

Making a Family Tree

The decision to start a family tree will take you on an interesting journey back through time. As a time traveler, your journey begins with you! However tempting it might be to try to prove a link to someone far in the past, always work backwards from yourself when creating your family tree.

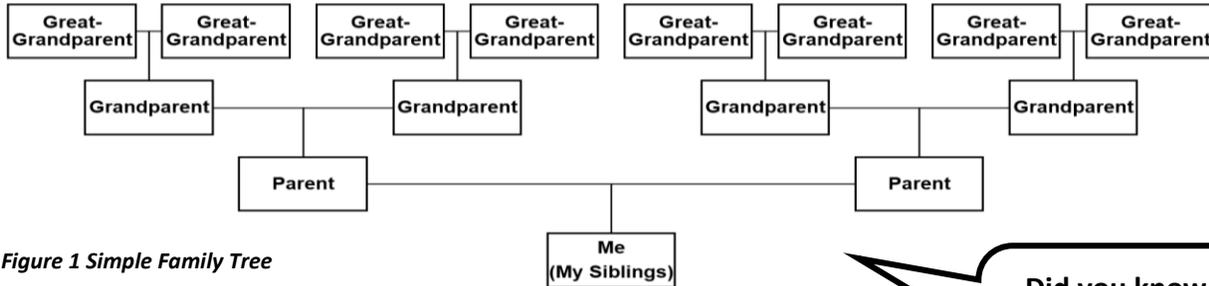


Figure 1 Simple Family Tree

Personal knowledge can often form the first limbs of your family tree. Begin at home with your parents; make a simple chart or list, beginning with you, your parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents.

Did you know that the study of ones family is called **GENEALOGY!**

The following types of records and documents can be useful in your search for information:

- birth, baptismal, graduation, marriage, military, and occupational records
- death certificates, burial records, and obituaries
- yearbooks, newspaper articles, family letters, social activity mementos, sports awards, and other documents that might provide names, dates, and locations
- religious records, old letters, photographs

Once you have filled in the chart with the most immediate of your relatives you can begin to add in aunts, uncles, cousins, great-aunt, great-uncles, second cousins, and on and on...

Finding information on your extended family can prove a little more difficult, but luckily, there are fantastic resources out there to help you in your search. First, ask family members what information they have. With some extra clues, you can then start looking in other places.

Today the internet is a terrific place to find information with sites like Ancestry.com (but make sure you have your parents' permission to search online). Many old newspapers and vital records about births, deaths and marriages can be accessed online as well.

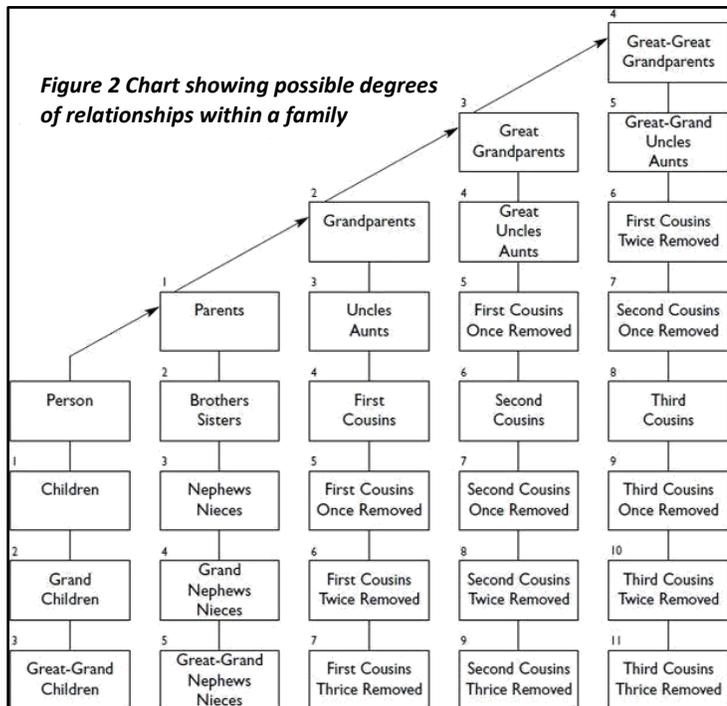


Figure 2 Chart showing possible degrees of relationships within a family

Your local Archive may also be able to help. Archives are treasure boxes full of records and documents that can help you as you fill in your family tree. Your local Archivist can often help you locate new records or suggest new directions to take your search.

Once you start connecting with your ancestors and your family's history, you will never want to stop. Happy hunting!