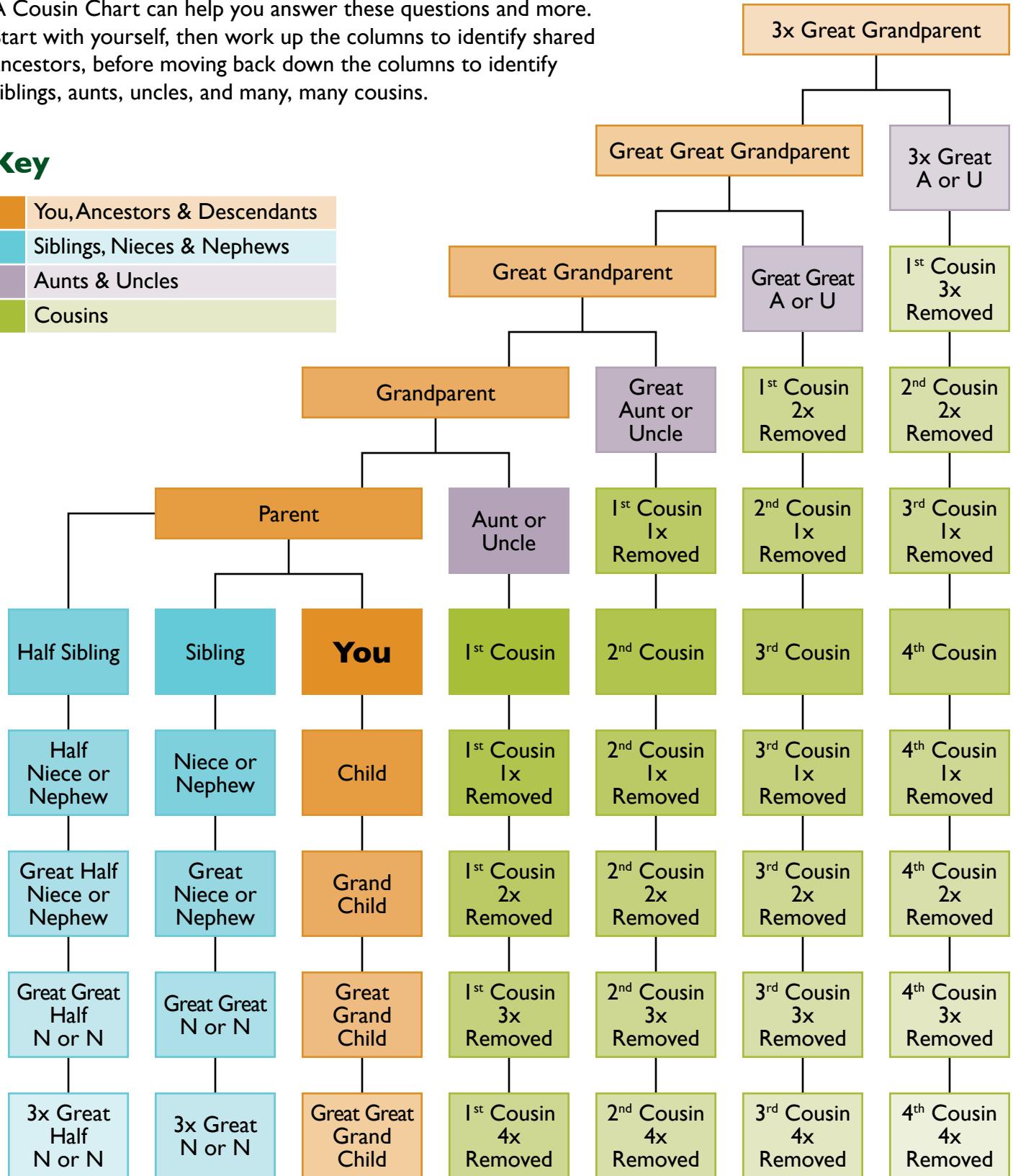
Have you ever wondered what it means to be someone's second-cousin-once-removed?  
Or are you trying to figure out exactly how you are related to a distant member of your family?

A Cousin Chart can help you answer these questions and more.

Start with yourself, then work up the columns to identify shared ancestors, before moving back down the columns to identify siblings, aunts, uncles, and many, many cousins.

## Key

<span style="background-color: orange; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> </span>	You, Ancestors & Descendants
<span style="background-color: lightblue; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> </span>	Siblings, Nieces & Nephews
<span style="background-color: lightpurple; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> </span>	Aunts & Uncles
<span style="background-color: lightgreen; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> </span>	Cousins



## Check Out These Books

- *How to Do Everything with Your Genealogy* by George G. Morgan

Provides advice on researching family history, from tips on interviewing family members, to planning a research trip, to using technology.

- *Researchers Guide to American Genealogy* by Val D. Greenwood

Includes research methods, terms, and in-depth information on ten different record types. Considered one of the most important books on American genealogy.

- *The Source* by Loretto Dennis Szucs and Sandra Hargreaves Luebking

Teaches family historians how to select, find, and use resources.

A great tool for new and experienced genealogists.

## Participate in Classes & Conferences

Classes are a great way to learn more about genealogical records and research methods.

- Review [mcdl.info/events](http://mcdl.info/events) for upcoming programs offered by the MCDL Genealogy Team at your local library.
- Choose from more than 2,000 on-demand, recorded classes by FamilySearch. See [familysearch.org/wiki/en/Classes\\_in\\_the\\_Learning\\_Center](http://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Classes_in_the_Learning_Center) for a list of topics.
- Attend a conference. Ohio Genealogical Society's retreats and conferences bring national speakers to Ohio annually. Learn more at [ogsconference.org](http://ogsconference.org).

## Join a Society

Connect with fellow family historians, to ask questions and share research tips. Consider joining...

- Medina County Genealogical Society - [medinacoogs.org](http://medinacoogs.org)
- Ohio Genealogical Society - [ogs.org](http://ogs.org)
- National Genealogical Society - [ngsgenealogy.org](http://ngsgenealogy.org)

