



GETTING STARTED

Easy Steps for Climbing Your Family Tree

THOMAS JAY KEMP

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Thomas Jay Kemp
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Cover Image Credit: *A Home on the Mississippi* by Currier & Ives. Credit: Wikipedia

Getting Started

I grew up hearing the story of when Indians attacked the family cabin in New Hampshire on 24 June 1724. They had been waiting at the edge of the forest observing the cabin. When the father and older son left to go hunting the Indians swooped in, killing two infants that cried out. Caleb and Ebenezer were killed that day; they were, respectively, 3 and 4 years old.

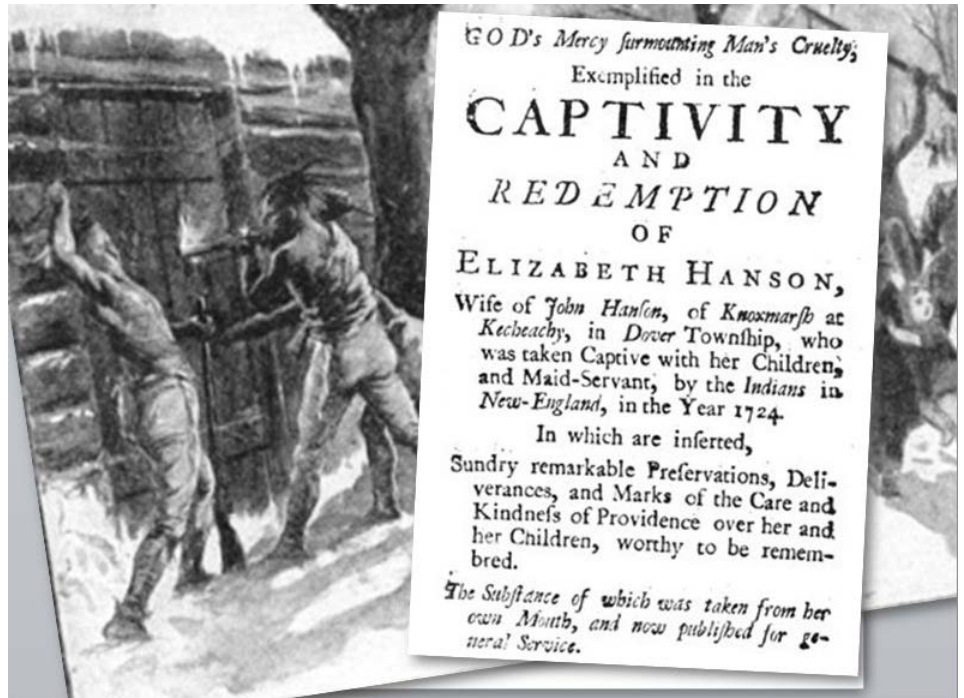
When I grew up in New Hampshire we didn't have a television. But no matter, my grandfather Walter Daniel Huse (1898-1968) told and retold the old family stories and kept us riveted on his every word. Clearly he had heard the story of the Indian attack from his grandmother Julia Clifford (Hanson) Sawyer (1830-1918). Every night we asked for that story and listened closely.

The forest, cabins, cellar holes—these were all familiar to us. We'd go exploring in the forest and find cellar holes. We could picture that long-ago Indian attack. Our neighbor's home still had a secret passage where the family would go to hide from the Indians. It was very narrow and led up to a bunker.

Our neighbor explained that the family would hide there and shoot anyone that came up that hidden staircase. Gripping and memorable, these family stories came alive and were hardwired into our memories.

Next June, it will be 290 years since that brutal attack in 1724. Almost 290 years later, and that story is still told in the family today.

Don't let your family stories be lost. Explore your family tree, researching and documenting your family history. This ebook will show you how to get started in four easy steps.



Credit: Wikipedia and InternetArchive.org

Step One

Your first step in compiling your family history is to gather the family's stories. Talk with every member of your family. Call and write them to gather the facts about the family.

Get a box and put it in the corner of a room, and then begin filling it with family heirlooms you have in your home or borrowed from a relative. Take your time with this; keep adding to the box for a few weeks.

Look for:

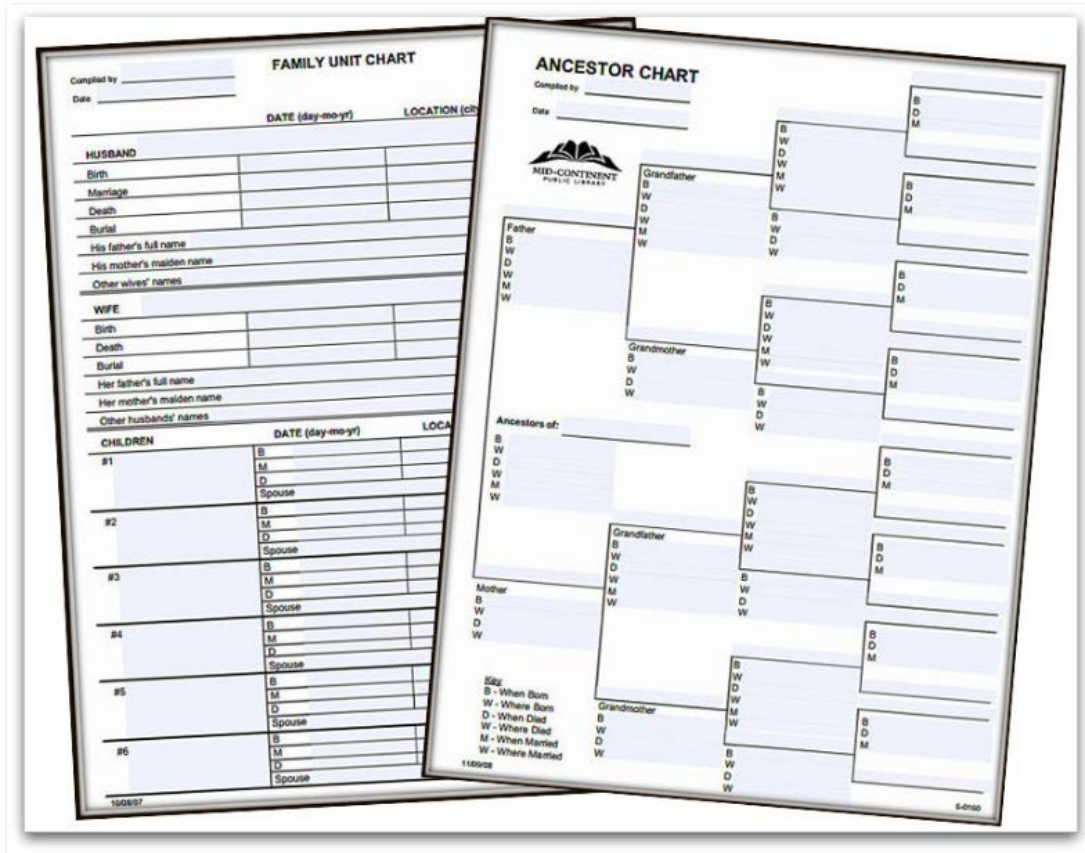
- Family photograph albums
- Family Bible
- Old family letters
- Family scrap book
- Military papers or clothing
- School papers or diplomas
- Wedding album, invitations
- Newspaper clippings
- Family dishes or flatware (just a sample)
- Antiques
- Copies of birth, marriage or death certificates



GETTING STARTED: Easy Steps for Climbing Your Family Tree

Step Two

Get your basic genealogy forms (a family tree chart and a family group sheet) and start filling them in. These are available from many online sources.



Midwest Genealogy Center, Mid-Continent Public Library
(Independence, Missouri)

The Midwest Genealogy Center is one place to get these two forms:

- Blank Family Tree Chart: http://www.mymcpl.org/_uploaded_resources/MGC-ancestorchart.pdf
- Blank Family Group Sheet: http://www.mymcpl.org/_uploaded_resources/MGC-familyunitchart.pdf

Before you get started, print out multiple copies of these blank forms. You will make mistakes so consider these your working copies. Use pencil and print clearly.

Here are a few tips:

- Use full names; no abbreviations
- Enter names last name first, putting the surname in caps: SMITH, John Henry
- Women: enter their full maiden name, not their married names
- Enter full place names (City, County, State); no abbreviations
- Enter complete dates in this format: Day Month Year (2 May 1857); no abbreviations

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Step Three

Repeat Steps One & Two at the homes of your relatives.

Continue to fill in your genealogy charts with your relatives. They might not remember all of the details, so just write down what they remember.

If they are not sure of a date, ask questions that will help you narrow down the information.

Sample questions:

- What was the birth order of the children?
- Not sure of a date? Try to pinpoint it to an event that happened about the same time:
 - He died while I was in high school.
 - They were married just before the war started.
- Do you have old family wedding invitations?
- Do you have an address book? Get the names and contact information about relatives.

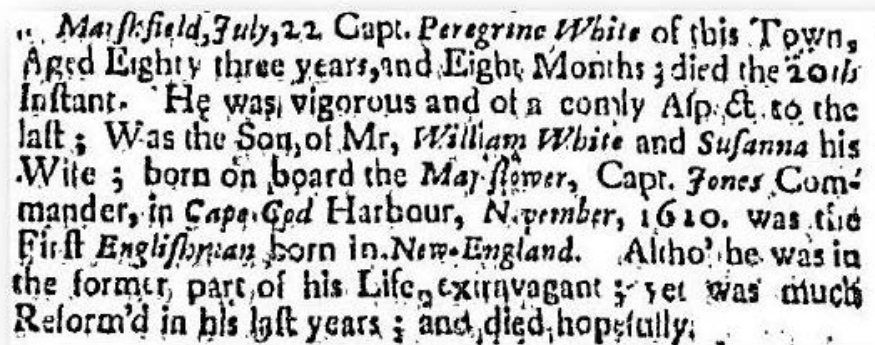
Step Four

Obtain copies of the birth, marriage and death records of your ancestors.

There are two primary sources for this information: official government certificates, and newspapers. Both were recorded about the time of the event and were usually verified by members of the family.

Families celebrate the birth of a new child, and family and friends gather to celebrate a wedding or to honor the passing of a dear relative or friend. We have celebrated these events and recorded the details since the beginning of the nation.

For example, here is Peregrine White's obituary. Peregrine was the first child born in the new Mayflower colony. In fact, he was born on board the Mayflower as it sat docked in the harbor on 20 November 1620.

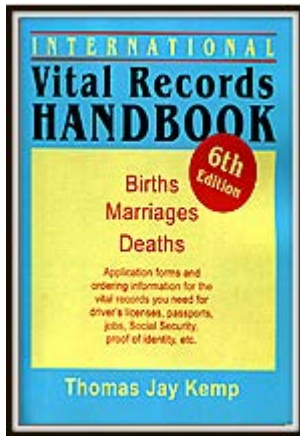


.. Marshfield, July, 22. Capt. Peregrine White of this Town, Aged Eighty three years, and Eight Months; died the 20th Instant. He was vigorous and of a comly Asp. Et. to the last; Was the Son, of Mr, William White and Susanna his Wite; born on board the May-flower, Capt. Jones Com-mander, in Cape Cod Harbour, November, 1620. was the First Englishman born in New-England. Altho' he was in the former part of his Life, extravagant; yet was much Reform'd in his last years; and died hopefully.

Boston Newsletter (Boston, Massachusetts), 24-31 July 1704, page 2. GenealogyBank.com

Birth, Marriage and Death Certificates

Governments have a near-complete record of the births, marriages and deaths in their jurisdiction. You will want to contact the state where your ancestor lived in order to obtain a copy of the birth, marriage and death certificates for your relatives. These generally cost \$10 to \$20 per document.



Credit: Genealogical Publishing Company

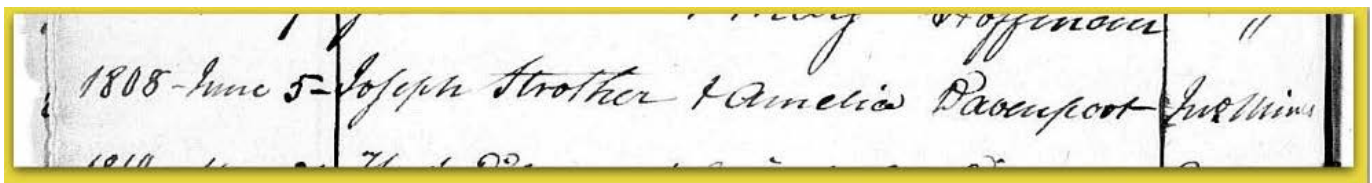
Your best source for ordering these records from a U.S. state or another country is the International Vital Records Handbook (Baltimore, Maryland), 2013 – 6th edition.

Many states are beginning to put their older records online. Check to see if your state has done this.

For example, West Virginia has begun putting up some of its older records:

- [WV Births 1790-1937](#)
- [WV Marriages 1780-1971](#)
- [WV Deaths 1753-1978](#)

Here is the official West Virginia marriage record for Joseph Strother and Amelia Davenport, who were married 5 June 1808. It is online on the West Virginia site: http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va_mcsearch.aspx

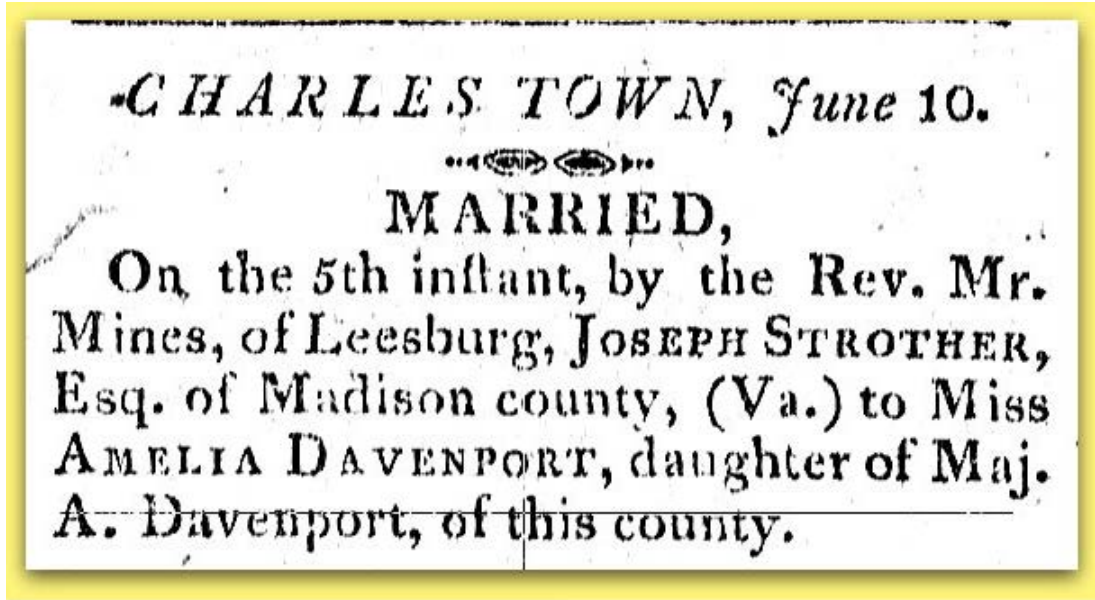


West Virginia Division of Culture and History

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Newspapers also published information about these family milestones.

Here is a newspaper account of that same Strother-Davenport wedding, giving more details of the event.



Farmer's Repository (Charlestown, West Virginia), 10 June 1808, page 2. Credit: GenealogyBank.com

From this article we get the rest of the story:

- The groom was from Madison County, Virginia, and the bride was from Kanawha County.
- Her father was Major A. Davenport.
- Joseph Strother was denoted as "Esquire."
- The minister was the Rev. Mr. Mines of Leesburg (Virginia).

These are great clues that you can use to track down additional information.

GETTING STARTED: Easy Steps for Climbing Your Family Tree

As a bonus, newspapers often published photographs of the family members involved in the event. Here is an example: a photograph of Claudette Smith, whose marriage was recorded in the Times Picayune.

SECTION FOUR PAGE THIRTEEN

THE TIMES-PICAYUNE NEW ORLEANS STATES, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1954



—Photo by Joseph E. Hammond, La.
MISS CRUSIFINE MERCANTE, whose engagement to Mr. Anthony Paul Figarino, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Figarino of Hammond, La., has been announced by her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Mercante of Hammond.



—Photo by Joseph E. Hammond, La.
MISS CLAUDETTE SMITH of Natchez, Miss., daughter of Mrs. Claude Smith Jr. of Mibright, Miss., and the late Mr. Smith, is engaged to Mr. Alfred Emanuel Robertson, son of Mrs. Eula E. Robertson of Vidalia, La., and the late Mr. Robertson. The wedding will take place Nov. 4.

State Society



—Photo by Jack Loom.
MRS. RUBEN PICKETT WOOTEN is the former Miss Evelyn Dorolita Moss, daughter of Mr.

MODERN MARRIAGE

Child Is Real Casualty When Divorce Occurs

By DR. FAUL FOPENOE (Professor 1954 by State P. Div. Co.)
You hear a great deal about children of broken homes and perhaps you think it is of small concern to you, since the matter does not touch you personally. There are more than two million such children in the United States, with thousands more to come—and they soon will constitute an important section of our adult population. If only half of them are damaged by the experience of having their homes come crashing down about their heads, it is a serious matter for the country. But in all probability far more than half will suffer some sort of mental or physical injury. There is plenty of evidence to support this opinion.

Now comes Mrs. L. to add her son to this pitiful army of helpless children: "I am getting a divorce next month," she announces, "and I'm going to put my son in the best private school in this part of the country. You can't make me believe that he won't be a whole lot better off there than in a home continually filled with discord. I don't try to make my readers believe anything, Mrs. L. I lay before them the facts, the evidence, and frequently my own conclusions. It is headed in the right direction. Watch the movement carefully from this point of view as well as from the point of view of its cost to the taxpayers. Read Modern Marriage daily in The Times-Picayune.

DELEGATES WILL REPORT TO WOMPI
High lights of their recent national convention in Dallas, Tex., will be reviewed Wednesday by Mrs. Lorraine Cass, Mrs. Connie Audemorte, and Miss Augusta Woolverton, delegates, at a meeting of the New Orleans Chapter of Women of the Motion Picture Industry.

They will speak at a noon session at the Court of Two Sisters, Mrs. Claire Tremorel, publicity chairman, reports.

Club Sets Election
Election of officers will high light the annual meeting Wednesday of the Cisterice Club at 1458 Camp at 2 p. m. Mrs. John M. Farrell, to be a supplement and aid to the president, announces.

Greetings New Orleans!

... we hope to see all of you

MONDAY, OCTOBER 11th

Times Picayune (New Orleans, Louisiana), 10 October 1954, Section 4, page 13. Credit: GenealogyBank.com

As you can see, it is essential that you search the old newspapers on GenealogyBank to get all of the information about your family.

Genealogy Records You Can Find in Newspapers



National titles

Newspaper Archives 1690–Today

Newspapers are a cornerstone of family history research. Learning about your ancestors' daily experiences provides a unique window into their lives and can bring your family history to life.

List of Newspapers

Discover your ancestors' stories through:

- [Obituaries](#)
- [Birth Records](#)
- [Marriage & Engagement](#)
- [Passenger Lists](#)

And Much More!

Search Newspaper Archives

Search U.S. Newspaper Titles

Alabama	National
Alaska	Nebraska
Arizona	Nevada
Arkansas	New Hampshire
California	New Jersey
Colorado	New Mexico
Connecticut	New York
Delaware	North Carolina
Dist. of Columbia	North Dakota
Florida	Ohio

Credit: GenealogyBank.com

GETTING STARTED: Easy Steps for Climbing Your Family Tree

Notice that GenealogyBank has made it easy to find birth, marriage and death records in newspapers by offering separate search boxes for each type of record.

Search Birth Records and Announcements in Newspapers 1728-1999



Find your ancestors' birth records published in newspapers. Read birth announcements, see baby photos and discover clues in birth notices that can help you trace your family tree in our newspaper archives.

Enter your ancestor's name below and we'll search birth records to help you learn more.

Last Name ?

First Name ?

Include Keywords ?

Exclude Keywords ?

Date Range to ?

Date

Added Since ▼

[Birth Record Search Tips](#)

[Clear Form](#) [Begin Search ▶](#)

Search Birth Records By State

Check your selection to search birth records by state, city, or newspaper title.


<input type="checkbox"/> Alabama	<input type="checkbox"/> Montana
<input type="checkbox"/> Alaska	<input type="checkbox"/> Nebraska
<input type="checkbox"/> Arizona	<input type="checkbox"/> Nevada
<input type="checkbox"/> Arkansas	<input type="checkbox"/> New Hampshire
<input type="checkbox"/> California	<input type="checkbox"/> New Jersey
<input type="checkbox"/> Colorado	<input type="checkbox"/> New Mexico
<input type="checkbox"/> Connecticut	<input type="checkbox"/> New York
<input type="checkbox"/> Delaware	<input type="checkbox"/> North Carolina
<input type="checkbox"/> Dist. of Columbia	<input type="checkbox"/> North Dakota
<input type="checkbox"/> Florida	<input type="checkbox"/> Ohio
<input type="checkbox"/> Georgia	<input type="checkbox"/> Oklahoma
<input type="checkbox"/> Hawaii	<input type="checkbox"/> Oregon
<input type="checkbox"/> Idaho	<input type="checkbox"/> Pennsylvania
<input type="checkbox"/> Illinois	<input type="checkbox"/> Rhode Island

Credit: GenealogyBank.com

Simply select the type of record you want to find and type in the person's name and the relevant date. You can search using only the surname with a specific date, or range of years. For more narrow searches you can add the first name, and include or exclude keywords.

GETTING STARTED: Easy Steps for Climbing Your Family Tree

Here is an example of the results from a typical search.



The screenshot shows a search results page for '2 Huse Birth Records'. At the top, there is a header with the text '2 Huse Birth Records' and a small photograph of a baby. Below the header, there is a search bar with the text '(Results 1 - 2 of 2) Refine Search Results' and a 'Sort by' dropdown menu set to 'Best matches'. The results are listed in two entries, each with a 'Birth Record' title and a thumbnail image of a newspaper clipping. The first entry shows the date 'Monday, July 19, 1875', location 'Salem, Massachusetts', paper 'Salem Register', and article type 'Birth Record'. The thumbnail image shows a newspaper clipping with the text 'In Georgetown, July 16, a d R C Huse.' and 'Born'.

Credit: GenealogyBank.com

Conclusion

Follow the four steps described in this ebook, and see how easy it is to climb your family tree and document your family:

1. Find the information and family records you already have in your home, and call or write your family members to gather the family stories.
2. Write that information down using the two basic genealogy forms, and begin compiling your family history.
3. Visit your relatives at their homes to see their family heirlooms and prod their memories for more family stories.
4. Add to the family history information you've gathered by finding copies of the original birth, marriage and death records of your family members that are on file with their town or county clerk, and were often published in local newspapers.

Climbing your family tree has never been easier.