

GENEALOGY: WHERE TO BEGIN, HOW TO BEGIN

- **START WITH WHAT YOU KNOW: USUALLY YOUR OWN PERSONAL INFORMATION, THEN YOUR PARENTS' INFORMATION, FOLLOWED BY YOUR GRANDPARENTS' INFORMATION, ETC.**
- **FILL OUT A PEDIGREE CHART; WRITING DOWN ALL THE INFORMATION YOU HAVE (BIRTH DATES AND PLACES, MARRIAGE INFORMATION, AND DEATH INFORMATION, IF APPLICABLE) – USE A PENCIL WHEN FILLING OUT THE CHART AS YOU MAY HAVE TO CHANGE ENTRIES AS YOU DISCOVER NEW INFORMATION**
- **WOMENS' SURNAMES ARE ALWAYS ENTERED ON THE CHARTS, WITH THEIR MAIDEN NAMES, EVEN IF THEY ARE MARRIED**
- **ONCE YOU HAVE FILLED OUT THE ABOVE INFORMATION, YOU WILL SEE FROM THE BLANKS ON THE PEDIGREE CHART, THE INFORMATION THAT IS MISSING – THAT IS THE INFORMATION THAT YOU NEED TO SEARCH FOR**
- **IN ORDER TO FIND THE 'MISSING INFORMATION' YOU WILL NEED TO BE A DETECTIVE: TALK TO ANY RELATIVES WHO MAY KNOW INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR ANCESTORS; CHECK ANY OBITUARIES/FUNERAL CARDS YOU HAVE FROM DECEASED ANCESTORS; LOOK AT LOCAL HISTORY BOOKS FROM THE REGION WHERE YOUR ANCESTORS LIVED; IF YOU ARE 'COMPUTER LITERATE', USE SOME OF THE "FREE" DATABASES THAT ARE AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET; TALK TO OTHER PEOPLE WHO ARE INTERESTED IN GENEALOGY; FIND OUT IF ANYONE IN YOUR EXTENDED FAMILY HAS BEEN WORKING ON THE FAMILY GENEALOGY – PERHAPS SOME OF THIS WORK HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE AND YOU WERE UNAWARE OF IT!**
- **IF YOU ARE JUST STARTING OUT, ESTABLISH A SIMPLE FILING SYSTEM TO KEEP YOUR DATA AND DOCUMENTS ORGANIZED. I SUGGEST HAVING FILE FOLDERS FOR EACH FAMILY GROUP – ONCE YOU GET MORE INFORMATION, YOU CAN EXPAND THIS FAMILY GROUP AND MAKE SEPARATE FOLDERS FOR EACH MEMBER OF THE FAMILY (FOR EXAMPLE, START WITH A FOLDER FOR YOUR FATHER; THEN EXPAND THIS TO HAVING A FOLDER FOR YOU AND EACH OF YOUR SIBLINGS)**
- **IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOUR INFORMATION BE DOCUMENTED: RUMOURS AND FAMILY STORIES ARE GREAT, BUT WE NEED TO VERIFY THE INFORMATION. THIS IS DONE BY GETTING COPIES OF BIRTH, MARRIAGE AND DEATH CERTIFICATES. SOMETIMES FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE THESE DOCUMENTS ALREADY AND YOU CAN GET A COPY OF THEM; OTHER TIMES YOU WILL HAVE TO DO SOME RESEARCHING AT THE REPOSITORY WHERE THE ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS ARE FILED. THIS WILL VARY, DEPENDING ON WHERE YOU ARE SEARCHING: IT COULD BE AT A PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES, PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES WEBSITE, CHURCH**

REPOSITORY, OR IF YOU ARE SEARCHING OUTSIDE OF CANADA, THE RECORDS COULD BE HELD AT NUMEROUS OTHER LOCATIONS.

- IF YOU ARE IN POSSESSION OF ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS FROM YOUR FAMILY AND/OR ANCESTORS, MAKE PHOTOCOPIES OF THESE FOR YOUR RESEARCH PURPOSES, AND STORE THE ORIGINALS IN AN ACID-FREE SHEET PROTECTOR AND/OR ALBUM. **NEVER** LAMINATE AN ORIGINAL DOCUMENT – THE LAMINATING PROCESS WILL DESTROY THE DOCUMENT OVER TIME.
- ASK FOR HELP: DO A “GOOGLE SEARCH” FOR GENEALOGICAL SOCIETIES AND/OR HISTORICAL SOCIETIES IN THE AREA WHERE YOUR ANCESTORS LIVED. THEY WILL USUALLY HAVE A LOT OF INFORMATION THAT THEY WILL SHARE WITH YOU.
- IN WETASKIWIN, THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS HAS A FAMILY HISTORY CENTER AT THEIR CHURCH. THIS IS AN AREA DEDICATED TO GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH, EQUIPPED WITH COMPUTERS, FREE ACCESS TO PAY-FOR-VIEW DATA BASES, AND TRAINED CONSULTANTS WHO ARE THERE TO HELP YOU WITH YOUR RESEARCH. **EVERYONE** CAN USE THE FAMILY HISTORY: YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH TO USE THEIR RESOURCES. THE RESOURCES ARE FREE FOR THE PUBLIC TO USE. THE CHURCH IS LOCATED AT 5410 – 36 AVENUE, AND THE FAMILY HISTORY CENTER IS ACCESSED BY USING THE SOUTH (MAIN) DOOR. THE HOURS THAT THEY ARE OPEN ARE: WEDNESDAY FROM 10:00AM-3:00PM AND WEDNESDAY FROM 6:15PM – 8:15PM. IF YOU ARE NOT COMFORTABLE USING COMPUTERS, THE CONSULTANTS WILL BE HAPPY TO ASSIST YOU WITH THIS.
- ALSO IN WETASKIWIN, THE WETASKIWIN BRANCH OF ALBERTA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY – THE PROVINCIAL BODY (AGS) HAS BRANCHES IN NUMEROUS LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT ALBERTA. **OUR BRANCH** HOLDS THEIR MEETINGS ON THE THIRD TUESDAYS OF THE MONTH, AT 7:00PM – WE HOLD THE MEETINGS AT THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS CHURCH, WITH ACCESS TO THE MEETING ROOM VIA THE NORTH DOOR (ADJACENT TO THE PARKING LOT). WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO JOIN IN ORDER TO ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP (NEWSLETTERS, DATABASES, ETC.); HOWEVER WE ARE HAPPY TO HAVE GUESTS ATTEND OUR MEETINGS. OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS INCLUDE A SHORT BUSINESS SESSION AT THE BEGINNING, THEN, WE DEVOTE THE REST OF THE MEETING TO SOME ASPECT OF EDUCATING OUR BRANCH MEMBERS. EACH MONTH WE HAVE A PRESENTATION THAT ASSISTS US WITH OUR RESEARCH AND/OR ALLOWS US TO ASK FOR ASSISTANCE FROM THE OTHER BRANCH MEMBERS – USUALLY A REQUEST FOR HELP WITH ONE OF OUR “BRICK WALLS”! WE DO NOT HOLD MEETINGS DURING THE MONTHS OF JULY, AUGUST OR DECEMBER.

- THE CITY OF WETASKIWIN ARCHIVES HAS A WEALTH OF RESOURCE INFORMATION IF YOU ARE RESEARCHING YOUR FAMILY IN THE WETASKIWIN AREA.
- WE EACH NEED TO REMEMBER THAT EVEN THOUGH WE MAY THINK OUR OWN PERSONAL LIVES WERE NOT THAT EXCITING, IMAGINE HOW THRILLED WE WOULD BE IF WE COULD READ AN ACCOUNT OF OUR ANCESTORS' LIVES – AND THEY ALSO, PROBABLY THOUGHT THEIR LIVES WERE NOT THAT SPECTACULAR!

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