



GENEALOGY STARTER KIT

Compliments of

**Central Brevard Library and Reference Center
308 Forrest Ave.
Cocoa, FL 32922**

**(321) 633-1794 Fax (321) 633-1807
Library website: www.mylibraryworld.com
Email: genealogy@brev.org**

**Hours:
Monday, Wednesday & Friday 9-5
Tuesday & Thursday 9-8
Saturday 9-5
Sunday 1-5**

*This kit is free to those who want to learn more
about genealogical research.*

Getting Started

Compiling your family's history is a task worthy of careful preparation. More than just names and dates, it is a legacy – a labor of love to be passed on to future generations. But it's also an intimidating task, especially if you're unsure of where to begin. Below are some tips to help you get started.

- **Start with Yourself.** The most important first step in beginning genealogical research is to start with yourself and work back in time. Never skip a generation. Always work from yourself to the next generation, and then on to the next. Following these directions will help to ensure that you do not spend valuable time researching a particular family only to discover that your family was the “other” one of the same name in the next county. Collect information such as birth, marriage and death dates along with the places where these events occurred.
- **Surname Origins.** Learn about the origin, history and meaning of your surname. Study the distribution of your surname noting any particular geographical areas where it appears to be prevalent. Be sure to keep in mind any name changes that might have occurred in the past or any variant spellings that might have been used. One of the biggest mistakes that beginning genealogists make is limiting themselves to the current spelling of a surname. Even if the family spelled their name consistently for a hundred years that doesn't mean that the census taker or town clerk spelled it that way when they wrote it down.
- **Research and Documentation.** Good record keeping and the documentation of sources is extremely important in genealogy. If done properly, these two things will assure you much better results than poorly organized searching. For example, it is best to have your ancestral four generation chart completed as much as possible before you actually begin searching through books and records. Secondly, it is essential that you document the sources of the information so that your work is as accurate as possible and so that you do not duplicate your efforts. This will also keep your material clear and discernible to others in the future.
- **Get your Family Involved.** When starting your research, remember that living relatives are your best sources. Ask permission to sort through their family records. You're likely to find valuable information in items such as family Bibles, letters, journals, scrapbooks, military papers and even on the back of

family photographs. Let your relatives know that you might want to photocopy some of this information, but assure them that you will pay the expenses and return their things to them as soon as possible. Interviewing your family and recording it on tape or video will also make a nice addition to your family history.

- **Check for Existing research.** The ongoing popularity of genealogy has resulted in the printing of thousands of family histories over the years. While some of these works are very well done, others may be poorly documented. In any case, they are worth consulting and may provide valuable information about your family. Also check the resources available at your local library such as the Mormon Family History Library Catalog, Genealogies in the Library of Congress, Genealogy and Local History Books in Print and online computer databases such as Worldcat.
- **Join a Genealogical Society.** Those who are new to genealogy may find it helpful to join a genealogy society. There is a genealogical or historical society for every county in the United States and Brevard County is lucky to have four genealogy societies that welcome beginners. These societies are made up of friendly people who are also researching their ancestry, often beyond Florida. Their meetings are a great place to talk with other people who may be researching in the same area as you, or even the same families. Avoiding others' mistakes and being knowledgeable of their successes can help you in your own research. These societies frequently host seminars and offer classes for both beginning and experienced genealogists. Joining a genealogy society in the place where your ancestors came from can also be helpful as most societies publish newsletters that contain information on their projects and local history.
- **Educate Yourself.** Read all that you can. Get a good general book on beginning genealogy and then expand your knowledge by reading more specific works on a particular geographic area or ethnic group. Since it is difficult to separate genealogy and history, it is also a good idea to make yourself knowledgeable about the different time periods that you will be searching in. Taking a genealogy class should also be part of your plan to become a good researcher. Even if you have been researching for a while repeating classes is a good way to stay current and to refresh your memory about things you may have forgotten.
- **Explore the Internet.** Online research is a great place to gather information and leads. Just don't expect to find your entire family

online. Keep in mind that your family tree is not on the computer unless you or some member of your family put it there. Internet research is best focused on sites that provide information on the holdings and resources of places like archives, libraries and historical societies. Some sites, like usgenweb.org, are also focused on providing transcripts of original records on a local basis. You should consult the State and counties where your ancestors lived to see what records have been put online for that particular area.

Top 10 Genealogy Mistakes to Avoid

From Kimberly Powell's What You Need to Know About Genealogy Column

1. Don't misspell the word genealogy
2. Don't trust everything you see in print
3. We're related to . . . someone famous
4. Don't be satisfied with names and dates
5. Beware the generic family history
6. Don't accept family legends without question
7. Don't limit yourself to the current spelling of your surname
8. Don't neglect to write down your sources
9. Don't assume that everything you find on the internet is reliable
10. Don't put off talking to relatives.

Genealogical Standards

Standards For Sound Genealogical Research

Recommended by the National Genealogical Society

Remembering always that they are engaged in a quest for truth, family history researchers consistently—

- **record the source for each item of information they collect.**
- **test every hypothesis or theory against credible evidence, and reject those that are not supported by the evidence.**
- **seek original records, or reproduced images of them when there is reasonable assurance they have not been altered, as the basis for their research conclusions.**
- **use compilations, communications and published works, whether paper or electronic, primarily for their value as guides to locating the original records, or as contributions to the critical analysis of the evidence discussed in them.**
- **state something as a fact only when it is supported by convincing evidence, and identify the evidence when communicating the fact to others.**
- **limit with words like "probable" or "possible" any statement that is based on less than convincing evidence, and state the reasons for concluding that it is probable or possible.**

- **avoid misleading other researchers by either intentionally or carelessly distributing or publishing inaccurate information.**
- **state carefully and honestly the results of their own research, and acknowledge all use of other researchers' work.**
- **recognize the collegial nature of genealogical research by making their work available to others through publication, or by placing copies in appropriate libraries or repositories, and by welcoming critical comment.**
- **consider with open minds new evidence or the comments of others on their work and the conclusions they have reached.**

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Genealogical Standards

Guidelines For Using Records Repositories And Libraries
Recommended by the National Genealogical Society

Recognizing that how they use unique original records and fragile publications will affect other users, both current and future, family history researchers habitually—

- **are courteous to research facility personnel and other researchers, and respect the staff's other daily tasks, not expecting the records custodian to listen to their family histories nor provide constant or immediate attention.**
- **dress appropriately, converse with others in a low voice, and supervise children appropriately.**
- **do their homework in advance, know what is available and what they need, and avoid ever asking for "everything" on their ancestors.**
- **use only designated work space areas and equipment, like readers and computers intended for patron use, respect off-limits areas, and ask for assistance if needed.**
- **treat original records at all times with great respect and work with only a few records at a time, recognizing that they are irreplaceable and that each user must help preserve them for future use.**
- **treat books with care, never forcing their spines, and handle photographs properly, preferably wearing archival gloves.**
- **never mark, mutilate, rearrange, relocate, or remove from the repository any original, printed, microform, or electronic document or artifact.**
- **use only procedures prescribed by the repository for noting corrections to any errors or omissions found in published works, never marking the work itself.**
- **keep note-taking paper or other objects from covering records or books, and avoid placing any pressure upon them, particularly with a pencil or pen.**
- **use only the method specifically designated for identifying records for duplication, avoiding use of paper clips, adhesive notes, or other means not approved by the facility.**
- **return volumes and files only to locations designated for that purpose.**
- **before departure, thank the records custodians for their courtesy in making the materials available.**

- **follow the rules of the records repository without protest, even if they have changed since a previous visit or differ from those of another facility.**

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Genealogical Standards

Standards For Use Of Technology In Genealogical Research
Recommended by the National Genealogical Society

Mindful that computers are tools, genealogists take full responsibility for their work, and therefore they—

- **learn the capabilities and limits of their equipment and software, and use them only when they are the most appropriate tools for a purpose.**
- **do not accept uncritically the ability of software to format, number, import, modify, check, chart or report their data, and therefore carefully evaluate any resulting product.**
- **treat compiled information from on-line sources or digital databases in the same way as other published sources--useful primarily as a guide to locating original records, but not as evidence for a conclusion or assertion.**
- **accept digital images or enhancements of an original record as a satisfactory substitute for the original only when there is reasonable assurance that the image accurately reproduces the unaltered original.**
- **cite sources for data obtained on-line or from digital media with the same care that is appropriate for sources on paper and other traditional media, and enter data into a digital database only when its source can remain associated with it.**
- **always cite the sources for information or data posted on-line or sent to others, naming the author of a digital file as its immediate source, while crediting original sources cited within the file.**
- **preserve the integrity of their own databases by evaluating the reliability of downloaded data before incorporating it into their own files.**
- **provide, whenever they alter data received in digital form, a description of the change that will accompany the altered data whenever it is shared with others.**
- **actively oppose the proliferation of error, rumor and fraud by personally verifying or correcting information, or noting it as unverified, before passing it on to others.**
- **treat people on-line as courteously and civilly as they would treat them face-to-face, not separated by networks and anonymity.**
- **accept that technology has not changed the principles of genealogical research, only some of the procedures.**

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RESEARCHING IN BREVARD COUNTY

At the present time Brevard County is an exciting place to be for those individuals interested in pursuing opportunities for genealogical and historical research. Over the last six years two new collections have entered the county, while the existing repositories have continued to expand their holdings. Research possibilities abound, and the following is meant to give an overall view of these resources and where they are located.

BREVARD GENEALOGICAL SOCIETIES

Genealogical Society of North Brevard, meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month at 7pm at the Titusville Public Library, 2121 S. Hopkins Ave.

Brevard Genealogical Society, meetings are held the second Monday of each month at 9:30am at the Central Brevard Library, 308 Forrest Ave. in Cocoa. The society is transcribing and posting local census data on its website and also has its own mailing list on RootsWeb.

Genealogical Society of South Brevard, meetings are the second Wednesday of each month at 10am at the Melbourne Public Library, 540 Fee Ave. The French and Canadian Heritage Society, which specializes in assisting individuals researching their French, Canadian and Acadian ancestry, is also a sub-group of this society.

LIBRARIES

Brevard County Public Library System has seventeen libraries throughout the county but the majority of its genealogy holdings are held at the libraries in Cocoa, Melbourne and Titusville. These three collections vary in size and content and are all well worth a visit.

Central Brevard Public Library, 308 Forrest Ave., Cocoa, FL

- Documents/Genealogy (321) 633-1794
- Over 4,000 books
- Large Passenger list collection
- New England
- NC, PA, SC, VA
- Approximately 350 CD-ROM's
- Florida Star 1880-1914, Cocoa Tribune 1917-Current, Melbourne Times 1926-1970
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

- 1920 Federal census for New York state and assorted other states and years on microfilm
- AncestryPlus & Heritage Quest Database with access to all Federal Census Records 1790-1930. Ancestry is available at all Brevard County Libraries and Heritage Quest only at Central.
- Florida Vital Records Indexes - Deaths, Divorces and Marriages

Melbourne Public Library, 540 E. Fee Ave., Melbourne, FL

- Reference (321) 952-4514
- Melbourne City Hall Collection
- Arlyn Gantz Michigan Collection
- Hartford Times Index
- CD-ROM access
- Complete set of The War of the Rebellion

Titusville Public Library, 2121 S. Hopkins Ave., Titusville, FL

- Reference (321) 254-5026
- Approximately 900 volumes
- American State Papers
- Papers of Continental Congress
- North Brevard Mortuary Indexes
- East Coast & Indian River Advocate 1890-1929
- 1830-1850 Florida Census

The collections at Titusville and Melbourne are maintained part time by volunteers, while the department at the Central Brevard Library is staffed full time by library employees.

OTHER LOCAL REPOSITORIES

LDS Family History Center, 1801 S. Fiske Blvd., Rockledge, FL

- LDS Collections and extensive film ordering capabilities
- Ancestry Database

Library of Florida History, 435 Brevard Ave., Cocoa, FL

- (321) 690-1971
- Florida history books, maps, manuscripts, postcards and photographs
- Approximately 150-200 Family Histories
- Large collection of WPA Records
- Bookstore

NEARBY LIBRARIES

Indian River County Main Library, 1600 21st Street, Vero Beach, FL 32960

- Call (772) 770-5060 ext. 5
- Census Microfilm from 1790-1870 for all states, also 1930 for FL.
- Collection also includes 17,000 books and ten computers
- Hale Collection for Connecticut
- Boston Transcripts 1896-1941
- Florida Vital Records Indexes

Orange County Main Library, 101 East Central Boulevard, Orlando, FL 32801

- Quest line for genealogy reference questions (407) 835-7640
- Census Microfilm from 1790-1930 for all states
- Access to AncestryPlus Databases. Free to Orange County Residents but others must pay a fee to use it.
- Largest book collection in Central Florida
- City directories from all over the country

COMPUTER RESOURCES

There are two RootsWeb mailing lists for genealogical research in Brevard County. The **FLBREVAR-D** list is for general Brevard research, and the **FL-BREVARD-GENSOC-D** is oriented towards the interests and projects of the members of the Brevard Genealogical Society. Genealogical assistance can be requested on both lists which can be subscribed to at <http://lists.rootsweb.com/index/usa/FL/brevard.html>. These lists complement the Brevard GenWeb and the Ancestry Brevard message board which can be used for queries, to share genealogical research, data, photos, maps and more. These sites also serve as a good place to request look ups from knowledgeable volunteers.

USEFUL LOCAL WEBSITES

Brevard County Library System online catalog

<http://www.mylibraryworld.com>

Genealogical Society of South Brevard

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~flgssb/>

North Brevard Genealogical Society <http://www.nbbd.com/npr/gsnb/>

Brevard GenWeb <http://www.rootsweb.com/~flbrevar/index.html>

Brevard Genealogical Society <http://www.rootsweb.com/~flbgs/>

East Central Florida Genealogical Society Co-op

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~flecfgsc/>

Indian River Public Library <http://www.irclibrary.org/genealogy>

Orange County Public Library <http://www.ocls.lib.fl.us/>
The Florida State Genealogical Society <http://www.rootsweb.com/~flsgs/>
Florida Historical Society <http://www.florida-historical-soc.org/>

GENEALOGY FORMS

Forms are very useful in genealogical research as they assist in the organization of your findings. There are many ways to obtain forms. The library has some available in our vertical files but many are copyrighted and cannot be copied. For your convenience we have included some basic forms in the back of this kit to get you started. There are also books that allow you to freely copy forms and web sites that you can print forms and charts at no charge.

- **The Genealogist's Companion & Sourcebook** by Emily Anne Croom 929.1 Cro. & **Managing a Genealogical Project** by William Dollarhide 929.1 Dol.
- Ancestry.com – www.ancestry.com/save/charts/ancchart.htm
- Cyndi's List of Supplies and Forms – www.CyndisList.com/supplies.htm

Bibliography

It is recommended that you read some of the following books or purchase them for your home library. The ones owned by Brevard County are followed by their Dewey Decimal number so that they can be easily located on the library shelves.

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13. Martin, Robert W. **My Sixteen: A Self-Help Guide to Finding Your 16 Great-Great-Grandparents**. Nashville, TN: Land Yacht Press, 1996. 929.1 *Mar*.
14. Mills, Elizabeth Shown. **Evidence! Citation & Analysis for the Family Historian**. Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1997. 929.1 *Mil*.
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16. Mills, Elizabeth Shown, Editor. **Professional Genealogy: A Manual for Researchers, Writer, Editors, Lecturers and Librarians**. Baltimore. MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2001. 929.1 *Mil*.
17. Neagles, James. **U.S. Military Records: A Guide to Federal and State Sources**. Salt Lake City, UT: Ancestry, 1994. 929.30973 *Nea*.
18. Szucs, Loretto and Sandra Luebking. **The Source, A Guidebook to American Genealogy**. 3rd edition. Provo, UT: Ancestry Publishing, Inc., 2006. 929.1 *Szu*.
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