



Iroquois Genealogy Society

Genealogy 101 by Leatha Jimerson

Genealogy can also be known as family history.

Genealogy is the study of your family ancestors with documentation of birth, marriage and death dates through parents, grandparents, great grandparents, as far back as possible.

Eg. Your grandfather was born September 4, 1980 at Olean Hospital in Olean NY, you would know this because you have seen his birth certificate.

Family history includes the life stories of individuals; their education, occupations, medical conditions, military service, residences, etc.

Eg. Your grandfather or grandmother was a SNI councilor, treasurer or clerk, your grandmother went to Syracuse University, your great great grandfather worked on the railroad or was a steelworker.

Start a family tree by:

1. Starting with yourself: your birthdate, where you were born. List what you already know about your family, start in the present and work backwards (your parents, grandparents (your mother and father's parents), great grandparents, great-great-grandparents.) Record dates and locations of birth, marriages and deaths. Be sure to record maiden names of the females in your family (their last name before they were married).
2. Talk to your relatives. Grandparents, Aunts, uncles, cousins. Where were they born, where did they go to school, where did they work, did they play sports and where, did they play a musical instrument, are they a veteran?

3. Record your information using a pedigree chart (or family tree) and a family group record. Fill out a family group chart for each family (eg. One sheet with your mother, father and brothers/sisters.) This will also help you see any missing pieces. You can also use just a plain sheet of paper.
4. Explore other resources: Cemeteries, obituaries, books (show list of books from our handout: genealogy resource list for IGS). Especially the books by Albert Austin: 'That's what it was Like' and 'That's what it was Like Volume II. There is a list of various elders and their fascinating stories about back in the day. Your great great grandfather could be in this book! (You could read thru some of the names).
5. Come to our Iroquois Genealogy Society meetings! We meet on the second Thursday of each month. Alternating between Cattaraugus and Allegany Territories. You can also find us on the Web at www.iroquoisgenealogysociety.org and Facebook: Iroquois Genealogy Society.

Lastly, things to look out for:

- Relatives with the same name (Sr., Jr.) or the first and last name is the same. Be sure to have the birthdate of the person in order to distinguish between the two.
- Variations of the last name. Eg. Jimerson, Jemison, Jamerson, Jimison
- Nicknames – Be sure you have the person's formal name or the name they were born with.
- Adoptions – if possible have the birth name.