


Getting Started with Your Family History

Learn the Basics

Kathleen Murray



Topics


1. Gathering Information
2. Information Types & Sources
3. Recording Information
4. Documenting Sources
5. Vital Records

Family Information, Interviews, & Collaboration

GATHERING INFORMATION

Family Information

- Gather documents, photographs, records, & artifacts from family members
 - Offer to copy & return
 - Scan, photograph, or transcribe on the spot
- Call family members: Voice & video
 - In lieu of face-to-face interviews
- Send letters & email messages
 - Track your correspondence




Correspondence Log

Entry Date Sent	Follow-up Response	Charge Refund	Addressee & Address	Subject or Citation	Results	Doc. No.
1						
2						
3						

- Physical and electronic correspondence
 - Record of what was asked of whom
 - Supports follow-ups with non-respondents

Family Interviews

- Interview several relatives
 - A more comprehensive picture emerges
 - Conflicting views can be sorted out
- Create a comfortable atmosphere
 - Select convenient time & quiet location
- Use:
 - Photos
 - News articles
 - Documents



Family Interviews



- Keep the conversation on track
 - Establish goals
 - Prioritize questions
- Request permission to record
 - Label audio/video file & transcript
 - Date, location, person(s)
 - Offer copies of recording and transcript




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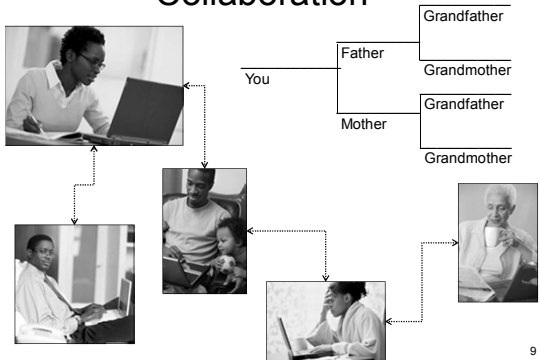
Question Guidelines

- Ask simple, short questions
 - What were the maiden names of George Wilkes?
 - Mother, Irene G. Wilkes?
 - Spouse, Bettie Ann Wilkes?
- Elicit memories of an era
 - What brought the family from Arkansas to Chicago?
- Avoid questions with yes or no answers
 - Are all the family buried in Burr Oak Cemetery?
- Restate responses
 - “Let me be sure I understand . . .”


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Collaboration




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Collaboration




“Since the information in [family trees] is contributed by the public, it is the responsibility of those who use the [information] to verify its accuracy.”
- FamilySearch.org



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Vital, Census, Court, Church, Military & Other Records


DISCOVERING INFORMATION




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Family Information


- Interviews
 - Recordings, transcriptions, notes
- Documents
 - Letters, funeral cards, family histories, news clippings
- Photographs
 - Studio, amateur
- Recordings
 - Audio & video
- Artifacts
 - Clothing, medals, jewelry, furniture, toys




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Key Record Types




- Vital Records
 - Birth, marriage, divorce, & death certificates
- Census
 - Federal (1790 – 1940) & State
- Legal Court Records
 - Naturalization petitions, tax records, deeds of trust, property titles, mortgage certificates, & contracts




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Finding US Records




- Vital Records
 - State, county, or district where the event occurred
 - CDC – Where to write for vital records
- Census Records
 - FamilySearch.org
 - ancestry.com
 - HeritageQuest database
- Court Records
 - Locality where the event occurred




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Important Record Types



- Church Records
 - AKA: Sacramental records
 - Baptismal, confirmation, marriage, burial
- Military Records
 - Pension files, draft registrations, service records
- City Directories
 - Census “alternatives” for missing years
- Newspapers
 - Historical & current



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Finding Records




- Church Records
 - FamilySearch.org - <https://familysearch.org>
- Military Records
 - Fold3 - <http://www.fold3.com/>
- City Directories
 - Ancestry.com - <http://www.ancestry.com/>
- Historical Newspapers
 - Library of Congress: Chronicling America - <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>



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Archives & Libraries




May offer primary and secondary source materials online and offline.

- National Archives (NARA)
 - Resources for Genealogists
- Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC)
 - Genealogy Resources
- Dallas Public Library
 - Genealogy Section




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Pedigree Charts & Family Group Sheets

RECORDING INFORMATION




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Building your Pedigree

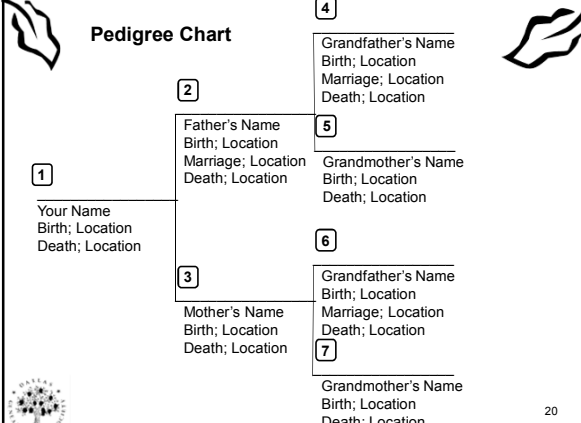
Record of births, marriages, & deaths (BMD) for your direct ancestors

- Pedigree Chart
 - AKA: Ancestor Chart & Family Tree
 - Record of direct ancestors
 - BMD information for 3-4 generations
- Work backwards
 - Start with yourself
 - Move back in time for each generation
 - Events – Dates – Locations



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Pedigree Chart



1 Your Name
Birth; Location
Death; Location

2 Father's Name
Birth; Location
Marriage; Location
Death; Location


3 Mother's Name
Birth; Location
Death; Location

4 Grandfather's Name
Birth; Location
Marriage; Location
Death; Location

5 Grandmother's Name
Birth; Location
Death; Location

6 Grandfather's Name
Birth; Location
Marriage; Location
Death; Location


7 Grandmother's Name
Birth; Location
Death; Location



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Pedigree Chart


- Date format
 - Day Month Year
 - Example: 14 May 1880
- Place names
 - City, county, state, country
 - Example: Dallas, Dallas, Texas, USA
- Female names
 - Maiden surnames
 - Example: Winny Williams (not Winny Lowe)



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Pedigree Chart for George Avery WILKES

<p>¹ George Avery WILKES b: 19 Feb 1919 in Trenton, Big Creek Township, Phillips, Arkansas, USA m: 12 Aug 1940 in Chicago, Cook, Illinois, USA d: 12 Apr 1970 in Chicago, Cook, Illinois, USA</p>	<p>² James McBride WILKES b: Aug 1888 in Marvell, Phillips, Arkansas, USA m: 31 May 1911 in Monroe County, Arkansas, USA d: 14 Aug 1950 in Chicago, Cook, Illinois, USA</p>	<p>⁴ Giles WILKES b: 1835 in South Carolina, USA m: 14 Jan 1886 in Phillips, Arkansas, USA d: Bet. 1900–1910</p>
	<p>³ Georgia Irene LOWE b: 06 Nov 1884 in Holly Grove, Monroe, Arkansas, USA d: 01 Sep 1960 in Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California, USA</p>	<p>⁵ Mary b: Abt. 1851 in Georgia, USA d: Bet. 1888–1900 in Big Creek, Phillips, Arkansas, USA</p>
		<p>⁶ George W LOWE b: Mar 1847 in Hardeman, Tennessee, USA m: 06 Aug 1870 in Hardeman, Tennessee, USA d: Bet. 1920–1930</p>
		<p>⁷ Winny WILLIAMS b: d:</p>




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Family Group Sheet

Contains *family unit* information for each pedigree ancestor.


- Family Unit
 - Husband, wife, & their children
- Information for husband and wife:
 - Date & location: BMD & burial
 - Names of their parents
 - Additional marriages
- Information for couple's children:
 - Date & location: BMD & burial
 - Spouse's name



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Family Group Sheet

- Other information
 - Residences
 - Occupations
 - Church affiliations
 - Military service
- Identify source for each item of information



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Family Group Sheet for James McBride WILKES (partial)

Husband: James McBride WILKES	
Birth:	Aug 1888 in Marvel, Phillips, Arkansas, USA
Death:	14 Aug 1950 in Chicago, Cook, Illinois, USA
Marriage:	31 May 1911 in Monroe County, Arkansas, USA
Father:	Giles WILKES
Mother:	Mary
Wife: Georgia Irene LOWE	
Birth:	06 Nov 1884 in Holly Grove, Monroe, Arkansas, USA
Death:	01 Sep 1980 in Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California, USA
Father:	George W LOWE
Mother:	Winnie WILLIAMS
Other Spouses:	WYNNE (Bet. 1950-1970)
Children:	
4	Name: George Avery WILKES
M	Birth: 19 Feb 1919 in Trenton, Big Creek Township, Phillips, Arkansas, USA
	Death: 12 Apr 1970 in Chicago, Cook, Illinois, USA
	Burial: 16 Apr 1970 in Alsip, Cook, Illinois, USA
	Marriage: 12 Aug 1940 in Chicago, Cook, Illinois, USA
	Spouse: Jacquelyn JACKSON
	Other Spouses: Bettie Ann
6	Name: Zilner Irene WILKES
F	Birth: 10 Nov 1923 in Chicago, Cook, Illinois, USA
	Death: 20 Sep 1929 in Chicago, Cook, Illinois, USA
	Burial: 23 Oct 1929 in Chicago, Cook, Illinois, USA
7	Name: Roy Cezar WILKES
M	Birth: 10 Jan 1926 in Chicago, Cook, Illinois, USA
	Death: 09 Jun 1929 in Chicago, Cook, Illinois, USA
	Burial: 11 Jun 1929 in Chicago, Cook, Illinois, USA

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Source Citations & Standard Formats

DOCUMENTING SOURCES

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- ### Sources v. Information
- Sources
 - Documents, photographs, recordings, publications, registers, artifacts, people, websites
 - Original sources: *Most authoritative*
 - Materials in their first oral, written, or recorded form
 - May be copies of originals on microfilm or in digital files
 - Derivative sources:
 - Materials that have been copied, abstracted, transcribed, or summarized from existing sources

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- ### Sources v. Information
- Information is contained in sources
 - Primary information: *Carries more weight*
 - Written or created:
 - At or about the time in which an event occurred
 - From contributions of people with firsthand knowledge of the event
 - Secondary information
 - Written or created:
 - A significant amount of time after an event occurred
 - Contributed by someone not present at the event
- Each piece of information within a source has to be evaluated separately.

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- ### Source Citation
- Publication information
 - Author, title, publisher, & publication date
 - Series & roll/item number for microfilm
 - Where & when information found
 - Repository name & address (NARA)
 - Website name, address (URL), & date accessed
 - Other details
 - Page number, entry number & date
 - Copyright information
 - Critical when you publish your research
- You can only accurately cite record that you have viewed for yourself.

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Husband:	James McBride WILKES ^{1,2,3} ←
Birth:	Aug 1888 in Marvel, Phillips, Arkansas, USA ^{7,8,9}
Death:	14 Aug 1950 in Chicago, Cook, Illinois, USA ²
Marriage:	31 May 1911 in Monroe County, Arkansas, USA ¹⁰
Father:	Giles WILKES ^{1,5}
Mother:	Mary ⁴ ←
Wife:	Georgia Irene LOWE ¹¹
Birth:	06 Nov 1884 in Holly Grove, Monroe, Arkansas, USA ^{6,9,11}
Death:	01 Sep 1980 in Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California, USA ¹¹
Father:	George W LOWE ¹²
Mother:	Winnie WILLIAMS ¹¹ ←
Other Spouses:	WYNNE (Bet. 1950-1970)

1 Fireman George Wilkes, 51, Dies. April 14, 1970. Page 4. Accessed September 5, 2012. Obituary, Chicago Daily Defender.

6 Arkansas, Marriage Certificates, "Arkansas, County Marriages, 1837-1957," index and images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pai:/MM9.1.1/N9MM-12B> : accessed 22 Sep 2012), Giles Wilkes and Mary Joyce, 1886.

13 Ancestry.com, Tennessee State Marriages, 1780-2002 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA, Ancestry. Operations Inc., 2008. Record for Geo W Lowe and Winnie Williams.

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Documenting Sources in Genealogy Software

Fact	Date	Place / Description	Y	M	D	Preferred
Personal Information						
Sex		Male	1	1	0	Preferred
Name		Geo W LOWE	1	1	0	Preferred
Also Known As		G W Lowe	1	0	0	Preferred
Name		Geo W LOW	1	0	0	Preferred
Name		George W LOWE	1	0	0	Preferred
Individual Facts						
Birth	Abt. 1848	Tennessee, USA	2	0	0	
Birth	1847		1	0	0	
Birth	Abt. 1847	Tennessee, USA	1	0	0	
Birth	Mar 1847	Hardeman, Tennessee, USA	1	0	0	Preferred
Occupation	1870	Bolivar, Hardeman, Tennessee, USA; School Teacher	1	0	0	Preferred
Occupation	1900	Oakburne, Monroe, Arkansas; Farmer	1	0	0	
Residence	1900	Oakburne, Monroe, Arkansas	1	0	0	Preferred
Occupation	1910	Duncan, Monroe, Arkansas, USA; Minister	1	0	0	
Residence	1910	Duncan, Monroe, Arkansas, USA	1	0	0	
Residence	1920	Duncan, Monroe, Arkansas, USA	1	0	0	
Occupation	1920	Duncan, Monroe, Arkansas, USA; Farmer	1	0	0	
Death	Bet. 1920-1930		0	0	0	Prefer
Shared Facts with Winny WILLIAMS						
Marriage	06 Aug 1870	Hardeman, Tennessee, USA	1	1	0	Prefer
Shared Facts with Josephine						
Marriage	16 Jul 1889	Pulaski, Arkansas, USA	1	0	0	Preferred

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Citation Standards

Elizabeth Shown Mills

- Standard formats for each item of information
- Applies to genealogical publications – including your “working documents”:
 - Pedigree charts
 - Family group sheets

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Birth, Marriage, and Death Records

VITAL RECORDS

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Vital Records

- Issued by a government entity
- Provides proof of a major life event
- Types of records:
 - Birth Certificates
 - Death Certificates
 - Marriage Records
 - Divorce Records

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Birth Records

- Maintained & distributed by state agencies responsible for vital statistics or vital records
- Registration in US began in late 1800’s – early 1900’s depending on the state
 - Earlier records are available in some locations
- Delayed Birth Records
 - People born prior to mandatory birth registration
 - To qualify for benefits of Social Security Act of 1935

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Death Records

- Required by States
 - Late 1800’s & early 1900’s
- Maintenance & distribution
 - State Bureaus of Vital Statistics
 - Certified copies of certificates
- Discovering clues
 - Obituaries
 - Social Security Death Index (SSDI)
 - Find A Grave (<http://www.findagrave.com/>)

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Marriage Records


- Usually began when counties were organized
- Usually on county level in 19th century
- Family History Library has microfilmed most counties and is in process of putting them on FamilySearch.org
- Sometimes found in newspapers and have been abstracted



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Divorce Records



- Jurisdiction to issue divorce decrees
 - State legislatures until mid 19th century
 - States and counties thereafter
- Divorce records can help clarify marriages and half-siblings
 - Two marriage records for one person
 - Did first spouse die?
 - Did first marriage end in divorce?



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Obtaining Vital Records


- VitalChek Network, Inc.
 - Order online
 - Cost
 - Addresses
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): State-by-state guide
 - Cost
 - Addresses: Internet & offline

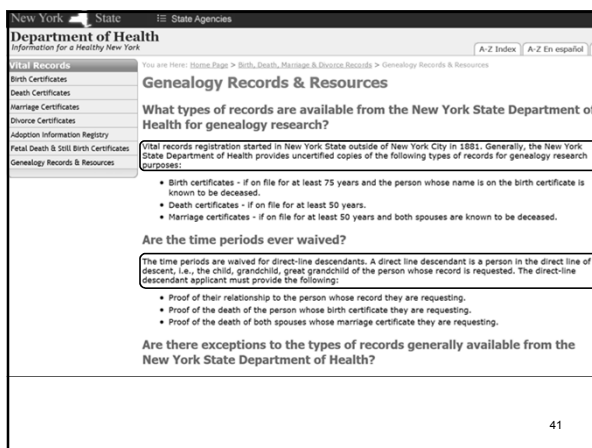
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Access to Vital Records

- Access Varies by Jurisdiction
 - Privacy years prior to public access
 - Birth: 75+ years
 - Death: 20+ years
 - Marriage: 50+ years
 - May be limited to direct-line descendants
 - Child, grandchild, great grandchild of the person



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Genealogy Records & Resources

What types of records are available from the New York State Department of Health for genealogy research?

Vital records registration started in New York State outside of New York City in 1881. Generally, the New York State Department of Health provides uncertified copies of the following types of records for genealogy research purposes:

- Birth certificates - if on file for at least 75 years and the person whose name is on the birth certificate is known to be deceased.
- Death certificates - if on file for at least 50 years.
- Marriage certificates - if on file for at least 50 years and both spouses are known to be deceased.


Are the time periods ever waived?

The time periods are waived for direct-line descendants. A direct line descendant is a person in the direct line of descent, i.e., the child, grandchild, great grandchild of the person whose record is requested. The direct-line descendant applicant must provide the following:

- Proof of their relationship to the person whose record they are requesting.
- Proof of the death of the person whose birth certificate they are requesting.
- Proof of the death of both spouses whose marriage certificate they are requesting.

Are there exceptions to the types of records generally available from the New York State Department of Health?

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Kansas
Department of Health and Environment

Sam Brownback, Governor
Robert Moser, MD, Secretary

Home Public Health Environment Health Care Finance Laboratories News

REPH - PH - Vital Statistics - Genealogy Requests

A to Z Topic Listing

Genealogy Requests

Vital Statistics Home

About Us

Birth Certificate

Birth Certificate for Voter ID

Birth/Marriage Certificate for April 14 Severe Weather

Death Certificate

Marriage Certificate

Divorce Certificate

Amendments & Corrections

Adoptions

The Kansas Legislature has determined that the vital records filed with this office are not open for public inspection. They are exempted from the Kansas Open Records Act [K.S.A. 45-221(a) and K.S.A. 45-2420(c)]. The vital records are deemed to be confidential records which may contain sensitive information. Also, the information contained in a vital record is sufficient for establishing a false identity. Identity theft and fraudulent use of vital records has soared within the last decade. Therefore, we have no indexes available to the public. The requestor must meet eligibility requirements and must provide proof of identification.

Currently, the Office of Vital Statistics does allow requests for genealogical research. Pre-1940 records may be requested by an individual related as at least a cousin. Post 1940 records must be requested by an immediate family member.

BIRTH and DEATH certificates began being filed with this office July 1, 1911. In 1940, this office received statutory authority which allows individuals still alive in 1940 and later who have no prior birth record filed to submit certain documentation to file a Delayed Certificate of Birth. If you think such a document could be filed, you may make a request for a Delayed Certificate of Birth search. However, please note that by state law, the initial \$15.00 fee for a certified copy of a birth certificate is a record search fee — one certified copy is issued if the record is found and if not found, the fee is retained. See instructions below for making a request for a Delayed Certificate of Birth record search.

MARRIAGE licenses began being filed with this office May 1, 1913.

