



SOUTH CAROLINA FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEADERS
Affiliated with National Volunteer Outreach Network, Country Women's Council, U.S.A.,
Associated Country Women of the World and in partnership with Clemson University
Cooperative Extension Service
SCFCL website: <http://www.scfcl.com>

Leader Training Guide
Researching Family History (Genealogy)

Objective: Start a basic search for family history (Genealogy). Find valuable information on family's country of origin, skills, occupations, migrating locations, medical history, and attributes through research online, in historical documents and talking to relatives while keeping notes and documenting details along the way.

Lesson Overview/Introduction: Your "Family Tree" is the starting point to provide the stepping stones to your family heritage. This lesson will provide the steps to be taken in research methods and contact facilities that can be used as resources in your search.

Lesson: (This lesson is taken from NARA's website: <http://www.archives.gov>)



National Archives and Records Administration

700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20408-0001

Genealogy Tool Kit

Getting Started-Research Basics

This checklist offers a step-by-step process to start your family history research, organize your work and introduce you to federal records of genealogical value. Each step outlines essential information and strategies to conduct your research in a logical and successful way. As you follow these steps and complete each worksheet in the tool kit, use the appropriate checkboxes to mark your progress.

Step 1: Preparing to do research

Get organized

The best approach is to organize yourself according to your own personal preferences for taking notes, filing records, and scheduling research activities. Some basic items to assemble include:

- Binders or file folders
- Notebooks
- Pens, pencils
- Calendar or schedule book

Basic tools you will need to record the information you find in the course of your research include:

- Pedigree charts
- Family group worksheets
- Correspondence record sheet
- Computer software programs (for more advanced research)

□ **Read books about genealogy**

It is always very helpful to do as much background reading as possible to become familiar with the basic methodology of genealogy research. Different types of records or sources require different methods of interpretation or organization. A few basic works include:

- Croom, Emily Anne. *Unpuzzling Your Past: The Best-Selling Basic Guide to Genealogy*. Cincinnati: Betterway Books, 2001.
- Croom, Emily Anne. *The Genealogist's Companion and Sourcebook*. 2nd edition. Cincinnati: Betterway Books, 2003.
- Greenwood, Val D. *The Researcher's Guide to American Genealogy*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2000.
- Luebking, Sandra Hargreaves and Loretto Dennis Szucs, editors. *The Source: A Guidebook to American Genealogy*. 3rd edition. Provo, UT: Ancestry, Inc., 2006.
- Powell, Kimberly. *The Everything Guide to Online Genealogy: A Complete Resource for using the Web to trace your Family History*. Avon, MA: F & W Publications, Inc., 2008.
- Renick, Barbara. *Genealogy 101: How to Trace your Family's History and Heritage*. Nashville, TN: Rutledge Hill Press, 2003.

□ **Join a Genealogy club or society**

The key to genealogy research is sharing information. Join a local genealogy club or society; meet veteran researchers who can share their successful research tips. These organizations often sponsor "how to" workshops, lectures, or classes that meet a variety of skill levels, from beginner to expert. As your confidence increases, seek out national genealogical organizations for more advanced knowledge.

□ **Focus on one person at a time**

As you work your way through the next steps, it is helpful to focus your research on specific individuals rather than casting a wide net. Identifying information about one person will often lead to other family members you may not know existed.

Step 2: Do your homework

□ **Identify what you already know**

To start a family tree, you need to identify certain basic facts that are unique to each individual. Recall information about each member of your family, including yourself, that is already general knowledge. Basic facts to identify include:

- Full name (first, middle, last) and any name changes
 - Important dates (birth, baptism, marriage/divorce, death, burial)
 - Places of important events (city, county, state, country)
- After vital statistics, identify other personal facts of interest:
- Education, (names and locations of schools, colleges, universities)
 - Occupations
 - Religion and churches attended
 - Personal anecdotes and stories

□ **Start with yourself and work backwards**

A family tree always grows exponentially (1 self; 2 parents; 4 grandparents; 8 great-grandparents; 16 great-great grandparents; 32 great-great-great grandparents, etc.) To begin your family tree and identify missing information:

- Start with yourself (date and place of birth/baptism/marriage)
- Work back to your parents (names, dates/places of birth/baptisms/marriage/death)
- Work back to your grandparents (same as above)
- Repeat the same process for earlier generations
- Record everything you know on family charts and forms

□ **Review what you have**

Once you have identified information that is already general knowledge, look at your charts to see where gaps exist. To fill those gaps, proceed to Step 3.

Step 3: Expand your sources

□ **Talk to your relatives**

Your relatives can help fill in the blanks on your family tree. Older relatives, especially, might remember generations that are no longer alive. Other family members may have already researched your family history and might be willing to share their work. Some useful tips for contacting relatives include:

- Be respectful and considerate
- Decide what specific information to ask for
- Take accurate notes
- Respect privacy, there might be information others are unwilling to share
- Be willing to share your information
- Document your sources

□ **Locate family documents**

Beyond general knowledge, information about your family may be recorded in a variety of records. The following types of personal documents are useful to identify basic vital information (names, dates, places); they will most likely be in the possession of your immediate family or other relatives:

- Family Bible (birth/marriage/death information)
- Birth/baptism/marriage/death certificates
- School report cards/diplomas (information about education)
- Old family letters
- Scrapbooks/photographs
- Diaries or journals

□ **Locate public records**

Vital records are also available from various levels of government, published sources, and religious organizations. These types of records include:

- Church registers—for baptism/marriage/death/burial records
- Newspapers—for birth/wedding notices, obituaries
- Municipal records (city hall or county courthouse)—for birth/ death registers, marriage licenses, estate records (wills, inventories), deeds, naturalization papers (before 1906)
- State records (vital statistics)—for birth/death certificates, contact the appropriate state office of vital records
- Local and state archives/historical societies/libraries—for copies or transcriptions of all the records listed above, and published family histories
- Federal records

□ **Check internet resources**

Much family information, and many of the public records listed above, is already available on the internet. Check the following web sites for further information:

- Genealogy.com, <http://www.genealogy.com>. A subscription-based web site that allows researchers to post and share family trees, communicate via message boards, and search data collections.
- FamilySearch.org, <http://familysearch.org>. A free web site sponsored by the LDS (Mormon) Church, that offers many tips and resources for starting genealogy research, including tutorials, searchable indexes, and databases of records and sources from the U.S. and around the world.
- Ancestry.com, <http://www.ancestry.com>. This web site is subscription based, but access is free of charge at any NARA research facility. It contains many collections of records, including newspapers and periodicals; birth, marriage, and death records; obituary collections; city directories; court, land, wills, and financial records; military records; published local and county histories; and census/voter lists.
- HeritageQuest.com, <http://www.heritagequestonline.com>. Another subscription-based web site that is free of charge at any NARA research facility. It contains many family and local histories, the U.S. Serial Set, and indexes to genealogy and local history articles.

Step 4: Cite your sources

Whenever you identify sources that relate to your family, regardless of their location, remember to document where you found the information.

□ **Published sources**

- Record the author, publisher, and page where the information is cited

□ **Archival records**

- Record the record item; file unit; series; subgroup; record group; repository

□ **Microfilm records**

- Record the same elements for citing textual records above
- At the series level, the microfilm publication title; roll or fiche number; frame number

□ **More information**

For more information on citing federal records, see General Information Leaflet 17, Citing Records in the National Archives of the United States. Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration, revised 2007.

Lesson Summary: Your Family Tree provides a road map to your family's heritage. The many sources for this research will provide information and the Family Group Sheet (provided) will help keep and maintain your family history for you and future family members.

Suggested Activities:

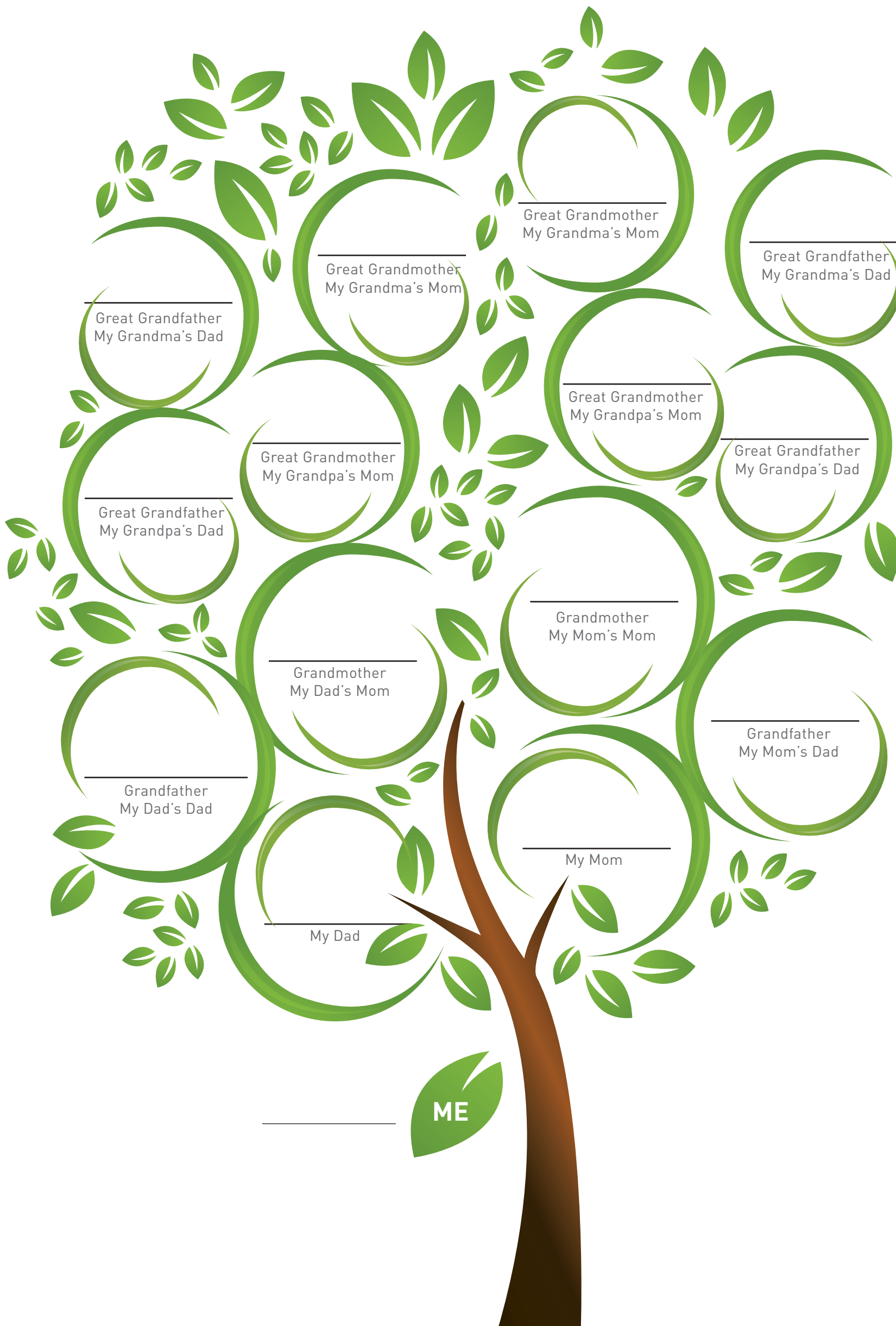
1. Discuss where to start and how to get organized.
2. Bring research background literature sources to a meeting (South Carolina FamilySearch Centers provided.)
3. Fill out what you already know on a Family Tree Handout (provided.)
4. Talk to relatives and document what they know about family history.
5. Assemble copies of family documents, search public records and internet resources into a folder/notebook for safe keeping and share with family members at family gatherings.

HANDOUTS: Family Tree
South Carolina FamilySearch Centers
Family Group Sheet

Lesson Prepared by: Pat Breznay, 2024-2026 SCFCL President and Jim Breznay, Richland County Member (Prepared May 2024)

Lesson Reviewed by: Pam Hanfland, South Carolina Family and Community Leaders Member

Sources/References: National Archives and Resources Administration, <https://www.archives.gov/research>; FamilySearch, <https://www.familysearch.org/en/united-states/>



South Carolina Family Search Centers

Columbia South Carolina FamilySearch Center
(803) 782-7141
4440 Ft Jackson Blvd
Columbia, SC 28207

West Columbia South Carolina FamilySearch Center
(803) 939-1633
1330 Whippoorwill Drive
West Columbia, SC 29169-4754

Lexington South Carolina FamilySearch Center
(803) 317-5165
2224 Augusta Highway
Lexington, SC 29072

Camden South Carolina FamilySearch Center
34 Chestnut Ferry Road
Camden, SC 29020-2074

Sumter South Carolina FamilySearch Center
(803) 481-8300
1770 Highway 15 S
Sumter, SC 29150

Aiken South Carolina FamilySearch Center
(803) 837-3511
358 East Pine Log Road
Aiken, SC 29803

Florence South Carolina FamilySearch Center
(843) 669-0100
1620 Malden Drive
Florence, SC 29505

Moncks Corner South Carolina FamilySearch Center
(843) 766-6017
319 West Main Street
Moncks Corner, SC 29461-3805

Greenwood South Carolina FamilySearch Center
(864) 223-0937
1417 Cokesbury Road
Greenwood, SC 29649

York South Carolina FamilySearch Center
1130 East Alexander Love Highway
York, SC 29745-9701

Cheraw South Carolina FamilySearch Center
1607 State Road 13-341
Cheraw, SC 29520

Spartanburg South Carolina FamilySearch Center
(864) 585-5943
121 Quail Drive
Spartanburg, SC 29302-3219

Gaffney South Carolina FamilySearch Center
(864) 839-6694
701 W Buford St
Gaffney, SC 29341

Charleston South Carolina FamilySearch Center
(843) 766-6017
1519 Sam Rittenberg Boulevard
Charleston, SC 29407-4130

Ridgeland South Carolina FamilySearch Center
(843) 726-8241
917 Grays Highway
Ridgeland, SC 29936-5461

Greenville South Carolina FamilySearch Center
(864) 627-0553
1301 Boiling Springs Road
Greer, SC 29650-4139

Beaufort South Carolina FamilySearch Center
703 Parris Island Gateway
Beaufort, SC 29906-6925

Anderson South Carolina FamilySearch Center
(864) 225-4164
412 Harden Road
Anderson, SC 29621-3256

Myrtle Beach South Carolina FamilySearch Center
(843) 449-1166
1392 48th Avenue North
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577-5426

Seneca South Carolina FamilySearch Center
(609) 760-1359
5003 Wells Highway
Seneca, SC 29678-4608



Family Group Sheet

Husband			Occupation(s)	
	Date	Place	Immigration	
Born			Naturalization	
Christened			Military Service	
Died			Cause of Death	
Buried			Date of Will	
Married			Other Marriages	
Father				
Mother				

Wife (maiden name)			Occupation(s)	
	Date	Place	Immigration	
Born			Naturalization	
Christened			Military Service	
Died			Cause of Death	
Buried			Date of Will	
Father			Other Marriages	
Mother				

Other Information/Records (ie. Census, Passports, etc...)				

Children

*	Sex M/F	Name	Birth		Date of first marriage	Date of Death/ Cause
			Date	Place	Name of Spouse	Place
		1				
		2				
		3				
		4				
		5				
		6				
		7				
		8				
		9				
		10				
		11				
		12				
		13				
		14				
		15				

* = Direct Ancestor