

The Complete Guide To Beginning Your Family Search

Embarking on a family search can be an incredibly rewarding and enriching experience. It offers a unique opportunity to connect with your roots, discover your heritage, and gain a deeper understanding of your ancestors' lives and experiences. The journey of family history research can be both challenging and fulfilling, but with the right tools and resources, it's an endeavor that can yield countless discoveries and insights.

This comprehensive guide will provide you with all the essential information and guidance you need to begin your own family search. We'll cover everything from determining your research goals to finding reliable sources of information, organizing your findings, and even preserving your family's history for future generations.

Chapter 1: Define Your Research Goals



Genealogy 101: The Complete Guide to Beginning Your Family Search by Jeff Kane

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Before you dive into your family search, it's important to take some time to consider your research goals. What do you hope to achieve through this process? Are you interested in tracing your lineage back as far as possible? Are you looking for specific information about a particular ancestor? Or are you simply curious about your family's history and heritage?

Defining your research goals will help you focus your efforts and make the most of your time. It will also help you determine which resources and strategies are most likely to be helpful in your search.

Chapter 2: Gather Family Information

The first step in your family search is to gather as much information as possible about your family. This can include interviewing family members, examining family Bibles and other documents, and searching through old photographs and letters.

Talking to your family members is a great way to learn about your family's history and traditions. They may have stories, anecdotes, or even photographs that can provide valuable insights into your ancestors' lives.

Chapter 3: Search Online Resources

There are a wealth of online resources available to help you with your family search. These resources can include:

- **Genealogy websites:** Websites such as Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org contain vast databases of genealogical records, including birth, marriage, and death certificates; census records; and military records.
- **Historical societies:** Many historical societies have online databases of local records, such as land deeds, tax lists, and church records.
- **Libraries:** Libraries often have collections of genealogical books and resources, as well as access to online databases.

Chapter 4: Visit Archives and Libraries

In addition to online resources, there are also many physical archives and libraries that can be valuable sources of information for family historians.

These institutions may have access to unique records, such as:

- **Original birth, marriage, and death certificates:** These records can provide valuable information about your ancestors' names, birthdates, death dates, and places of residence.
- **Census records:** Census records can provide a snapshot of your ancestors' lives at specific points in time. They can include information such as their names, ages, occupations, and places of residence.
- **Military records:** Military records can provide information about your ancestors' service in the military, including their rank, unit, and dates of service.

Chapter 5: Organize Your Findings

As you gather information about your family, it's important to keep your findings organized. This will help you track your progress and make it easier to find the information you need when you need it.

There are a variety of ways to organize your family history research, such as:

- **Using a genealogy software program:** Genealogy software programs can help you organize your research and create family trees and charts.
- **Creating a family history notebook:** A family history notebook can be a great way to keep track of your research notes, sources, and discoveries.
- **Using a filing system:** A filing system can help you organize your research materials by topic or ancestor.

Chapter 6: Share Your Findings

Once you've made some progress on your family search, you may want to share your findings with other family members. This can be a great way to connect with your relatives and learn more about your shared heritage.

There are a variety of ways to share your family history research, such as:

- **Creating a family website:** A family website is a great way to share your research with family members near and far.
- **Writing a family history book:** A family history book can be a lasting legacy for your family, and it can be a great way to share your research

with future generations.

- **Giving a presentation:** Giving a presentation about your family history is a great way to share your research with a larger audience.

Embarking on a family search can be an incredibly rewarding and enriching experience. By following the steps outlined in this guide, you can increase your chances of success and make the most of your journey. Remember, family history research is an ongoing process, and there's always something new to discover. So enjoy the journey, and embrace the opportunity to connect with your roots and learn more about your family's history.



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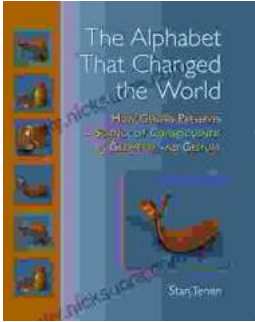
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