Digging up Your Ancestors

Using Internet & Traditional Genealogy Resources

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Allegan District Library  
Allegan, MI 49010  
269-673-4625  
www.alleganlibrary.org

Reseacher  
Ferret
WHAT IS YOUR GOAL?

- **DAR** membership (begats)?
- **tribal** membership?
- Find **famous** ancestor?
- Trace family **medical history**?
- Curious about ancestors, stories?
- Want to leave behind **family history**, a legacy for children, grand-children, descendants, historians?
- Want to understand why my spouse/relative/friend is so **obsessed with genealogy** & learn how I may help?
Learning how to do genealogy research is not as easy as clicking on an Ancestry leaf.

- Genealogy existed pre-computers
  - you don’t have to use a computer, but you are handicapped without computer access.
- Computers have greatly assisted genealogy
  - finding, sorting, & storing data
  - sharing information (email, FaceBook)
  - doing long-distance research from home.
- The Internet does not have all genealogy info.
  - On-hands research is still necessary (by you or a free or paid researcher).
www.alleganlibrary.org

Need Computer Help?

Access from any Internet computer

- Do not have to have an ADL library card to access
- Click on “online classes”
- Click on “Computers”
Learn how to do Genealogy Research

- Get a mentor
- Join a genealogy/historical society
- Take classes at libraries/ societies
- Take online tutorials/ classes
- Read How-to-Books
- Use library brochures

Genealogy 101
Genealogy Online for Dummies
ONLINE TUTORIALS & INSTRUCTION

Cyndi’s List - (weed free from bait & switch)
http://www.cyndislist.com/how-to-tutorials/
There are MANY online tutorials to help beginners.

BYU free online courses: well done, refreshers for people out of touch with genealogy.

Since FamilySearch & Ancestry are heavily used, beginners need to learn how to effectively use those resources.

Avoid “FREE” sites that are really subscription sites before giving real information.
A listing of Free Ancestry Resources and How To Use Them

MORE FREE ANCESTRY WEBSITES

United States  Canada  Australia  New Zealand  France  Belgium
Italy  Germany  Norway  Netherlands  Eastern Europe
England  Ireland  Scotland  Wales  Channel Islands  Isle of Man

https://sites.google.com/site/freeancestryforbeginners/

Ancenstry For Beginners is a comprehensive list of free ancestry resources and examples of how to use them. If you are new to ancestry research, then you will find this website particular useful since the resources listed are absolutely free. You can take your time and enjoy the experience of researching your family ancestry without worrying about how much it's going to cost you.

Free vs “Free” bait & switch

Free Genealogy Software

Free Genealogy Software

Ancestry Research Techniques Through Example
Has Somebody Already Researched My Family
Finding and Using Free Census Data
Free Ancestry Search Tools
Using Free State and County Resources
Using the Bureau of Land Management Records to find land Patents
Passenger Ships Lists of Emigrants To America
Lookup Volunteers to Help You with Your Research
Finding Cemetery Headstone Images
A Useful Tip to Help You With Your Ancestry Research

Using Google Command Operators To Improve Your Search Results

If you are going to do a Google Search and you want to get the best results, you should familiarize yourself with a couple of very useful Google command operators, "allintitle" and "allintext". The "allintitle" operator returns search term results with matches found in the title of a file where "allintext" returns search results with each of your search terms found in the text of the file. For instance, if you were looking for census documents from Clark County Washington for the year 1850, you could use the "allintitle" operator and your search might look like this:

allintitle operator:

```
Google
allintitle:Clark County Washington 1850
```

This may return a lot of unwanted results, such as "Clark County Nevada". You could further filter your search results by trying double quotes around Clark and County. This would still pull up "Clark County Nevada" and probably many more Clark Counties. You might even try "Clark County Washington". Double quotes could have the reverse effect and return very few results. So you will have to experiment. The search string below could eliminate "Clark County Nevada" results by using the "-" operator. The "-" operator means, minus these results.

“-” operator means minus these results

```
Google
allintitle: "Clark County" Washington 1850 -Nevada
```

There is also a "+" operator that works the opposite way. You don't need to use the "+" operator with the "allintitle" command, because it automatically searches for every search term you listed.

If you wanted to do a search for a census record for "Bill Jones" living in "Alameda County California" in 1910, you should use the "allintext" operator. It will return only matches from your search terms found in the text of a file. The "allintext" operator is a very good way of filtering unwanted results. In the example above, you should try putting last name first and inclosing last and first name in quotes. Most census records were recorded this way. You can also use the "-" and "+" operators with "Allintext. Below is an example search for "Bill Jones" living in "Alameda County California" in 1910.

Allintext operator: use quotes to filter results

```
Google
allintext: "Jones Bill" "Alameda County California" 1910
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Just Google “Library of Michigan Genealogy”
Basic Charts and Worksheets - basic reference sheets & forms to start tracing your family tree.
Research Trackers and Organizers - keep track of research progress &d organize your files.
Census Forms information found in US censuses.
Immigration Forms - designed for transcribing details from passenger lists.
Record Worksheets forms for recording information from a variety of genealogical records.
Oral History and Heirlooms keep track of family stories, traditions and treasures.
Create Your Own City Guide Use this template to create a customized guide to genealogy research in your US ancestor's town or city. You'll find instructions for DIY-ing your own city guide in the September 2013 Family Tree Magazine.
Family Group Charts:

- Make one for each family
- Make a separate chart if a son or daughter is married
- Family group charts are used for quick reference
- Scan in or type a form for digital records
- Some family tree makers perform the same functions
- **Document** each “fact” with a source of information
- **Verify** any information without documentation.
Ancestral Chart

An ancestor chart records the ancestors from whom you directly descend—those for whom you intend to compile a complete and correct family unit. It shows at a glance the progress you have made towards this goal and what remains to be done.

Research Calendar

The research calendar gives an account of every record source you have searched and serves as a reminder of what you have already done and where you have found pertinent information.

Research Extract

Use the research extract sheets to summarize information which cannot be photocopied, for which there is no document in your possession, or for things such as deeds which may be time-consuming or difficult to read quickly when you need information from the copy you have.

Correspondence Record

It is important to keep track of those with whom you have corresponded, the reasons for writing, and whether or not you have already received an answer.

Family Group Sheet

Each piece of information concerning a pedigree ancestor and his/her family is placed on a worksheet. Since the end result of your research efforts will be to compile complete, correct and connected families, the use of family group sheets from the beginning will make the completion much easier.

Census Forms

US Census Forms

Allows you to read column headings and record information from the US Census.

UK Census Forms

Allows you to read column headings and record information from the UK Census.

Canadian Census Forms

Allows you to read column headings and record information from the Canadian Census.

http://www.ancestry.com/download/charts
You do not need a subscription to Ancestry to download Ancestry forms from home.

http://www.ancestry.com/download/charts
Pedigree Charts

ONLY show lineage; do not show siblings, aunts, uncles...

"begats"

Ancestral Chart

No. 1 on this chart is the same person as No. ______

On Chart No. ______

Dad

BORN
PLACE
MARRIED
PLACE
DIED
PLACE

CONT. ON CHART ______

MOM

BORN
PLACE
DIED
PLACE

CONT. ON CHART ______

"begats"

YOU

NAME OF SPOUSE

BORN
PLACE
MARRIED
PLACE
DIED
PLACE

CONT. ON CHART ______

http://www.ancestry.com/save/charts/ancchart.htm

CITATIONS – The importance of documentation

Each fact MUST have an individual source citation:

• Birth dates, birth places, parents
• Death/burial dates, places
• Marriage/births dates, places
• Census records, directories…

Records should be verifiable

• another researcher should be able to verify each source
• Record place (Allegan District Library, Old Jail Museum) & date you found the fact, not just book title & page numbers
• Websites change; give URL, dates accessed

Cite Your Genealogy Sources - A Guide to Documenting Your Genealogy Research – by Kimberly Powell
Record Conflicts: Confusing & Irritating

• When “facts” conflict, you will have to go back & look for clarification; record both possibilities, even negative ones.

• If people have the same names, birth sites, & birth years (2 Civil War soldiers), you need more facts to separate them.

• If your records are good, later facts may allow sorting people, perhaps by township, census records, or spouses.

• A query about a supposedly Casco twp., Allegan Co., MI Civil War soldier was later found to be a Casco twp., St. Clair Co., MI soldier when further records were consulted.
Begin by Interviewing Yourself & Your Family

For ideas and possible questions
- Visit www.alleganlibrary.org & click on “Genealogy,” then click on “Interview Suggestions and Questions for Beginning Genealogists” for suggestions.
- Use/create templates for interviews.
- Fill in Family Group Sheets & Pedigree sheets.
- Keep sessions short for grandparents, elderly.
- Record (digital or tape sound or on video).
- Thank the person for helping with your project.
- Remember to document & verify all information.
Possible Family History Resources in Your, Home or Your Relatives’ Homes

- Bibles
- Report Cards
- Diploma
- Birth Certificate
- Baptismal Record
- Driver’s License
- Wedding License
- Rent/Tax Receipts
- Funeral Cards
- Mortgage
- Hospital Bills

- Photo Albums
  - Births
  - Birthdays
  - Weddings
  - Christmas
  - Family Reunions

- Scrapbooks
  - Obituaries
  - Wedding Notices
  - Engagements

- Facebook...
Look for time clues in photos of your people, homes, area.

- styles of doors & windows of houses, buildings
- Clothing styles, jewelry
- appliances, cars.
Census Records (work new to old) 1890 burned

- **Ancestry Library Edition**
  - in libraries only; 1790-1940 all indexed, links to other data
  - heads household to 1840
  - every white person 1850-1860; every person 1870-1940
  - printable census images, downloadable, email

- **Heritage Quest** — free at home, sortable,
  - [www.alleganlibrary.org](http://www.alleganlibrary.org) -> research -> MeL databases -> Heritage Quest -. Census (many other genealogy perks)
  - 1830, 1840, 1850 not indexed; 1830 partial
  - most indexed by heads household; some every name

- **FamilySearch.org** — free site —
  - view 1940, 1900, 1870, 1850 census images free
  - many census records link to pay-to view-sites: 1860 images, at Fold3; most of rest at Ancestry.com for a fee
Before You Go on a Field Trip to Research Your Family

- Do your homework; be prepared; have ready facts on hand, research from home

- Decide what you are seeking and where you will look for records.

- Bring documentation needed to access birth records, find graves, verify...

- Remember to document...remember to document...remember to document....

- Prioritize -- if time is a factor, focus on what you hope to find that is important
Decide which places to visit to look for records; call/email to verify

- Contact places, email to verify & plan trip
- Research hours, days open/closed
- Ask if places have Wi-Fi, if copying/scanning or photographing documents is O.K. & charges
- Addresses, directions, construction, parking, parking fees, maps; locations of medical care

Nice to have:
- Laptop w/ power cord, charged battery
- Digital camera with recharger & extra batteries
- Disposable camera, scanner
Genealogy Kit to take to document sites

- Pens, pencils, markers, paper, post-it notes, paper, forms, digital camera
- Zipper-lock bag with paper clips, rubber bands, highlighter
- Forms - recording data, maps
- Ziplock bag or coin purse & plentiful supply coins, ones $
- Magnifying glass, yellow film
- Laptop with full battery, cord
- Emergency snacks (eat outside)
Items to take to visit sites

• Names, addresses, phone #s contacts, hours, street maps, parking at places to be visited

• Flash-drives, access to email, passwords to files

• Emergency contact info & paperwork in case of auto trouble, health emergency, medications

• Business cards/cards with your contact information

• Copies of family trees or documents to leave

• Copies of your notes/research; leave a set at home; scan/copy to a flash-drive or DVD!

Make a “to-do” list for each stop on your trip; scan & email files

Tote bag, ready for security searches

Back up your files!!!
Vital Records—Births, Deaths, Marriages, Divorces

See where to look: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/w2w.htm

• State health dept (SHD) & usually at co. courthouses
• Availability & charges vary with each state

• Michigan – SDH $26 & 5 week wait

• Allegan Co. Courthouse $10; births & deaths since 1867; divorces since 1897, many marriages earlier.
DEATHS

- Official Records &
  - obituaries, necrologies & “deaths” in papers
  - military records
  - church records
  - mortality census records
MARRIAGE RECORDS & RETURNS

May contain some or all:

- Names, ages, #marriages bride/groom, jobs, race, parents & residences
- Birthplaces/residences bride & groom
- names witnesses & witness residences
- official (JP/MOG) conducting ceremony, date & place
- Maiden & married names of widows
- Other states: Indiana records – fathers’ occupations
- Usually in co. courthouses, & cheaper than at state
• To access MI birth records less than 100 years old –
  • Must be for yourself or your child OR
  • If for genealogy, verify that the person is deceased

• To access records over 100 years old,
  • Just ask or apply as with other vital records

Courthouse records are usually less expensive than if you send for records from the states.
Church Records

- Usually associated with births, marriages, funerals, burials

- NC began birth records 1880s; 1873 christening record had true birth date

- Christenings were often done later, sometimes whole families at once; funerals, Godspeed, 1st communion, memorials, & new member records

- Denominations often changed, buildings sold; congregations moved, records lost
Some Local Resources

- indexes/Obituary cards, online?
- local history collections: books, brochures, scrapbooks, clippings, photos, artifacts
- biographies, necrologies, local files
- lists in newspapers of marriages, births, deaths
- cemetery lists, sexton lists, cemetery records
- regional resources indexes, historical societies
- librarians/genealogists to help direct your search
Local Records

Each library/ historical society has its own unique local records – sometimes one-of-a-kind & NOT online.

Check for an online catalog. Write, call, or email & ask for a list of local materials relevant to your specific research.
Finding Michigan Cemeteries

http://libraryofmichigan.state.mi.us/MichiganCemeteries/
locate named cemeteries. links., alternate names; incomplete, some updates needed

- Allegan Co.: 84+ cemeteries; 130+ names

- Check FindAGrave, RootsWeb, Interment.net

- Local genealogy & historical society records

*Cemetery Etiquette for ghost hunters
  - http://hollowhill.com/cemetery-etiquette-for-ghost-hunters

*Association for Gravestone Studies - helpful; read
  - www.gravestonestudies.org/
I don’t know where to get help - recap

- Library of Michigan Website
- Librarians with local history stuff
- Cyndi’s List & online lessons
- Area genealogy society classes
- Area historical society programs
- Local genealogists as mentors
- Knowledgeable library volunteers & friends
- Clueless library volunteers & friends
- Take a computer class
Go to our home page www.alleganlibrary.org
Click on Genealogy

See what links are available; if a link is “dead,” just Google the name of the site.
At ADL our collection is mostly centered around our county, but use this as a guideline of what you might find at other places.

Lists of some materials at ADL

- 3-Vol. Genealogy Allegan Co.
- Allegan City Directories
- Allegan City Newspapers 1856-present (microfilmed; 2000-present in paper)
- Allegan Co. Early Births
- Allegan Co. Early Deaths
- Allegan Co. Early Marriages
- Allegan Co. Early Wills & Estates
- Allegan Co. Cemetery Records
- Allegan Co. Church Histories
- Allegan Co. Cross-Listings Directories
- Allegan Co. German P.O.W Camp
- Allegan Co. Land Atlases
- Allegan Co. & Local Histories
- Allegan Co. Pioneer Records
- Allegan Co. Plat Maps
- Allegan Co. Poor Farm
- Allegan Co. Railroad Notebooks
- Allegan H. S. Grads notebooks
- Allegan House/Bldg Histories
- Assorted Family Histories
- Assorted Local Histories
- How-to Guide Area Local Research
- How-to-Guide Beginning Genealogy
- How-to-Guide Cemetery Research
- Military Records (Civil War & …)
- Phase One Research
- Many other resources
Van Buren Regional Genealogical Society (VBRGS)
(Allegan, Berrien, Cass, Kalamazoo & Van Buren Cos.)
Local History Room of Webster Memorial Library, 200 N. Phelps St., Decatur, P.O. Box 143, Decatur, MI 49045
http://vbrgs.lib.mi.us/vbrgs.htm
E-mail: tbseng@vbrgs.org
Sources: oit, obituaries, SW MI military registry, online catalog at rootsweb.com/vbrgs.htm sponsored by VBRGS; quarterly public: Van Buren Echoes: one-semester school collection, yearbook collection
a Family History satellite, SW MI area, large collection one-room schoolbooks, yearbooks, oit, local documents

Western Michigan Genealogical Society (Grand Rapids, Kent Co., & area nearest)
116 Library St. NE, G.R., MI 49503-3263
http://wmgs.lib.mi.us/wmgs.htm
E-mail: wmgs@wmgs.org
Online searchable databases: Kent County, oit 1920-present, social: 1881 Kent Co. history; every name Indexed, oit 1903-1962, Farm Bur. News 1918-26, records: genealogists, training, meetings, excellent resources

Allegan County Library's Genealogy is Growing!
Please add your family history to our growing collection of local history, records, and local history.
Your monetary or family history contributions to our genealogy/local history collection are welcome. We are indexing family histories and improving accessibility to our genealogy/local history collection.

Please donate copes—not valuable originals—of documents or photos.
We accept digital attachments, CD's, hard copies, etc., and put those material copies into print collages page protectors and into 3-ring binders, on shelves accessible to the public all the hours we are open.

Documents on local history & genealogy shelves in notebooks were acquired since April 2002. We depend upon volunteers and donated materials to help fill our collection of resources. Any donations for Genealogy go toward purchase of family and local history materials, page protectors, and binders. Volunteers are welcome, and we always need people to improve our collection. Look for resources towards purchase of family and local history materials, page protectors, and binders. Volunteers are welcome, and we always need people to improve our collection. Look for resources.

Microfilmed Allegan city newspapers are not yet indexed for obituaries, except for (1856-1889) & 1978-2006. We have an A-Z necrology list for deaths in Allegan Co. 1956 through 2007, over 7000 names.
Thank you volunteers and senior workforce team members! You have accomplished a mountain of work!
Your Genealogy Records – suggested disorganization

Table of Contents
- 3-ring notebook with tabbed sections
- Computer File with subfolder sections
- Or arrange a sequence to fit your style
- You may not have records in all these categories, but this is a suggested way to divide your folders

Timelines
- Individuals
- families

Family Trees
- Comprehensive trees
- Individual family trees

Genealogy “text”
- Text numbered charts
- Pedigree Charts
- Family History Sheets

Births
- Birth records
- Birth announcements in newspapers

Marriages
- ...
Birth announcements in newspapers

Marriages
- Engagement articles in newspapers
- Marriage records
- Marriage notices; Wedding articles in newspaper

Deaths
- Death records
- Mortality Census 1850, 1860, 1870 & 1880
- Death notices
- Necrologies
- Newspaper items of accidents, deaths
- Obituaries
- Funeral Cards

Cemetery
- Cemetery records
- Tombstone inscriptions
- Tombstone photos

Census Records
- Census
- Non-population Agricultural Schedules
- State & other census records

Directories
- City directories, phone books

Newspaper articles about travel
- Border crossing records

Family photos
- Please arrange and label all persons, events in photos
- Arrange by chronology or use family grouping

Histories & Biographies
- History Books, other book entries
- Biographical sketches, honors

Family stories
- Stories handed down
- First Person stories

Correspondence
- Oral histories
- Personal talks, phone calls
- Letters, emails

Genealogy Records
- Other forms, research notes, misc
The End

Please contact me if you need help; please volunteer with a library or genealogy society if you are able to help others. Please donate copies of your family history to local historical or genealogical organizations to preserve your family history for future generations.

Linda Koch