

Tracing Your Family Tree (in 7 steps using 5 rules)

Larry Olson

from "Tracing Your Family Tree: Are You Following the Rules?" by William Dollarhide, *The Genealogy Bulletin*, No. 30, Nov-Dec 1995, pp. 1-10

Five Rules for Researching

- Treat siblings of your ancestors as equals
- Never accept one document or source to prove something
- Never trust a published family history or genealogical compilation
- Never trust secondary sources
- Prepare your genealogy so others can read it

Seven Steps to a Family Tree

- Home and family sources
- Family interviews
- Write for death records
- Follow up death records
- Federal census search
- LDS library search
- State and county search

Genealogy Software

Skip Bieber

Genealogy Software - Apple

Heredis: Supports both Windows(\$40/retail) and Apple(\$60/retail) <http://www.heredis.com>

iFamily for Leopard: Supports Apple iOS 10.4 and newer. Emphasis is on the person and not the family. <http://www.ifamilyforleopard.com>

Reunion: Works on almost any version of Apple 10.x systems. Free trial and \$99/retail. <http://www.leisterpro.com>

MyBlood: Known for its integration with Google Maps. Offers different search methods and websites free trial and \$60/retail. <http://www.myblood-line.com>

Genealogy Software - Handheld

iPad & iPhones

Ancestry.com Can view existing Family Tree within Ancestry.com website

Family History Search actually an epub. Normally \$16.99 now on-sale for \$1.99 (as of 8aug2013. Great for beginners.

GedView Allows you view your family tree as a GEDCOM. As option to view tree (or branches) as a slide show.

Android

Ancestry.com Can view existing Family Tree within Ancestry.com website.

Find A Grave Offers a mobile method for searching FindaGrave.com

Genealogy Software – Windows

Family Tree Maker – Easy to use. Considered by many as the THE Genealogy software package to own. Costs range from \$20-\$50/retail (Windows or Apple)

Family Tree Builder - Easy to use. Includes DNA marker tracking, private website. Directly interfaces with Myheritage.com <http://www.myheritage.com/family-tree-builder>

GRAMPS Considered by many as THE best opensource (FREEWARE) packages available. Excellent record keeping and tracking research progress per person. You can generate oversized charts. This is ***NOT an entry-level software***. <http://www.gramps-project.org>

Legacy Family Tree: Known for its printing charts and wizards for creating notes, footnotes, bibliographies. Under \$45/retail <http://www.legacyfamilytree.com>

GeneWeb known for its flexibility with user defined fields/events. Works on Windows, Apple or Linux. Freeware <http://opensource.geneanet.org/projects/geneweb>

Ancestral Quest Free & paid versions. Automatic search of WorldConnect and Ancestry.com. <http://www.ancquest.com>

PAF (Personal Ancestral File) Still available but not actively being developed at this time. <http://www.familysearch.org/eng/paf>

Brothers Keeper Nice basic software for getting started. Known for its ease of use.
<http://www.bkwin.org>

RootsMagic offers paid and free versions. Supports children with multiple parents and name changes. Doesn't support book printing. <http://www.rootsmagic.com>

Ahnenblatt Very nice, AND FREE basic genealogical software package for Windows. Supports some foreign languages. <http://www.ahnenblatt.com>

Family Historian Powerful & flexible software package. **Not recommended for entry level** – this package is known for not offering consistency/error checking/date formats that many expect to have automatically. 30 trial, \$50/retail. <http://www.family-historian.co.uk>

The Next Generation Actually, this software will allow you to directly publish your genealogical results on an internet website. Price is \$33/retail. <http://lythgoes.net/genealogy/software.php>

GenSmarts - This is an add-on software package that can read your existing data for automated genealogy research. Does complex calculations of siblings/tree/line and validates items such as dates/locations and recommends "lost" family members via searching databases. Limited free trial, otherwise \$24-\$30/retail <http://www.gensmarts.com>

Clooz – Add-on software package. Supplements existing software by its analyze/ validation methods. Free trial, otherwise its \$40/retail <http://www.clooz.com>

Best Sources to Begin Your Search

Jacque Schattner

- ▶ *Ancestry.com – only at library or with subscription*
- ▶ *Familysearch.org - free*
- ▶ *HeritageQuest.com – through library card*
- ▶ *Findagrave.com - free*
- ▶ *Cyndi's list - <http://www.cyndislist.com/> - free*
- ▶ *Illinois Archives <http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/archives/databases.html> - free*
- ▶ *Newsbank – through library card*

Other Useful Websites

General

- ▶ *Fold3 – www.fold3.com - military records*
- ▶ *Proquest – Chicago Tribune articles*

- ▶ *CLIO – scanned books from all over Midwest*
- ▶ *WorldVitalrecords .com*
- ▶ *Rootsweb.com - free version of Ancestry*
- ▶ *Usgenweb.org – information for certain areas*
- ▶ *Genforum.com - leave questions on message boards – excellent replies, but can take years*
- ▶ *Ellisland.org - immigration 1892-1941, manifest and photo of ship*
- ▶ *Castle Gardens - <http://www.castlegarden.org/searcher.php> - pre-Ellis Island*
- ▶ *NARA - <http://www.archives.gov/> - can order records such as military, pension for veterans*
- ▶ *Language translation – many sites, just Google the language “translations”*
- ▶ *<http://genealogy.about.com/cs/oralhistory/a/interview.html> - 50 great questions to ask relatives*

Illinois

- ▶ *Illinois State Genealogical Society – <http://www.ilgensoc.org>*
- ▶ *Bureau of Land Management - <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/> - land records*
- ▶ *Genealogy Trails History Group - <http://genealogytrails.com/>*

Chicago & Cook County

- ▶ *www.chicagoancestors.org – go to “tools” to find many links to other many websites*
- ▶ *Newberry Library – <http://www.newberry.org>*
- ▶ *Cook County Clerk’s Genealogy records - <http://www.cookcountygenealogy.com>*
- ▶ *Chicago Genealogy - <http://www.chicagogenealogy.com/>*
- ▶ *Cook County Naturalization records - <http://www.cookcountyclerkofcourt.org/NR/about.aspx>*
- ▶ *Chicago Parish locator - <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~itappcnc/cathsearch.htm>*
- ▶ *Cook county Cemeteries - <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~itappcnc/pipcnccookcem.htm>*

Other Sources

Books

- ▶ *The Genealogist's Address Book, by Elizabeth Petty Bentley - State and local Resources including ethnic and religious organizations, genealogy and historical societies*
- ▶ *International Vital Records Handbook, by Thomas Jay Kemp – obtaining records overseas*
- ▶ *Follow the Paper Trail, by Jonathan Shea and William Hoffman – translations of documents in many languages*
- ▶ *Unpuzzling Your Past, by Emily Croom – general research information*

AHML Volunteers – DAR, German, Polish, French, Swedish – call Michael Mulholland for times

Local Genealogy Groups

- ▶ Northwest Suburban Council of Genealogists - 1st Saturday 10:00 AM, Arlington Hts
- ▶ CAGGNI – Focused on technology – 3rd Saturday 10:00 AM, Schaumburg
- ▶ Schaumburg Public Library - 2nd Tuesday 7:30 PM, Schaumburg

Blogs

- ▶ *Genea-Musings* – Sunday/Monday top blogs of week and list of other with top blogs
- ▶ *Family Tree list of top blogs* – www.familytreemagazine.com/article/40-best-genealogy-blogs-2011
- ▶ support@genealogytoday.com
- ▶ *Geneabloggers* – most if not all genealogy bloggers are listed by category
- ▶ *Software ratings 2012* - <http://www.gensoftreviews.com/>

Beyond the Internet (Focus on U.S. records)

Nancy I.Z. Reese

Vital records

Family History Library films, local courthouse, state/county websites, www.deathindexes.com

Obituaries, local history files

Libraries, historical societies, newspaper archives, www.elephind.com,
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:List_of_online_newspaper_archives

City directories

Local libraries, historical societies, state archives,
<https://sites.google.com/site/onlinedirectorysite>

Books

Libraries, Google Books, archive.org, books.familysearch.org

Land records

FHL films, local courthouse, Federal Land Patents (gloreCORDS.blm.gov), state websites
(www.ilsos.gov/isa/landsrch.jsp)

Probate records (wills)

FHL films, local courthouse, rarely online, look for indexes or published abstracts in a local library or at county GenWeb site

Church records

FHL films, local church offices, denomination archives or headquarters, historical and genealogical societies, libraries. See "The Source: A Guidebook to American Genealogy" for listings of church offices, also located at
www.ancestry.com/wiki/index.php?title=List_of_Selected_Denominations

Genealogy societies, where your ancestor lived, regional/state/national – and CAGGNI!

Local libraries, including Arlington Heights, Wheaton, Mount Prospect, Elgin (Gail Borden), Naperville, Schaumburg, Libertyville (Cook Memorial), Lake County Genealogical Society Genealogy Room (now located at the Vernon Hills Village Hall), Newberry Library in Chicago