

## Getting Started

Genealogy or family history research is an increasingly popular passion for many Americans complemented by increasing access to historical information and data.

Genealogy is essentially the study of information, which makes it important to learn where to source facts when you first start out. You can begin using what you know, like family documents and oral history.

Your next port of call should be Schuylerville Public Library's Genealogy Department, where you can find guides on how to do it yourself.

Once you start looking a whole world of evidence will be opened up to you. The basic rules of genealogy are:

- Devise a research plan
- Start with the basics
- Prepare in advance
- Keep detailed records
- Verify everything

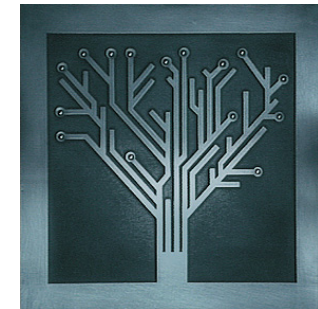
At the end of their quest many people compile their records into displays or gifts including pictures enabling the results of their research to be shared and enjoyed by everyone. Many genealogists also enjoy traveling to the place where their families came from. Genealogy is ultimately a rewarding experience and can be a thrilling exercise.

## Tips To Get Started

1. Write down everything you know about yourself, your own family, and your parents' families.
2. Test your own knowledge of your family tree by filling out a pedigree chart that includes you, your parents, and as many generations beyond them as possible. Include their full names as well as dates and places for their births, marriages, and deaths.
3. Talk to your oldest living family members to mine their memories for family history information. Each relative is likely to remember parts of the family story that others have forgotten, so be thorough!
4. Evaluate the resources already available in your family by going through your own attic and by asking relatives to do the same. Look for family heirlooms, old photographs, and official documents. These may help you to uncover more family information, and such documents are an excellent way to verify dates or places that family members have given you in oral interviews.
5. After evaluating what you have, set a specific research objective (e.g., find grandfather's enlistment date). The next step will be to search records online or to visit a library or archive that has the information you are looking for.

## Town of Saratoga

# 15 Steps to Starting Your Family History



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# 15 Steps to Starting Your Family History

1. Start with yourself and work backwards



2. Interview relatives

3. Look for Bibles, letters, diaries, photos, samplers



4. Visit cemeteries

5. Look for obituaries



6. Check vital records

7. Check federal & state census data

PLACE OF BIRTH	NAME	RELATION	SEX	AGE	MARRIAGE	MARRIAGE DATE	MARRIAGE PLACE	MARRIAGE TYPE	MARRIAGE DATE	MARRIAGE PLACE	MARRIAGE TYPE	OTHER NAMES OR ALIEN NAMES		CITIZENSHIP
												1910	1920	
	Norman Ralph J.	Head	M	37	1	1901	Pa	1st	1901	Pa	1st			US
	Helen Jane	Wife	F	35	1	1901	Pa	1st	1901	Pa	1st			US
	John H. Wilson	Son	M	11	0									US
	Marion Anita	Daughter	F	9	0									US
	John J. Wilson	Son	M	7	0									US
	James Earl	Son	M	5	0									US
	James Earl	Son	M	3	0									US
	James Earl	Son	M	1	0									US
	James Earl	Son	M	0	0									US

8. Look for deeds & wills

9. Use free online websites



10. Search Social Security Death Index online (free)

11. Visit libraries & historians



12. Check military records

13. Get genealogy software program

14. Join a genealogical society



15. Share your research

## Keep Your References

- Write down the source of your information and the place where you found the source.
- Copy the exact title, author's name and publication date from the title page-not from the spine of a book.
- Note the page on which the information appears.
- Photocopy the title page as well as the information you need when photocopying material.