

Top Ten Beginner Mistakes to Avoid

- 1.** Not everyone with your last name is a relative. Just because your last name is Washington doesn't mean you have a connection to America's first president.
- 2.** Don't trust everything you see in print. Whether you find it online or in a book, confirm any information you find by going back to the original source when possible.
- 3.** Don't neglect your living relatives. They are the single best resource for family information that can't be found elsewhere.
- 4.** Don't do all of your searching online. The Internet is an excellent source of genealogical information, but a lot of the pieces to the puzzle of your family tree will only be found in libraries, archives, and other repositories.
- 5.** Beware the generic family history. Those mass-produced coats of arms and family tree scrolls that you see at the mall or receive fliers for in the mail won't tell you anything about your own family tree.
- 6.** Family legends aren't always fact. While most family stories of scandalous ancestors or famous relatives may have some basis in fact, they often tend to be exaggerated with each retelling. Don't take them as truth, but don't ignore them, either—research them instead.
- 7.** Genealogy isn't just name collecting. While it is fulfilling to watch your family tree grow, it is more exciting to learn about the people behind the names and dates.
- 8.** Don't expect others to do your work for you. Genealogists are a very helpful bunch, but they are more likely to want to help you if you've obviously done your own homework first.
- 9.** Names do change. Familiarize yourself with all the names used by your ancestors, and don't neglect to search for all alternate spellings.
- 10.** Document every source you have searched, even if you fail to find anything helpful. Otherwise you'll waste hours re-examining documents and Web sites that you've already looked at.

APPENDIX B: CHARTS FOR PLOTTING YOUR FAMILY

Family Group Record					
Husband's name					
Born		Place			
Chr.		Place			
Mar.		Place			
Died		Place			
Bur.		Place			
Father			Mother		
Husband's other wives					
Wife's name					
Born		Place			
Chr.		Place			
Died		Place			
Bur.					
Father			Mother		
Wife's other husbands					
Children					
1	Sex	Name		Spouse	
		B/Chr	Place	Mar.	Place
		Died	Place	Bur	Place
2	Sex	Name		Spouse	
		B/Chr	Place	Mar.	Place
		Died	Place	Bur	Place
3	Sex	Name		Spouse	
		B/Chr	Place	Mar.	Place
		Died	Place	Bur	Place
4	Sex	Name		Spouse	
		B/Chr	Place	Mar.	Place
		Died	Place	Bur	Place
5	Sex	Name		Spouse	
		B/Chr	Place	Mar.	Place
		Died	Place	Bur	Place
6	Sex	Name		Spouse	
		B/Chr	Place	Mar.	Place
		Died	Place	Bur	Place
7	Sex	Name		Spouse	
		B/Chr	Place	Mar.	Place
		Died	Place	Bur	Place
8	Sex	Name		Spouse	
		B/Chr	Place	Mar.	Place
		Died	Place	Bur	Place

Other Marriages

Appendix B

Charts for Plotting Your Family Tree

Pedigree Chart

