

Get Your Family History Organized

[Video Link](#)

Overview

Being organized with your family history is key to finding answers quickly, resolving brick walls, and helping you to go back generation after generation.

Most importantly... more than anything else... being organized will help you create an accurate tree... with less mistakes... and getting it right the first time... so you are not “barking up the wrong [family] tree.”



I Challenge You!

I challenge you to pick one ancestor and get him/her organized.

Typically, people start with the ancestor where they have that one burning question, that brick wall they are stuck on. That's fine if you want to start there. If you're really stuck, you might pick another ancestor just to learn the skills discussed below.

That's it.

Method

- Pull the **Records**
- Scan** Everything
- Add a **Title** and **Source Information** to Documents (in the file name)
- Put a **Coversheet** on All Documents
- Transcribe** All Documents
- Abstract** All Documents
- Add Abstracted Information to **Research Notes**
- Research What is Missing**

Did I mention adding it all to your Research Notes? That's worth repeating.



Getting Organized

Easy, right? This might take some time at first, depending on how many documents you find. Long documents, like a probate packet may take time to transcribe.

Once you do this method, (one ancestor at a time) you will see details you never noticed before. It will spawn new ideas and logic patterns you likely missed previously.

Working through this method will help you discover what is still needed, what to do next, and help you resolve your genealogy conflicts and get unstuck.

Then “rinse and repeat” with another ancestor. Before you know it, your files are starting to get organized.

Whatever method you choose, be consistent.

Connie’s 200 Year Rule

Make sure that someone 200 years from now can navigate your records without a finding aid or your crazy coding system that only you understand. Make it easy for them to find their ancestors in your files.

Finding the Records at Home

There is *no need* to pull out *all* your files for *all* ancestors, all photos, all of your personal archives. No need to be cleaning out the closets, the attic (heaven forbid), and your garage, only to spend months trying to organize it all. **If you do, you’ll never get to the fun of research.**

Just pick one ancestor and get the files for that one person. Get him/her organized. Hopefully you know where most of the information is hiding for that one ancestor.

We’re not at the research phase yet, just organize the records you have. Research comes later.

Scan

You can use a flatbed scanner, the Ancestry cell phone app, TurboScan (cell phone app), or something like the newer ScanSnap scanner (pictured) sold by Vivid Pix.

I have used them all and love them all. It just depends on what I’m doing determines which I use.

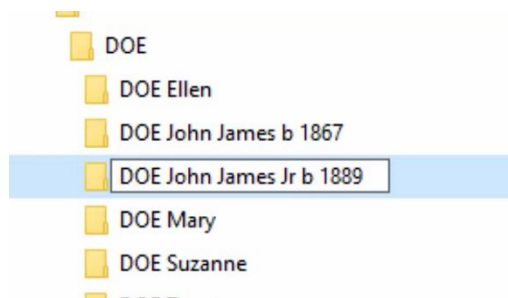
I find the Ancestry app and the SnapScan to be the fastest. [Here is a short video about the Vivid Pix scanner and software.](#)



For images, documents, and books, I recommend the SnapScan for higher resolution copies... but do what is easy and affordable for you. **The goal is to get them scanned regardless of the technology.**

File

Once you have scanned all the documents for that one ancestor, titled them properly, and added a coversheet with the details to the documents/images, put them in folders by surname and then ancestor's name.



Let the Research Begin



Once you get your one ancestor organized now you can research what is missing.

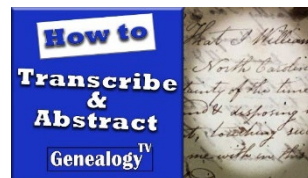
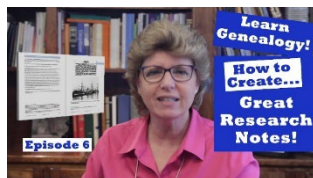
Having that one ancestor completely organized helps you get into the Genealogy Research Zone!

It lets you focus on the research instead of digging for those missing records.

Once you are organized everything is at your fingertips and you can focus on the research question at hand.

More Videos to Help You on Your Journey

There are several videos on the [Genealogy TV YouTube channel](#) that explains in detail, some of these steps. Click the images to see the videos.



Genealogy TV Academy

If you want to take a deeper dive into getting organized, learning good research skills, so you can produce a qualify family tree, consider joining the [Genealogy TV Academy Membership](#).

