



Your Family Tree

A Creative Hobby

Genealogy is a creative hobby which may lead you to interests in areas you have not previously considered. You may become more aware of history and geography or find a particular country fascinating. You may begin or increase your interests in antiques. You may become interested in family crests or the science of heraldry. Your study may encourage you to learn about sailing vessels or perhaps an occupation of a by-gone era. Genealogy can be much more than a record of names, dates, and places.



“What do I know about my ancestors? Where did they come from? How long has my family been in Kentucky?” These and similar questions are being asked by an increasing number of Kentuckians. They are avidly searching for answers, wherever the facts may be.

Tracing family histories is a fascinating study that tells us about our families who lived long ago. These studies—known as genealogy—provide information about people, places and events, and specific periods in history. Genealogy can give us an understanding of the present through knowledge of the past.

Detective Work

You must do detective work on records, learning about those who preceded you in your family. Ethel Williams, the author of *Know Your Ancestors*,* says a good genealogist is “a full-time detective, a thorough historian, an inveterate snoop . . . a confirmed diplomat, a keen observer, a hardened skeptic, an apt biographer, a qualified linguist, a part-time lawyer . . . a studious sociologist, and, above all, an accurate reporter.”

If you fit any part of this description, you too have the qualifications to be a genealogist. You also need much patience and perseverance.

*See “General Sources,” p. 10.

Family Records

Visits with older members of your family will be meaningful in many ways. Older persons usually enjoy reminiscing. It gives them pleasure to tell someone their memories of their early life and to know others are interested. Their stories can provide you with valuable information.

Family Traditions

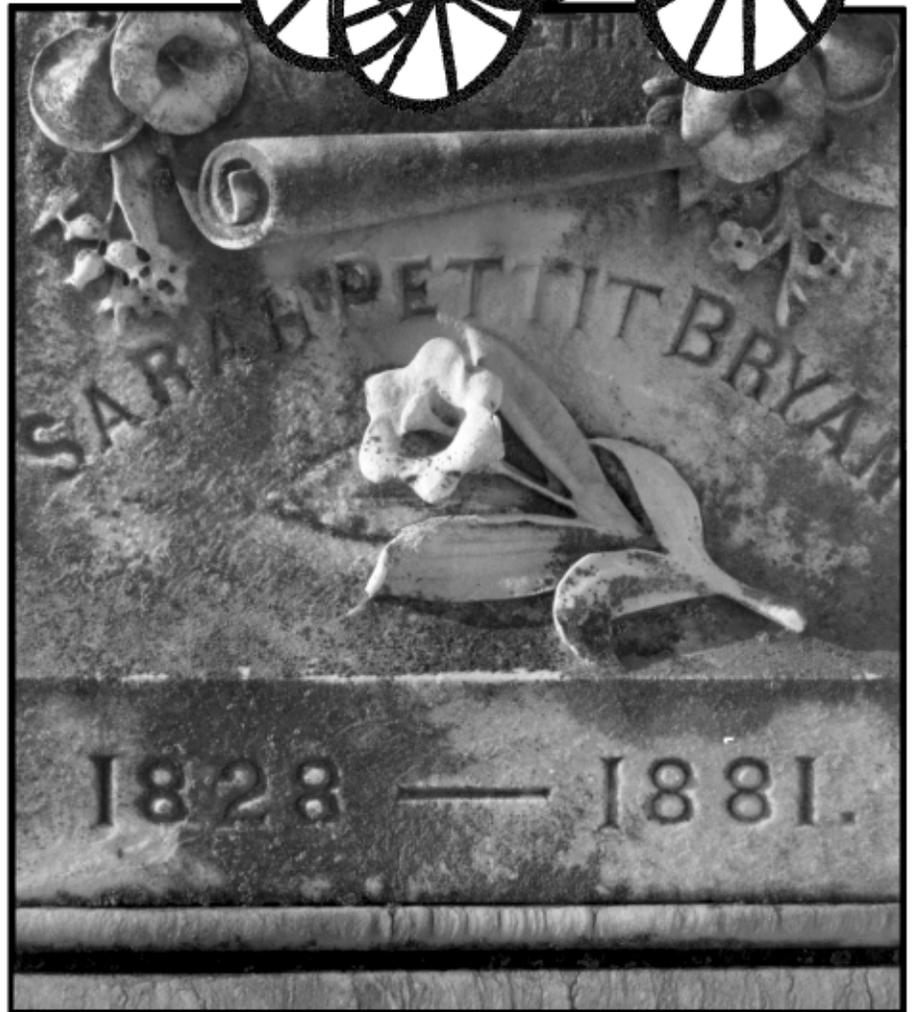
The family traditions with which you have grown up probably happened, but maybe not exactly as rumored. Perhaps your grand-aunt was the heroine instead of your great-grandmother, or your great-grandfather may have been both local lawyer and circuit riding preacher, or the family home may have been originally in Maryland rather than Virginia as you believed. Keep an open mind, and you will be amply rewarded.

For future reference, accurately record with whom you talk and when. Do not be alarmed if family memories are different from what you later discover to be true through public records or library research. Family stories may vary, but generally they have a factual beginning.

Printed records do not always present all the facts. Being human, even professionals make mistakes. Do not be discouraged if you find discrepancies. Over the passage of years, interpretation of situations can vary, or the meaning of foreign languages can be misunderstood.

The Family Bible

Family Bibles are excellent sources of information. Check these carefully to see if births, deaths, or marriages were recorded at the actual time of the event or at some later date. A birth date could not have been recorded at the actual time of the birth if the family Bible was not published until a later date.





Primary and Secondary Records

Primary records, such as birth certificates or marriage licenses, are those recorded at the time of the event by someone who knew the circumstances. Secondary records are those recorded at a later time by someone who knew or who referred to other sources for information.

Other family resources are letters, wills, deeds, diaries, funeral programs, military papers, newspaper clippings, etc.

Do not overlook needlework, as samplers were often embroidered with significant dates. The names of a couple and the date of their marriage were sometimes woven into a coverlet, or these facts were carved or painted on a wooden chest. Perhaps your attic contains some of these mementos.

Old Photos

In the course of your research you will doubtless be shown many old photographs—possibly tin-types and other pictures that may have been made a century or more ago. You may wish to have them copied for your later use. By all means, without delay, identify the persons in these old pictures. Nothing in later life is more frustrating than trying to identify old pictures when there is no one living who can help you.

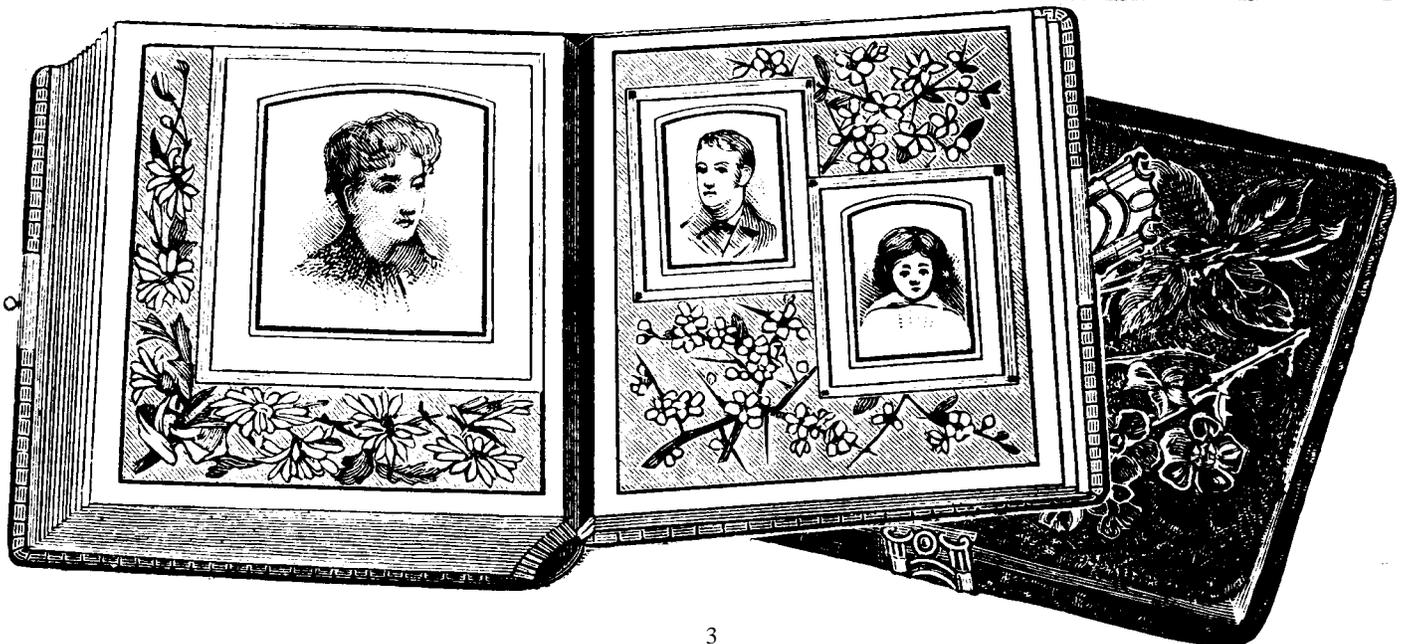
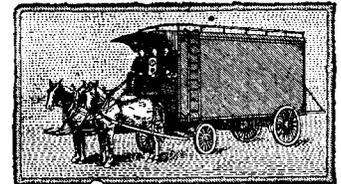
Do you have pictures in your home that are not identified? If so, now is the time for you to identify them. Years from now your children and grandchildren will rejoice that you took the time and effort to write on the reverse side of your own pictures the names of the persons shown.



Write to Relatives

Write to all known relatives, asking for Bible records (photographic copies are excellent), their memories of family events, and suggestions for further family or other contacts. You may find sharing your information with them will be mutually helpful.

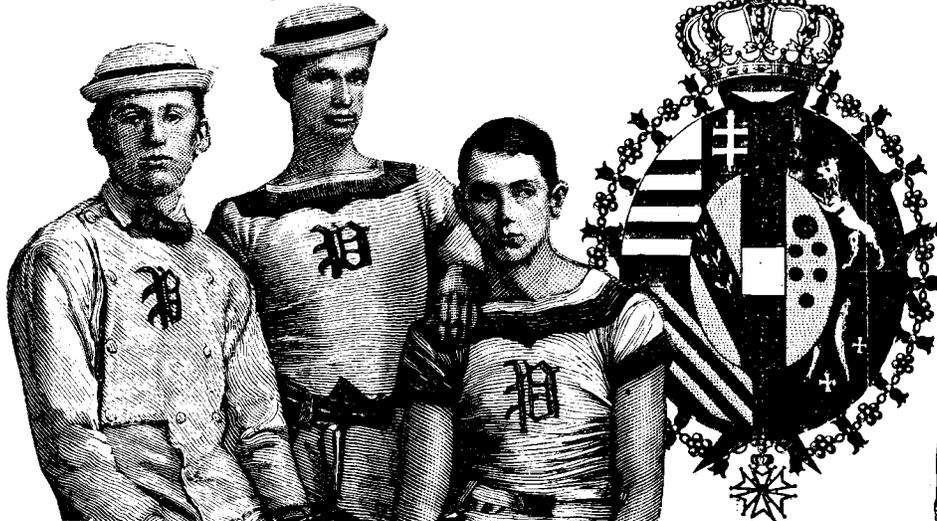
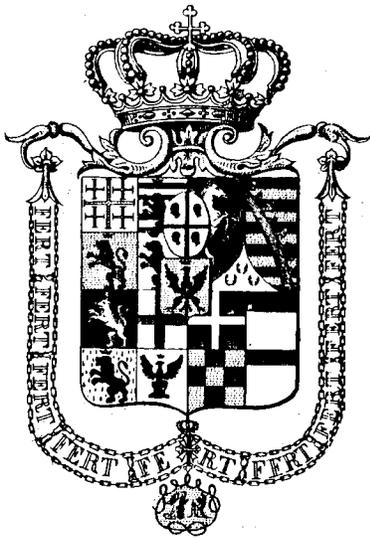
Establish your relationship, whether brother or sister or cousin or aunt, etc., as definitely as possible. Your relative may be able to provide missing links or give you clues to further identities. You may be rewarded by family ties with distant relatives who will enjoy your company as much as you will enjoy theirs.



Your Family Coat-of-Arms*

If you are interested in finding out about a coat-of-arms for your family, remember this fact: If you have the same name for which a coat-of-arms exists, that doesn't necessarily mean that your ancestors actually were granted that particular coat-of-arms. It is common knowledge in the heraldic field that several different coats-of-arms can exist for a single family name.

There are firms that provide by mail coats-of-arms reports and other heraldic properties. They do not, however, claim to trace your family tree. What they are likely to do is research back through several centuries to find the earliest people with that family name.



Recording Information

When you record information, do it as if you were writing for someone who knows nothing about you. Be accurate. Type or print precisely, as handwriting can be misinterpreted.

Spell all the names correctly. You may find the spelling of a family name has been changed over the years. Even some members of the same generation do not spell the family name the same. Record all variants of family names.

List names in full, using initials only when the entire name is impossible to find. Underline unusual names or spellings. Use parentheses around nicknames with the given name spelled out. Do not abbreviate, such as "Bill" for "William." If you have only an initial and you do not know whether it was used as a name or not, write it **without** a period following, such as "A". If you know it stood for a name but you do not know the name, write it **with** a period following, such as "A."

Record your sources of information accurately. You may wish to refer to these again or cross-check them with other information you discover. Others may also find your sources important to their research.

Do not assume a person is your relative just because your family name is the same. Verify your relationship through all possible means before you begin what might prove a fruitless search.

Write up family stories and record them according to who told them. Add photographs of those involved whenever possible. This is YOUR family history. Add what makes it meaningful for you, keeping it as factual as possible. True stories often make more interesting reading than fiction.

You'll Be an Ancestor Some Day

As you research and find fascinating family diaries and other records, think of your own impact on future generations. What diaries are you writing? Are you keeping records? What kind of ancestor are YOU?

**Information presented in this section comes from Dollars and Decisions, Vol. 11, No. 1, June 1974, The Extension Service, University of Vermont.*





be lost. Don't wait until you can give it more of your time . . . even part-time research is rewarding.

Remember, when you write someone for information, if you send a stamped, self-addressed envelope, you may receive a reply more quickly. Also, let your correspondent know how much you appreciate the help he or she gives you.

Public Records & Census Data

Public Records

After you have recorded as much family data as possible, begin a search of public records. You will need all pertinent information you can gather, for you cannot simply ask to see the public records of a community and expect to find family data easily. You will save many wasted hours if you know the exact county, township, or city ward in which your ancestor lived before you begin your research.

You should make a study of the locale before you search the records. The divisions of town and county governments vary in different areas.

In some states, but not in Kentucky, counties are divided into

Where Do You Begin?

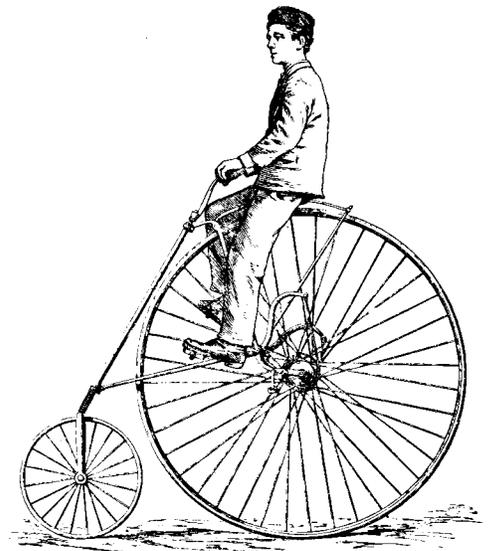
You could begin your search by concentrating on only your father's family line . . . or your mother's . . . or that of your spouse, but you will probably find several ancestors from the same community. You will wish to record all the information you find and keep all clues pertaining to your family lines. Each bit of information will provide interesting facts.

You may not be able to completely trace down all the persons in whom you become interested. Good family histories take much time. Don't get discouraged!

Find Other "Detectives"

Make contact with someone else who is working on a family history. Most genealogists seem eager to share knowledge. Missing information about ancestors is similar to missing parts of a puzzle. Researchers enjoy the challenge of the search and the joy of discovery!

Gather all information possible from your living relatives. You may find a relative who has a good record of a family line about which you know little and who will be delighted to share this information with you. DO IT NOW! Records can





townships. Determine in which township a family home was located if your ancestor did not live inside city limits. Large cities are divided into wards. A street address will help locate the exact ward.

State and county boundary lines have changed over the years. What you assume to have been the community in which an ancestor lived may have been designated a different county or even a different state when he actually lived there.

Early settlers in a community are often listed in the tax records. They may be listed also as county officers, ministers, teachers, doctors, storekeepers, or in other occupations. Plat books that contain township maps sometimes

include names of early landowners.

Church records and fraternal organizations are good sources of information. Patriotic organizations, such as the Daughters of the American Revolution, have excellent records of their membership.

Cemetery Sleuthing

Tombstones will give dates of birth and death and sometimes cause of death. If the surface of the stone is badly worn, common white chalk rubbed over it will make the inscription clearer. Chalk will not harm the tombstone and will wash off. However, it would be wise to obtain permission from the church sexton or another official before doing this.

For future reference, remember to record the location and name of each cemetery where you search.

Errors can be present in any record, but generally the researcher will get helpful information from them. Whenever possible, check several records so that your facts are accurate.

Census Data

State historical societies or libraries contain census records and other data pertaining to family histories. Provide yourself with all information possible before you attempt such library research. The librarians have many requests and desire to give as much help as possible, but they need all the facts you can provide to enable them to give you greater assistance.

Check the card catalogue at the historical society library to find if a history of your family is listed. These catalogues sometimes list newspaper articles, county histories, and other sources of information.

Many volumes are precious editions that must be used only in the library. There are also microfilm records of data that need to be used with proper equipment. Plan to spend the time needed to review these records.



The National Archives

Copies of the original federal census schedules can be found in many genealogical collections. The National Archives in Washington, D.C., houses the original records.

The National Archives also is the repository of veterans' records going back to 1775. Included are the pension applications of veterans and their dependents, such as their widows. To make a request for a particular veteran's record, you will need to request Form GSA-6751 from the National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C.

The 1790 census is available for most of the colonial states. This records only the name of the household. Beginning in 1850, all persons in the household were recorded, including names, ages, occupations, and places of birth. In the 1880 census only, the birthplaces of parents also are listed, giving valuable information.

Mortality schedules were taken during the census years of 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880. These list persons who died before June 30 during the census years. Included is information about name, age, sex, color, whether free or slave, marital status, place of birth, cause and date of death, and occupation.



Ships' Passenger Lists

Although not all ships from other lands kept complete passenger lists, those that did are sources of further data. Original records include the name of the ship, when and from where it sailed, the name of the captain, and the name, ages, and occupation of the passengers.

Early land records, deeds, probate records, tax lists, pension lists, naturalization papers, wills, and other legal papers are good sources of data. Use all clues and keep records of what you find. These may prove of value later.



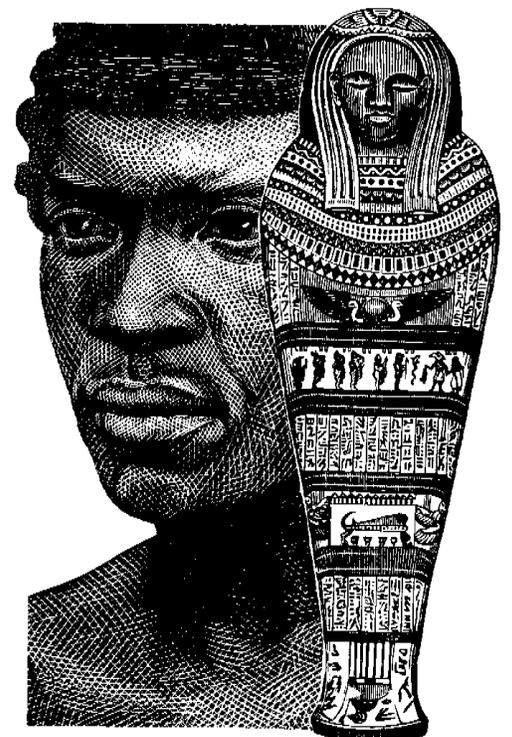
County Histories, Centennials

County histories are published at various times and include the names of people who contributed to the publishing. Centennial programs and biographical sketches about an area can be useful. Be cautious in accepting all the stories as related, since writers sometimes give personages added characteristics in an effort to provide "local color" to situations. These stories can provide important links in tracing dates and lives of individuals, however.

Keep Good Records

Keep an accurate list of the materials you review so as not to spend unnecessary time re-checking those of no further value to your search. Classify your references, including book and page number. This validates your research. Indicate whether references were of value or not.

Also record those things you review that do not pertain to your family genealogy. This may save you valuable time at some later



date because you will review so many records you will not be able to remember all of them unless you keep accurate lists.

Data pertaining to your family that you do not plan to use immediately should be recorded and retained. Some other family member may find it useful, if you do not.

Record-Keeping Aids

In your record-keeping, be as simple or as detailed as you feel suits your needs, but be accurate.

Index cards and a file box allow manipulation of records. List the names of a person and spouse and other pertinent information on one side of the card. Record information about children of the couple on the other side.

Index sheets with tabs are helpful to use in alphabetizing surnames of persons.

Adequate notebooks or files are necessary for recording information. You will want to be free to add data. Many persons find looseleaf notebooks or file folders quite satisfactory. It is wise not to try to include too many persons or too much information on a page. You may find you need to insert other facts.

Family History Records are invaluable. These tell YOUR story. Record all known facts about yourself, your spouse, your parents, dates and places of births, dates and places of marriages, dates and places of death and burial, war service, and any other pertinent facts.

For other family members, such as a history chart for your parents, record data about both father and mother and all children. Although you may be interested in only one relative listed, you may find a relationship included that will give you or others assistance in research.



Pedigree Charts show your relationship to your ancestors.

The Pedigree Chart on page 12 is an example of one individual's relationship to parents and grandparents. You may use this style or develop another that seems suitable.

All male parents are given even numbers. All female parents are given odd numbers. **You are number one.**

Each chart is numbered. You would be number one on Chart One. If you make a separate chart for your father's father, he would be number four on Chart One.

Family History Record, page 11, is also numbered with the same identifying numbers as on the Pedigree Chart. The illustration is of numbers eight and nine, your great-grandfather and your great-grandmother. Your family history record could give you as "number one on Chart One" and your spouse as "number two on Chart Two," with all this information listed on the proper line.

Suggested Projects

Family Reunion

You may want to organize a family reunion to help collect information, such as old Bible records, pictures, and wills, and to develop a sense of unity and belonging among your relatives.

County & Community Projects

As a group, you can develop many projects that would be of value to your community. Consider restoration of historical homes and other buildings. Help to preserve county historical records, such as probate proceedings, cemetery records, and naturalization papers.

In many counties, valuable records have been lost by fire, ignorance of value, or carelessness. Alphabetize county records to help others in their research and to provide a permanent record of information.

Develop a history of the community, school, or church. Collect pictures of buildings, people, occupations, events, and maps.

Encourage contributions to a local or state historical museum. Help to keep a sense of family continuity alive along with pride in family and community history.

Some Kentucky Sources

Kentucky Historical Society

The Kentucky Historical Society is known as Kentucky's centralized source for genealogical research. The KHC library is a leading genealogical repository and historical research center. A vast collection of historical maps, manuscripts, photographs, and rare books documents Kentucky's pioneer heritage. The library is located at the Kentucky History Center on Broadway in downtown Frankfort. The general collections are open seven days a week, 8-4:30 Eastern time.

Membership in the Kentucky Historical Society includes a subscription to its regular publication, *The Register*, as well as *Kentucky Ancestors*, a quarterly publication for those working on genealogy. It contains vital statistics, court records, cemetery records, Bible records, and other genealogical material, in addition to a section of queries from members of the Society.

The Society, located at Frankfort, maintains a well-stocked genealogical library that is open to the public seven days a week. In addition to Kentucky census records, the Society's library has tax records of Kentucky counties, which help to trace persons migrating into and from different localities.

Kentucky Genealogical Society

The Kentucky Genealogical Society meets monthly in Frankfort. The purpose of the organization is to promote genealogical research. The Society publishes a quarterly magazine, *Bluegrass Roots*. Dues are \$15 per year. For more information write to the Kentucky Genealogical Society, Box 153, Frankfort, Kentucky 40602-0153.

The library of Western Kentucky University at Bowling Green has genealogical material pertaining especially to those families who settled in the western portion of Kentucky, including many who migrated from Tennessee.

The Filson Club

The Filson Club, 1310 S. Third St., Louisville, is a private organization concerned with Kentucky history, but its library is open for public use. Included are many items of aid to genealogists. Also in Louisville is the Louisville Free Library, 301 West York, which has a genealogical section.

Interest in the Bicentennial observance sparked the organization of several county historical societies and genealogical societies. There may be one in your county or nearby.

Already mentioned is the collection of Kentucky court records on microfilm in the Special Collections of the University of Kentucky's Margaret I. King Library. These and other records were presented to the library following many years of work in



this state by microfilm teams of the Church of Jesus of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon). In Salt Lake City, Utah, the library of the Latter-Day Saints Genealogical Society contains the world's largest collection of genealogical data and is available for public use.

General Sources

Most of the material in this brief list can be found in Kentucky public libraries, and the titles given are intended to be merely a basic reading list for anyone beginning the study of Kentucky families. Several of the books contain extensive bibliographies that will be useful as you progress in your research.

Clift, G. Glenn (compiler)—*The "Second Census" of Kentucky, 1800*. Privately printed. Frankfort, Ky. 1954.

Colket, Meredith B., Jr., and Frank E. Bridgers—*A Guide to Genealogical Records in the National Archives*. This handbook describes in detail the numerous groups of records in the National Archives that are most valuable for genealogical research: Population and Mortality Census Schedules, Passenger Arrival Lists, U.S. Military Records, U.S. Naval and Marine Records, Records of Veterans' Benefits, Records Concerning the Confederate States of America, Land-Entry Records for the Public Land States, and other records of genealogical value. National Archives and Records Service, GSA, Washington, D.C. 1964.

Collins, Lewis—*History of Kentucky, 2 vols.* Collins and Co., Covington, Ky. (rev.) 1882.

Doane, Gilbert H.—*Searching for Your Ancestors*, Bantam Books, Inc., New York 1974.

Everton, George B., Sr.—*Handy Book for Genealogists*, Everton Publishers, Logan, Utah. 1967.

Heinemann, Charles Brunk (compiler)—*The "First Census" of Kentucky, 1790*. G.M. Brumbaugh, Washington, D.C. 1940.

Jillson, Willard Rouse—*Kentucky Land Grants: An Index to All Land Grants Recorded in the State Land Office at Frankfort, 1782-1924*. Filson Club Pub. 33. 1925.

Jillson, Willard Rouse—*Old Kentucky Entries and Deeds*. Filson Club Pub. 34. 1926.

Williams, Ethel W.—*Know Your Ancestors*. Charles E. Tuttle Co., Rutland, Vt. 1964.

Periodicals

Some genealogical societies publish newsletters and other material on a regular basis for their members. Included may be a section in which members or subscribers request information concerning, or offer to exchange information on, various families. Members of the Kentucky Historical Society have that privilege in *Kentucky Ancestors*, already mentioned.

Acknowledgment: The manuscript was adapted, with some revisions and additions, from II-121, "Your Family Tree," by Zoe E. Slinkman, Kansas State University Cooperative Extension Service, Manhattan, Kansas. Selected and revised for use in Kentucky by Patty Rai Smith, Ed.D., Extension Home-Based Business Specialist, Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service.

Photographs taken by David R. Mullins at the Lexington (Ky.) Cemetery.

Web Sites

Due to increasing interest in genealogical studies, the Internet has become a great source of information on genealogy. Many Web sites now exist to aid in the search for genealogical information. This is also a relatively simple and inexpensive way to research one's family history.



Example of a Pedigree Chart

Date _____

PEDIGREE CHART No. 1 No. 1 on chart 1

Name of Compiler

B — Born
M — Married
D — Died
R — Resident

PATER- NAL	2. Your Father	4. Your Father's Father	8. Father of No. 4
	B _____ M _____ R _____ D _____	B _____ M _____ R _____ D _____	B _____ M _____ R _____ D _____
MATER- NAL	3. Your Mother	5. Your Father's Mother	9. Mother of No. 4
	B _____ D _____	B _____ D _____	B _____ D _____
1. You	B _____ R _____	6. Your Mother's Father	10. Father of No. 5
		B _____ M _____ R _____ D _____	B _____ M _____ R _____ D _____
		7. Your Mother's Mother	11. Mother of No.5
		B _____ D _____	B _____ D _____
			12. Father of No. 6
			B _____ M _____ R _____ D _____
			13. Mother of No. 6
			B _____ D _____
			14. Father of No. 7
			B _____ M _____ R _____ D _____
			15. Mother of No. 7
			B _____ D _____

