Research Guides: Genealogy: Beginners & Basics
Although not aimed at genealogy and family history, the collections of the University of Delaware Library (Morris Library) include materials useful to genealogists and family historians.

This Genealogy Research Guide is provided as a service for genealogists. It presents topics and resources to assist researchers.

The UD Library does not specialize in genealogy and does not have staff responsible for genealogy. Library staff cannot conduct research.

For questions about library resources and holdings, use the Ask the Library service.

For questions about getting research assistance, see the suggestions on the home page of this guide or on the topic/resources pages.
Start here:
These guides provide concepts and strategies for genealogy research in Delaware and other states. A few minutes reading this information may save you from a lot of problems later on.

- United States (The Family History Guide)
- U.S. - Delaware (The Family History Guide)
- The Family History Guide
- Libraries, Archives, & Societies
  Links for Delaware and surrounding areas.

Major Players

There are several companies, products, and organizations that can be considered major players in the genealogical research world.

- Ancestry Library Edition
  A massive online website which provides collections of historical and genealogical information. U.S. Census, records, vital records, immigration, military, and much more. This is the version of Ancestry.com available for libraries to subscribe to. Includes the “Learning Center” which contains information on topics as well as “Tip and Tricks.” Many of the functionalities and collections offered to individual users on Ancestry.com aren’t available on Ancestry Library Edition.

- Ancestry.com
  Ancestry.com is the world’s largest online family history resource center. It provides billions of historical records, many of them having full text of the items. Ancestry is designed for personalized, at-home use. Many of the functionalities and collections offered to individual users aren’t available on Ancestry Library Edition, the version of Ancestry available to libraries.

- FamilySearch
  A service provided by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The website has learning guides, the catalog of the Family History Library, full-text original records, and Family History Books, a full-text collection of genealogy reference books and family histories. Requires free registration which allows viewing records, creation of family trees, uploading images, and sharing information. Most resources and services on FamilySearch are free. There are some cases where a FamilySearch link will go to a partner site which is a fee only source, such as Ancestry.com

- National Archives
  The United States agency that holds historical records. U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

- Cyndi’s List of Genealogy Sites on the Internet

- Findmypast
  UK-based online genealogy service. Subscription includes PERSI (Periodical Source Index) an invaluable index to records from over 8,000 genealogy and history societies from all over the world. Offers Free Records, including all U.S. Census records (easier interface than Ancestry).

$ Indicates a fee-based site
$F Indicates a fee-based site with significant free content

Local Major Players

- Delaware Public Archives (DPA)
  The Delaware Public Archives is the repository for all the non-current records of the State of Delaware, its counties, and large municipalities, as well as papers and records from organizations and private individuals.

- Genealogy LibGuide (Delaware Division of Libraries)

- Delaware Library Catalog / Delaware Libraries
  A combined catalog of public libraries and other libraries in Delaware, including the print materials in the Delaware Public Archives (DPA).

- Delaware Heritage Collection

- Delaware Public Archives Resources on Ancestry.com
Guides to Delaware Genealogy Resources

- Genealogy (Delaware Division of Libraries)
- Delaware Genealogy: A Guide to Research in the Delaware Historical Society Library
- Delaware Public Archives (DPA)
  Browse the "Finding Aids" list.
- Delaware, United States Genealogy (FamilySearch wiki)
  Excellent guide to types of records and to advice on doing genealogical searching. Has pages for each state.

**Delaware Genealogical Research Guide** by Delaware Genealogical Society and Thomas P. Doherty
Call Number: Morris Library – Reference (Ref F163 .D349 2002)
An important guide for locating primary sources or conducting historical and genealogical research in Delaware. It covers specific types of records and where they can be found in the state. Includes maps of Hundreds and a map of the Delaware Divide. The guide describes unique resources available at various sites. Examples:
  - Tatnall Tombstone collection and index at the Delaware Public Archives (DPA)
  - "Family Surname File" at the Delaware Historical Society (DHS)
  - "Delaware Index" at the Wilmington Public Library.
Written by Thomas P. Doherty and published by the Delaware Genealogical Society.

- Getting Started (Delaware Genealogical Society)
- Delaware: research page (FamilySearch)
  Includes "Indexed Historical Records," such as collections from Delaware Public Archives and GenealogyBank Obituaries, 1980-2014. Also includes "Image Only Historical Records."
- Online Delaware Death Records & Indexes: A Genealogy Records Guide

Genealogy for Beginners

**Where to start?**

Start with yourself and work backwards

- Record what you already know about yourself and your family
- Organize, sort, separate (newspapers, photographs, textiles, papers)
- Contact other family members
- Keep track of what you have searched and whom you have contacted
- Document everything
- Then, do something with all this research: write it up; publish it; pass it on
Getting Organized

Decide how you will organize your information.

Paper

- Notebooks or file folders?

Computer (Genealogical Software)

- Select Computer Software (FamilySearch)
- Best Genealogy Software (Top Ten Reviews)

- Organizing Your Files (FamilySearch)
  Focuses on paper files and file folders.
- Another Sort of A to Z: Your Genealogy Filing System (Genealogy.com)
- Organizing Your Research (Genealogy.com)
  This page has several articles, including digital files, color coded folders and labels, and numbering systems.
- Organize and Preserve Your Family History Documents (The Family Curator)
- Elyse's Genealogy Blog
  A lot of good information. Use the Search feature to find what you are looking for, such as organize, file folder, or brick wall.
- Why Bother? The Value of Documentation in Family History Research (Genealogy.com)

Learning and Exploring

There is much to learn about genealogical research!!

You can learn by reading books, by consulting websites, and by sharing information with other researchers.

Join!

One easy way is to join a genealogy society. You can join a local genealogy society even if your family is not local. Societies will often have programs and speakers about techniques and resources that are valuable for many places, not just local. You can join a genealogy society in an area where your family lived if the society has newsletters or publications.

Starting Places

- The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy by Loretto Dennis Szucs; Sandra Hargreaves Luebking
  Call Number: Morris Library – Reference (Ref CS49 .S65 2006)

- United States Genealogy (FamilySearch wiki)
  Excellent guide to types of records and to advice on doing genealogical searching. Has pages for each state.

- Red Book: American State, County, and Town Sources by Alice Eichholz and Ancestry Publishing Staff
  Call Number: Morris Library – Reference (Ref CS49 .R44 2004)
  Wonderful guide to genealogy resources. Describes genealogical resources in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Use to identify types of resources and libraries, state archives, and historical and genealogical societies in various locations.

- Organizing Your Family History Search: Efficient & Effective Ways To Gather and Protect Your Genealogical Research by Sharon DeBartolo Carmack
  Call Number: Morris Library – Reference (Ref CS 44 .C375 1999)
  This book has a lot of wonderful ideas about different ways to organize your genealogy stuff. However, because the book was published in 1999, all of the computer related advice is out-of-date.

- Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace by Elizabeth Shown Mills
  Publication Date: 2017
  "Evidence Explained" examines History through documents. Author provides information needed to analyze and decide what is authoritative.
### Learning and Exploring -- Examples of Books

- **Genealogy for the First Time** by Laura Best
- **The Genealogy Handbook** by Ellen Galford
- **The Unofficial Family Archivist** by Melissa Mannon
- **Courthouse Research for Family Historians** by Christine Rose

### Learning and Exploring -- Examples of Websites

- Delaware, United States Genealogy (FamilySearch wiki)
  Excellent guide to types of records and to advice on doing genealogical searching. Has pages for each state.
- Principles of Family History Research (FamilySearch Wiki)
- FamilySearch Research Wiki
  Research guides on various topics and countries. See the Delaware guide.
- Ancestry Genealogy Toolkit (Ancestry.com Support)
- Beginners (Cyndi's List of Genealogy Sites on the Internet)
- Resources for Genealogists (National Archives)
- Genealogy Learning Center (Genealogy.com)
- Microfilm Publications and Original Records Digitized by Our Digitization Partners (National Archives)
- Research Cornerstones: Use a Research Plan
- Twelve Key: Information about U.S. archival records
- Know Your Records Program (National Archives)
  Webinars, notes, announcements on topics of interest to researchers.
- Ancestry Academy (Ancestry.com)
  Video tutorials on important topics.
- Top Ten Genealogy Mistakes to Avoid (ThoughtCo)
- Back to Basics: 10 Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them
Digital Book Collections

- Genealogy Gophers
  Free searching and downloading of 80,000 digital genealogy books.
- Compilation of Published Sources (My Heritage)
- Digital Public Library of America
- HathiTrust Digital Library
- Free Digitized Book Collections
  Guide to collections.
- Delaware Heritage Collection
  Documents, artwork, maps, newspapers, slides, photos, audio/video and other important items documenting Delaware’s rich history and culture are available online in the Delaware Heritage Collection.
- eBooks & PDFs (Delaware Public Archives)
  Full text of important Delaware publications, some of them out of print.
- Family History Books (FamilySearch)
  A collection of more than 200,000 digitized genealogy and family history publications from the archives of some of the most important family history libraries in the world. The collection includes family histories, county and local histories, genealogy magazines and how-to books, gazetteers, and medieval histories and pedigrees. Search for the title of a book, for surnames, or for topics, such as, “delaware genealogy.”
- Genealogy Ebook and Texts Archive (Internet Archives)
  Free online library of books in the public domain. Includes many family histories and pedigree books.

Blog Roll

- Genealogy Insider (Family Tree Magazine)
- Ancestry Blog
- FamilySearch Blog
- Genealogy by Barry
  Over 1500 how-to articles on genealogy and family history
- Ancestor Hunt
- Findmypast blog
- Prologue: Pieces of History (A National Archives blog)
- Best Genealogy Blogs of 2015
- Delaware Public Archives Blogs
- NARAtions (A National Archives blog)
- Milstein Division of United States History, Local History and Genealogy (New York Public Library)
- Nanticoke River Roots
  Genealogy, family history, and kinship in and around Delaware. By Reese Robinson.
- photo detective
- Ancestry Insider

Contact Family Members

- Fifty Questions for Family History Interviews: What to Ask the Relatives (ThoughtCo)
- Genealogy: 150 questions to ask family members about their lives (Genealogy by Barry)

YouTube Channels

- Family Tree Magazine
- Know Your Records (National Archives)
- Ancestry.com
- FamilySearch

Go to YouTube and search for genealogy research!!
Courses and Lessons

Lessons and courses are offered for a fee by many associations and companies. Sometimes free material is included.

- Ancestry Academy
- Family Tree University
- Learning Center (FamilySearch.org)
  Offers hundreds of online genealogy courses.

Related Library Guides

- Forms to Record Your Genealogical Information
- Caring for Your Records (Archival Information)

Beginning Your Genealogy Research - The Basics, from the USGenWeb Project. How to get started in Genealogy, from the New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS).