



EFFINGHAM COUNTY GENEALOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY (ECGHS)

BEGINNING GENEALOGY

GENEALOGY: Before we talk about genealogy let's define the word. Genealogy is a record of the ancestry and descent of a person, family or group. Genealogy is a mystery. You need lots of clues to pursue this exciting adventure. A genealogist is a person qualified to do research work.

WHY KEEP FAMILY RECORDS: Family stories provide a sense of belonging, of having roots. You can share the story with others at family reunions. For health reasons the medical history of family members can be important. Your ancestors were real people too. The history of each life is interesting. Doing genealogy helps preserve history. If we lose that our past is gone.

BEGINNING YOUR GENEALOGY: Where do I begin? You're number one. Determine your goals and then achieve them. What do I want to know about my ancestors? How do I go about finding this information? Be patient. This is a time consuming hobby.

START WITH YOURSELF: Begin with yourself, and work backwards to your parents, grandparents, etc. one generation at a time. Begin at home with the help of the family Bible where you may find dates of births, marriages and deaths. Then look for old letters, scrapbooks, diaries, photographs, school records, birth certificates, baptismal certificates, and obituaries. Look on the back of old photographs for identifying marks, names and places. Interview older relatives for facts and priceless family stories. Be organized. Fill out Pedigree charts and Family Group Sheets. It is a good idea to keep a list of sources and note where each bit of information was found. Next go to local courthouses, libraries, churches, cemeteries, and funeral homes before going to regional and state archives.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION: A very important source of information is census records. The census shows where people lived, names and ages of family members, where they were born, occupation, etc. Keep in mind the 5-mile rule. When looking for marriages, remember 100 years ago a young man couldn't go courting at night much farther than 5 miles or he wouldn't make it back home the next morning in time for farm chores. So, on a census, the man probably found his future wife living within that distance. Also search Cemetery Readings, Church Records, Vital Records, Wills, Land and Property Lists, Passenger Lists, Guardianships, Military Records, Probate Records, Tax Lists and Newspapers.

WOMAN'S MAIDEN NAME: One of the hardest parts of doing genealogy is finding the maiden name of a woman. Why? Name changed at marriage. Along with this goes the spelling of names. Hard to read handwriting in old documents makes for variations in spelling of names.

MICROFILM: Census records as well as newspapers can be found on microfilm. Microfilm is a roll of negative copy and is viewed on a reading machine. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints/Mormon has one of the largest genealogy record collections in the world, and their records can all be found online.

COMPUTER: Family Tree Maker is computer software that many genealogists use to organize their data. Others prefer to use online programs, such as Family Search or Ancestry. Websites we have found useful: <http://www.ancestry.com>, familysearch.org, [findagrave](http://findagrave.com), [cyndi'slist](http://cyndislist.com), [usgenweb](http://usgenweb.org), [familytreemaker](http://familytreemaker.com), [rootsweb](http://rootsweb.org), [genforum](http://genforum.com), [censusonline](http://censusonline.com), nationalarchives.gov, fold3.com and footnote.com.

NATIONAL OBITUARY ARCHIVE: This is the world's largest repository of obituaries and death records with more than 55 million entries on file at <http://www.arrangeonline.com/>

MILITARY RECORDS: These records are on file in St. Louis, Missouri. Original 4 ½ X 5 WWI draft cards are on file at the National Archives and Records Office in Atlanta and have been scanned and may be found at center@atlanta.nara.gov or www.friendsnas.org/

CEMETERIES: Cemeteries are interesting and rewarding places to visit. To help read inscriptions on tombstones, people have made rubbings of the stones using paper and chalk, or shaving cream and even dirt. Cornstarch works well and causes less damage to the stone.

MISTAKES IN RESEARCH: All data that finds its way into print is not necessarily true. Not every story is completely accurate. Almost every genealogist eventually deals with the painful topic of mistakes in their family tree. To help prevent this, find more than one source of information recorded as near to the date of the event as possible. Read, re-read, proof and proof again to help prevent mistakes. Social Security applications may be considered primary sources of information since the individual himself filled them out.

IMMIGRATION RECORDS: Show millions of persons who came from foreign countries by ship to America between 1819 and 1940. "Germans to America" names passengers who arrived along the east coast of the United States and entered mostly through Ellis Island. Over 50 of these books are in the collection in the Effingham Public Library.

MIGRATION: From the east coast of the United States the pilgrims moved westward along the Old National Trail. Early settlers to Effingham County, Illinois came mostly from Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Indiana. Maps are very useful in tracing the travels of your ancestor across the country and finding where they settled. Going backward one can also locate the town and country from which they came to America.

LAND RECORDS: Of all activities of public record in which our ancestors engaged, the one most likely to have been recorded faithfully was the purchase and sale of property.

ORPHAN TRAINS: Millions of children were placed on trains and sent to the Midwest for adoption. New York Children's Aid Society's system of "placing out" children.

COAT OF ARMS: Several companies sell coats of arms for thousands of surnames.
Beware as some of these companies will not provide accurate information!

POOR HOUSE RECORDS: Local and state archives contain poor farm, asylum, and mental institutions records. ECGHS has written a book on the Effingham County Poor House and Poor Farm.

CRIMINAL RECORDS: May be obtained by writing to the Illinois State Archives, at Springfield.

RECORD IT TODAY: Tomorrow may be too late. What will become of your research? Share with family members, local and state libraries.

HOW MANY ANCESTORS DO YOU HAVE?

Seven generations back = 128, 6th generation grandparents.

..... 1 YOU

..... 2 parents

..... 4 grandparents

..... 8 great-grandparents

..... 16 g-g-grandparents

..... 32 g-g-g-grandparents

..... 64 g-g-g-g-grandparents

..... 128 g-g-g-g-g-grandparents

GENEALOGIST'S CODE OF ETHICS: I will treat with the greatest care and respect all public records and library books which may be made available for my use. I will not remove original records, or any resources from libraries, courthouses, etc. Remember the Copyright Law: check sources before infringing upon someone else's copyright records. Also remember to say "Thank You".

SKELTONS IN THE CLOSET: Don't worry if you find an ancestor who was a shady character. Some sly, wily family members have been found hiding in old records.

RESEARCH IN EFFINGHAM: Effingham Public Library and Effingham County Genealogical and Historical Society display the largest collection of genealogical materials in this part of the state.

WRITE A BOOK: Why? You can tell your grandchildren where their grandparents lived without leaving your home. There is a very informative article in Crossroad Trails, 1985, Vol. 6 No. 4.

Follow us at our ECGHS Facebook Page: [Effingham County Genealogical & Historical Society](#)

HIS OWN GRANDFATHER

I married a widow who had a daughter.

My father visited our house frequently, fell in love and married my stepdaughter

Thus my father became my son-in-law

And my stepdaughter became my mother, for she was my father's wife

My stepdaughter also had a son who was, of course, my grandchild,
and my brother at the same time, because he was the son of my father.

My wife was my grandmother, for she was my mother's mother.

I was my wife's husband and grandchild at the same time
and as the husband of a person's grandmother is his grandfather,

I am my own grandfather.

ONLINE FREE RESOURCES:

CROSSROAD TRAILS Quarterly - 42 years totaling 180 issues of "Crossroad Trails" and SIX YEARS of the "Teutopolis Press-Dieterich Gazette" (Jan 1979-through Dec 1984), are now microfilmed and digitized and

can be viewed in the Bill and Jane Austin Genealogy Room at the Effingham Public Library, or online at <https://effinghamcountyil.advantage-preservation.com/>. An additional 2 years may be viewed

FAMILYSEARCH.ORG – ECGHS is an **Affiliate Library** with **Family Search**, and when you use the **ECGHS** computer for your research, you may be able to access additional records that are not available to you on your computer. *Unavailable records are often due to copyright restrictions – some of which may be waived for an Affiliate Library.* You can sign up for a **FREE** account at www.familysearch.org. After setting up your account, enter your family information, conduct searches to find ancestors, view historical records, photographs, create family history charts. etc.

NEWSPAPERS.COM has scanned over 100 years of Effingham County newspapers (1861-to 1970s) from our 600+ rolls of microfilm. Newspapers include: Altamont, Beecher City, Dieterich, Effingham, Mason and Teutopolis and are now easy to search and you can view them for **FREE** in our genealogy room. What a tremendous resource! Go to: www.newspapers.com.

ST. FRANCIS CHURCH RECORDS, Teutopolis, Illinois: Phone: 217-698-8500, Ext 172. Call with questions about names in the church records. Or archives@dio.org. *These church records are now available on Ancestry.com.

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ECGHS is a Not-For-Profit Organization, under Section 501 © (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Membership \$25.00 per year.

Members receive 2 “Crossroad Trails” quarterlies per month via e-mail.

*****ECGHS works with Effingham Public Library to provide research materials at:
200 North Third Street, Effingham, Illinois. Phone 217-342-2464**

*****Available for research are: Cemetery Records, Census, Directories, County Histories, Family Histories, Maps, Marriages, Military Records, Surname Files, Taxes, Wills and Estates.**

Two Microfilm Readers, with printer/copier, are available.

*****The Genealogy collection is open during library hours:
Monday-Thursday 8 am - 7 pm ; Friday 8 am - 6 pm, Saturday 9 am - 1 pm.**

*****Research:** ECGHS Volunteers are available to help most days from 10 am to noon.

*****A genealogist will search for an article for \$10, when the exact date is provided;
\$15.00, without the exact date; research is \$15/hour – you set how much time we spend!**

*****For further help or research contact us via email at: ECGHS.1980@gmail.com**

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OLD genealogists never die they just lose their censuses.
You may find that some of your relatives are from the shallow end of the gene pool.