STEP 4: Learn More About Genealogy

Read about Genealogy Research

These and others are available for checkout from our general collection to learn more:

- Dowell, David R. *Crash course in genealogy*. Santa Barbara, Calif: Libraries Unlimited, 2011

Follow the Genealogy Rules

1. Document your sources.
2. Never assume another researcher’s information is 100% correct.
3. Every first and last name has variations. Make sure to check them all.
4. Don’t assume — verify with sources.
5. Everything is not available online. Visit libraries, archives, and historical societies for additional information.
STEP 1: Getting Started

Organize
You will need a place to take notes and gather records. Items to help with organization include:

- Notebooks and folders
- Ancestral charts (these can be printed from Ancestry.com)

Establish What You Know
Starting from yourself, work backward to create your family tree.

Identify:
- Full names (and maiden names)
- Important dates (birth, marriage/divorce, death, burial)
- Important places (place of birth, lived in, marriage/divorce, death, burial)
- Education
- Occupation
- Religion and churches attended

Review Your Ancestral Charts to Identify the Gaps

STEP 2: Fill In The Gaps

Talk to Your Relatives
Family members can help fill the gaps in your family tree. Some may have started researching the family and want to share their information. Be mindful of these tips:

- Be respectful! There may be information others don’t want to share.
- Take accurate notes.
- Document your sources.
- Ask for specific information (ex. a marriage or birth date).

Find Family Documents
Family members may have useful personal documents, such as:

- Family Bible (with birth and marriage/death information)
- Scrapbooks/photographs
- Family letters
- Obituaries

Check Internet Resources

- Ancestry.com: www.ancestry.com
  Subscription-based website but freely accessed in the Virginia Room at Main Street Library. It contains birth, marriage/divorce, and death records; census/voter lists; city directories; military records and many collections of records.

- Heritage Quest: www.heritagequestonline.com
  This subscription-based website is accessible on the NNPLS website with a Newport News library card.

- Family Search: www.familysearch.org
  This is a free website created by the LDS (Mormon) Church. It has basic genealogy research tips, searchable indexes, and database of records.

STEP 3: Cite Sources
Always record where you located useful information.

- The type of record (census, birth/death, or marriage/divorce records)
- Year of records
- Page numbers