

## THE SOURCE

citations will be useful as you analyze information with an eye to proving or disproving parts of it.

Note taking and interview skills and the assessment of memories and traditions are critical first steps in the research process. You will come to appreciate the necessity of preserving these memories and personal attributes of people who could move out of your life at any moment. Public records and archival collections, in all likelihood, will outlast the relatives and acquaintances who have knowledge of the family to share. That is why people, not records, provide one of our first sources of information.

Interviews also provide opportunities to locate and identify home sources. You may find a bounty of home sources including heirlooms, manuscript materials, and personally held copies of public records. Your interview notes should contain an illustration (sketch, photograph, or photocopy) and description of the item, the name of the item's holder, how the item was acquired, and as much explanatory information as can be obtained.

Your personal knowledge and memories, the home sources you locate, and the interviews you conduct are the first steps in family history research. Findings from such seemingly humble origins will thrust you into the larger arena of public records and, perhaps, more detailed facts, but you will return to these beginning steps often—each time with an awareness of the information previously collected.

### Network to Expand Your Research

Networking—making contact with others who share similar interests—can speed your research progress. Have a research question? Try networking. At a crossroads and not sure in which direction to turn? Try networking. Need someone to talk to about your successes or frustrations? Again, try networking. Networking can take place online, by correspondence, or in person, and can include society membership, classroom participation, and workshop or national conference attendance.

#### Online

The Internet has changed the ways family historians communicate. E-mailing is a quick, inexpensive, and effective means to communicate. Technology allows the easy flow of e-mail with attached documents and photographs. It's common to hear stories about an individual who has shared a piece of family history with a distant cousin and then received copies of long-sought documents or photographs in return. A brief and polite e-mail to a potential, newfound, or well-known relative is often the beginning of a wonderful exchange. The chart in figure 1-9 will be useful in determining the relationship between you and the relative. When communicating via e-mail, traditional courtesies should be observed.

A mailing list is simply an e-mail party line: every message that a list subscriber sends to the list is distributed to all other list

subscribers. Genealogy-related mailing lists can cover surnames, U.S. counties and states, other countries and regions, ethnic groups, and other topics. Subscribing to a mailing list is one of the best ways of connecting to people who share your interests. Many websites host mailing lists, including RootsWeb.com (with over 29,140 lists), Ancestry.com, and Genealogy.com.

A message board is a computerized version of the old-fashioned bulletin board. There are message boards focusing on surnames, localities, and many other topics. By posting a message to the appropriate message board, you create a record through which other researchers can find you. You'll find message boards on Ancestry.com, RootsWeb.com (with over 132,000 message boards), and Genealogy.com.

Some websites allow you to add “digital sticky notes” to content. On RootsWeb.com, these notes are called “Post-em Notes” and can be added to the Social Security Death Index (SSDI), the WorldConnect Project, or to other databases. Post-ems allow you to attach your e-mail address, a link to another website address, or other information to the records of any individual. On Ancestry.com these notes are called “Comments and Corrections.” Use these to add to an individual's record alternate names or other comments about the person, both viewable by other researchers. On the Ellis Island website <[www.ellisland.com](http://www.ellisland.com)>, you can add annotations to individual records. All of these additions to records are viewable by other researchers and could potentially help in your research and connect you with other researchers. Search for your ancestors and leave your calling card attached to their names.

Online family tree databases can help you locate others interested in the surnames you are researching. These resources include the Pedigree Resource File on FamilySearch.org, Ancestry World Tree on Ancestry.com, and WorldConnect on RootsWeb.com. You can initiate contact by e-mail.<sup>8</sup> A number of online services also allow you to locate living individuals who may have family information to share.

#### Repositories/Libraries

There are many libraries, archives, and societies that have excellent and well-known collections of genealogical research materials. The names and contact information for repositories of importance to family historians are given within the chapters and appendixes of this book. Several of these repositories, particularly the smaller ones, maintain lists of researchers and the local area families they are researching.

The LDS Family History Library (FHL) of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City, Utah, is perhaps the most widely known repository of genealogical materials. The FHL has been acquiring and preserving genealogical data since its founding in 1894. The library has collected vital information on hundreds of millions of deceased individuals. This data includes print and microform copies of records from all over the

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2	Brother/Sister	Aunt/Uncle or Nephew/Niece	Great Aunt/Uncle or Nephew/Niece	Great, Great Aunt/Uncle or Nephew/Niece	G.G.G Aunt/Uncle or Nephew/Niece	G.G.G.G. Aunt/Uncle or Nephew/Niece	G.G.G.G.G. Aunt/Uncle or Nephew/Niece	G.G.G.G.G.G. Aunt/Uncle or Nephew/Niece
3	Aunt/Uncle or Nephew/Niece	FIRST COUSIN	First Cousin Once Removed	First Cousin Twice Removed	First Cousin 3 Times Removed	First Cousin 4 Times Removed	First Cousin 5 Times Removed	First Cousin 6 Times Removed
4	Great Aunt/Uncle or Nephew/Niece	First Cousin Once Removed	SECOND COUSIN	Second Cousin Once Removed	Second Cousin Twice Removed	Second Cousin 3 Times Removed	Second Cousin 4 Times Removed	Second Cousin 5 Times Removed
5	Great, Great Aunt/Uncle or Nephew/Niece	First Cousin Twice Removed	Second Cousin Once Removed	THIRD COUSIN	Third Cousin Once Removed	Third Cousin Twice Removed	Third Cousin 3 Times Removed	Third Cousin 4 Times Removed
6	G.G.G Aunt/Uncle or Nephew/Niece	First Cousin 3 Times Removed	Second Cousin Twice Removed	Third Cousin Once Removed	FOURTH COUSIN	Fourth Cousin Once Removed	Fourth Cousin Twice Removed	Fourth Cousin 3 Times Removed
7	G. G. G. G. Aunt/Uncle or Nephew/Niece	First Cousin 4 Times Removed	Second Cousin 3 Times Removed	Third Cousin Twice Removed	Fourth Cousin Once Removed	FIFTH COUSIN	Fifth Cousin Once Removed	Fifth Cousin Twice Removed
8	G. G. G. G. G. Aunt/Uncle or Nephew/Niece	First Cousin 5 Times Removed	Second Cousin 4 Times Removed	Third Cousin 3 Times Removed	Fourth Cousin Twice Removed	Fifth Cousin Once Removed	SIXTH COUSIN	Sixth Cousin Once Removed
9	G.G.G.G.G.G.G. Aunt/Uncle or Nephew/Niece	First Cousin 6 Times Removed	Second Cousin 5 Times Removed	Third Cousin 4 Times Removed	Fourth Cousin 3 Times Removed	Fifth Cousin Twice Removed	Sixth Cousin Once Removed	SEVENTH COUSIN

**Figure 1-9.** Relationship chart for determining family relationships. Do a simple problem first: find the relationship between you and your first cousin's granddaughter who shares a common ancestor (your grandparent). Steps: List the common ancestor in square #1. Put your name in square #3 in the top row. In the far left column, list your first cousin in square #3. List his or her granddaughter in square # 5 in the same column. Find the common square—in this example, First Cousin Twice Removed is the relationship between you and your first cousin's granddaughter. Adapted from the "Cousin-Finder" chart developed by N. Dale Talkington, McKinney, Texas.

world, which are made available at the library in Salt Lake City and at Family History Centers throughout the United States and in many foreign countries. Many of the records described in *The Source* have been microfilmed and a good portion are indexed and accessible by visit to the library or a family history center. A catalog of FHL sources is available online at <[www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)>. Appendix F provides further information about the Family History Library.

### Societies

Family historians are usually willing to share findings and exchange ideas and research experiences. This camaraderie

results in a vast system of societies working to preserve and make records available and to promote educational opportunities. Participation in society activities as a member and volunteer allows you to pay back some of what you will reap as the beneficiary of society activities and projects. Societies also provide educational opportunities, including instructional articles published in their periodicals, local skill-building sessions, and one- or two-day seminars featuring nationally-known professionals.

Hundreds of genealogical and historical societies across the country seek to preserve records and provide instruction to family historians. Many groups form at the county level because of the research significance of local area records. Organizations

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also exist to study a single surname or the descendants of a particular couple (see appendix B, “Family Associations”). Ethnic or religious origins account for many such groups, such as the Polish Genealogical Society of America and P.O.I.N.T.—Pursuing Our Italian Names Together. Other societies bring together researchers with common locales of origin, for example, the Palatines to America and Germans from Russia societies.

Virtually all states have a state genealogical society, a state council, or both. In addition to major projects, a state-level group might coordinate the efforts of local societies within the state. Their publications (newsletters and journals) supplement those produced by local societies. Some state organizations, such as the Ohio Genealogical Society, offer chapter membership throughout the country. Other state organizations operate on a less-structured basis.

At the national level, a number of organizations serve individual genealogists or societies. The Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) <[www.fgs.org](http://www.fgs.org)> is an umbrella organization for genealogical and historical societies and research institutes such as libraries and archives. The National Genealogical Society (NGS) <[www.ngsgenealogy.org](http://www.ngsgenealogy.org)> is comprised of individual researchers. The oldest society in the United States is the New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS) <[www.nehgs.org](http://www.nehgs.org)>, which celebrated its sesquicentennial in 1995. Appendix C gives contact information for some state and national societies.

### Volunteer Efforts

While most societies undertake valuable indexing and preservation activities and produce periodicals and other publications that benefit the genealogical community, there are also efforts by family historians working independently of societies. The availability of online indexes and databases are often the work of these volunteers, as are some national ventures to provide access to local records. The USGenWeb Project at <[www.usgenweb.org](http://www.usgenweb.org)> is a volunteer-driven site that publishes historical information and resource material such as cemetery indexes and newspaper abstracts. The sites they maintain often provide important local detail about an area’s history, geography, and settlement, along with an overview of record availability and access and research tips. More information on USGenWeb is in chapter 2, “Computers and Technology.”

### Professional Groups

Family historians interact with professional genealogists in several ways. Professionals write articles and books and present lectures that provide new information and give examples of methodologies to help in difficult research situations. Professionals often lead efforts to protect records in jeopardy and to make them available for wide use. Many (but not all) professionals conduct research on a contract basis for others and can assist a family historian with a quest that seems impossible.

The research that professionals do ranges from an entire lineage to small but significant tasks in their field of expertise.

In the United States, there are several groups that serve the interests of professional genealogists and their clients, as well as those of the genealogical community. The Association of Professional Genealogists (PO Box 40393, Denver, CO 80204-0393) is a membership organization that does not administer tests, award credentials, or otherwise endorse individual researchers. The association does offer arbitration in the event a dispute arises between any association member and the general public. The APG website at <[www.apgen.org](http://www.apgen.org)> lists members’ names, contact details, and areas of expertise.

The Board for Certification of Genealogists (PO Box 14291, Washington, DC 20044) is a certifying body that is not affiliated with any group. BCG screens applicants through a testing process and successful candidates earn the initials CG (Certified Genealogist). A roster of certified genealogists is at the BCG website <[www.bgcercertification.org](http://www.bgcercertification.org)>.

The International Commission for the Accreditation of Professional Genealogists (ICAPGen) offers independent testing without membership. This program, established in 1964 by the Family History Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is designed to examine and accredit researchers in specialized geographic areas. Those who successfully complete the program receive the initials AG (Accredited Genealogist). In 2000, the LDS Church transferred its ownership and administration of the program to ICAPGen, PO Box 970204, Orem, UT 84097-0204; <[www.icapgen.org](http://www.icapgen.org)>.

The American Society of Genealogists (ASG) was founded in 1940 as an honorary society, limited to fifty lifetime members designated as Fellows (identified by the initials FASG). Election to the ASG is based on a candidate’s published genealogical scholarship. A list of Fellows and news of the ASG Scholar Award is at the website <[www.fasg.org](http://www.fasg.org)>.

### Education

Continuing education is a hallmark of genealogists, who recognize an ongoing need for skill and knowledge building. After the how-to guides (see Bibliography), local class offerings, regional workshops, national conferences, and week-long institutes loom. Institutes are intensive, multi-track programs oriented toward a variety of interests and skill levels. Institutes that have operated for more than a decade include the Genealogical Institute of Mid-America, Springfield, Illinois <[www.rootsweb.com/~ilsgs](http://www.rootsweb.com/~ilsgs)>; the Institute of Genealogy and Historical Research, Birmingham, Alabama <[www.samford.edu/schools/ighr](http://www.samford.edu/schools/ighr)>; the National Institute on Genealogical Research, Washington, D.C. <[www.rootsweb.com/~natgenin](http://www.rootsweb.com/~natgenin)>; and the Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy, Salt Lake City, Utah <[www.infouga.org](http://www.infouga.org)>.

Education can come via the Internet as well. One online course that has earned awards for excellence is *American*

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*Genealogy: A Basic Course*, offered by the National Genealogical Society, Education Department, 3108 Columbia Pike, Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22204-4304 <[www.ngsgenealogy.org](http://www.ngsgenealogy.org)>.

National conferences are held annually in different parts of the United States. For nearly four decades, the BYU Family History and Genealogy Conference at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, has served the genealogical community. For more information about the BYU conference, contact BYU Conferences and Workshops, 136 Harman Continuing Education Building, Provo, UT 84602 <<http://genealogyconferences.byu.edu>>.

Two national societies offer annual conferences that draw more than a thousand people to scores of lectures and a large display arena featuring vendors of family history products and services. Contact the National Genealogical Society, Conferences, 3108 Columbia Pike, Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22204-4304 <[www.ngsgenealogy.org](http://www.ngsgenealogy.org)> or the Federation of Genealogical Societies, Conferences, PO Box 200940, Austin, TX 78720-0940 <[www.fgs.org](http://www.fgs.org)> for details of their upcoming conferences. For a full range of educational events of all kinds, use the Federation's online international calendar at <[www.fgs.org](http://www.fgs.org)>. Ancestry.com also offers online classes on a variety of topics <[www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)>.

### Understand Developments in Technology

New technology has changed the way we conduct research and organize the results of our research and the way we publish information and share it on a global scale. Whether using personal computers or the online networks at libraries, family historians are locating and accessing research materials with a few keystrokes. Thousands of reference works and other items that were previously hidden or inaccessible are now identified and put within reach. Technology and a great surge of interest in the field have expedited the publication of enormous databases of census records, vital records, military records, cemetery records, and the like. In addition, the Internet and DNA testing are allowing some researchers to prove lineage in a way never imagined just twenty years ago. Understanding these advancements will simplify the way you conduct and organize your family history.

#### Internet

The Internet is changing the landscape of family history research, with more genealogical content being added daily. Still, many of the important records needed to complete family history research are not yet online and may not be digitized for years to come—if ever. A number of free online newsletters including the *Ancestry Weekly Journal*, *Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter*, and *RootsWeb Review* offer regular updates on the availability of records, new products and services, and articles written by experts to help family historians of every

level of experience. Almost every chapter in this book includes relevant websites, and chapter 2 provides an in-depth discussion of the latest sources and methods for efficient use of computers and technology.

#### Family History Software

Computers have saved researchers countless hours that would have been wasted in transcribing original records and organizing materials. A wide variety of computer software that facilitates and enhances genealogical research is available. Genealogical programs, such as *Family Tree Maker*, *Personal Ancestral File* (PAF), and *The Master Genealogist*, make it possible for you to enter names, dates, places, and relationships for an individual into the computer only once, whereupon the program will automatically recognize the individual and link him or her to the appropriate family and generation.

Because new genealogical software programs regularly come on the market, and those already in use are constantly being upgraded, it would be difficult to detail specific products here. A good way to stay informed of what is happening in this quickly changing arena is to participate in one of the many computer interest groups associated with genealogical societies.

#### Tools and Electronic Files

Much computer hardware, software, and tools, though not made specifically for family history use, are beneficial for family history projects. Pamela Boyer Porter, in her FORUM column "Digitools" identifies aids such as high-speed Internet access and a wireless network as being timesavers for online searching and retrieval.<sup>9</sup> A thumb (or jump) drive takes up little room in a briefcase yet allows for collecting images from the microfilm-to-digital-image copier at the Family History Library. Other devices include a digital camera to photograph everything from tombstones to documents to living relatives; a PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) to keep a genealogy database; and a scanner to reproduce photographs and other documents. Other items to consider are desktop publishing software which has opened new avenues for disseminating family information through personal letters, newsletters, and books, and sound and video editing software that makes it possible to turn sound clips and video into movies and other family history projects.

Computers offer many ways to store and preserve your family history research and projects. Electronic files can be stored on a computer's hard drive, on CDs and DVDs, or on other storage devices. Photo-editing software enables you to restore old photographs and share them with others. A favorite picture of one family historian's grandparents' wedding day was scanned into a computer. Duplicates of the scanned file were stored on the hard drive and on a CD. Photo-editing software was used to clean the scanned image of defects that appeared on the original picture. The restored image was then sent to family