



Story County Genealogical Society

Story County, Iowa, USA

<https://www.storygenes.com>

Genealogy 101: Getting Started

What is Genealogy?

Many beginners confuse Family History with Genealogy.

- Family History tells the stories of our ancestors as passed down through the ages. It lives in family legends and provides context.
- Genealogy recreates the lives of our ancestors from the clues they left behind through research and records.

Step 1: Begin with What You Know - Yourself

Begin with yourself and record what you know. Record the names, dates, and places of your birth and marriage (if applicable). Ancestral Charts can provide a quick reference for information on you and your family with vital dates and places on one sheet.

Step 2: Expand What You Know - Your Family

Record the names, dates, and places of your siblings, parents, grandparents, etc, for their births, marriages, and deaths (if known). Family Group Sheets can serve as a good way to begin organizing the information on each family in your research. They include space to list each child with their parents and vital information about each member of the family.

Step 3: Records & Sources - Records around the House

Explore the documents used to verify details of the dates and places you are recording in your Ancestral Charts and Family Group Sheets. Look for obituaries, tombstones, family bibles, newspapers, diaries, letters, school records, photos around the house. Make sure to look in all these places and more: Closets, Attics, Safes, Baby Boxes, Keepsake Boxes and Chests, Safe-deposit Boxes, Photo Albums. Records and sources of information can take many forms and be stored in many locations around a person's house for decades! When you have found documents that provide the information you are looking for, add them to a Research Log so you can find them again.

Step 4: Get Organized & Start Researching

Whether you are a paper filer or a digital record keeper, the key to good Genealogy is Organization! Make sure you know where you got each piece of information. Knowing what you are looking for and what you have already found will save you a ton of time. Also, remember to make lots of copies! It would be terrible to lose the only copy you have of a crucial document or record. Even with digital files, you want to save copies in multiple places.

Genealogy 101: Getting Started

Local and Online Resources

- Ames Public Library - <https://www.amespubliclibrary.org/> - has a number of Genealogy resources, including Ancestry Library Edition, FamilySearch Affiliate Library access, HeritageQuest Online, Ames/Central Iowa Newspapers, Books, Family Tree Magazine, Internet Genealogy
- ISU Parks Library - <https://www.lib.iastate.edu/> - includes Special Collections & University Archives, and Access to Databases and Journals
- County Courthouses - legal records, including birth, marriage, death, and land records.
- State Historical Society of Iowa - <https://history.iowa.gov/history> - Located in Des Moines, serves as the official state historical repository.
- Iowa Genealogical Society - <https://iowagenealogy.org/> - Located in Des Moines, their mission is to share genealogical information and methods with those interested in family history. To provide personal assistance to researchers, offer education in obtaining and managing genealogical information, and improve access to genealogical resources.

Genealogy Software and Websites

There are a number of useful software and websites Genealogists use to keep their information organized and useful.

Commonly used Software

- Ancestral Quest
- Family Tree Maker
- Legacy
- Reunion
- RootsMagic

More information and reviews can be found at <http://gensoftreviews.com>

Commonly used Websites

- Ancestry.com
- FamilySearch.org
- FindMyPast.com
- MyHeritage.com

Remember: Not all records are online and not all online records are accurate.