

WHERE WHO HAVE YOU COME FROM?

By Dave Ackerley

You may know where your parents came from, even maybe your Grandparents but have you ever wondered WHO they came from? You may know your Grandparents or who they were but who were their parents? Uncles, Aunts, brothers, sisters etc? Where did they live, their Jobs? The lists can be endless!

Well here's a Beginners Guide to get you started to researching your Family Tree or Family History: Your Family Tree is just who was born to who and is related to who else but as you progress you may start to find out more about them - where they worked, education, what they looked like from old photos, descriptions etc - "putting the skin on their bones" as they say, this is researching your Family History. This is by no means a detailed guide but should at least get you well on your way into finding WHO YOU HAVE COME FROM.

The text in red in this guide indicates useful sheets that can be downloaded from the website and be printed off to aid you in your research.

START WITH YOURSELF!

SO, where do you start? With yourself! Quite often people start with their parents, Grandparents etc but remember - your descendants may carry this on so your information is just as important. So starting with yourself write down a pedigree tree ie your DIRECT ancestors that is your 2 parents, your 4 Grandparents etc as far back as you can using the **Pedigree Sheet**.

Then from your pedigree chart and starting with yourself, write down everything you can think of about yourself using the **Family Sheet** ie - birth, baptism, parents (with your Mother's MAIDEN Name), where you lived, education (Primary, Secondary, etc), Employment details, Married? (remember to enter your Wife's MAIDEN name), when & where etc, children? and so on.

Then repeat the same process next for your parents, ie - you will be in the *Children* entry along with any brothers and sisters you may have, then again for each set of Grandparents etc, so you will now hopefully be building up a good foundation Tree to build upon.

QUESTIONS

Right you now need to ask your relations some questions to start filling in some gaps! First print off the questionnaire sheets – **Questionnaire 1** deals with direct ancestors and **Questionnaire 2** deals with related ones - brothers/sisters & uncles/aunts and their families, then distribute these to as many relations as possible to get as much information back as possible!

With this information you can start filling in the gaps in your Pedigree and Family Sheets, once this is done review what you still need and if possible arrange to

'interview' the relevant relations to obtain this and any other information, eg if they stated when someone died & where then try and find out when & where they were buried so you can visit the grave to see if there is a headstone to verify the information (and may give new information on other ancestors!), which leads me to an important point - **always** verify information you get (without upsetting anyone!) by other sources eg Birth, Marriage and Death certificates, gravestones (as above) etc. It's surprising how people can get their facts wrong so consider and note what anyone tells you no matter how ordinary or bizarre (family legends are good for this but they might be based on some real facts) but always try to verify them from other sources. Also ask if they have any other information like Family Heirlooms, Certificates, old photo's, Family Bibles, newspaper cuttings & scrapbooks, War medals (may have name, rank & number on them) etc that you could look at - **anything** that you think could be of help.

WHAT NEXT?

Birth, Marriages and Death certificates

You need to determine from your information what you need next. If you have say a Grandfather who was born about 1906 in Ormskirk you can look on the St Catherine's index which is the index of Birth, Marriages and Deaths for England and Wales (Scotland and Ireland each have their own). The indexes start in 1837 and are arranged in quarters - January to March, April to June, July to September and October to December, and can be found in some libraries, Local Studies and Record Offices. Using the **St Catherine's Sheet** and starting from the nearest date (**remember** - the Quarters are when the entries were registered, ie if someone was born in December they may have been registered in January the following year), tick off the sheet as you search, expanding outwards as you go like in our example if you cannot find any likely entries in 1906 then try 1905 and 1907 etc. The same applies if you are searching for a Marriage or Death.

- Birth certificates mainly give you the Fathers name and the Mothers MAIDEN name (to then look for a Marriage) and an address to look up on a census if the date is dated around 1891 or earlier.
- Marriage certificates mainly give you the Grooms name, the Brides MAIDEN name, where they lived, their ages (although this may say "full" - they were over 21), and the Fathers names of both Bride & Groom and their Occupations, and the names of the Witnesses (sometimes other relations).
- Death certificates mainly give you the name of the Deceased, what they died of, name of the informant (usually a relation), the appropriate addresses, the age of the Deceased when they died and sometimes their date of Birth!

Census's

If you know of any of your ancestors that were around before April 1891 and you knew roughly whereabouts they lived then you may find them on a census, these are a great source of information.

Census's were taken every 10 years starting from 1801 onwards for Government statistics but the ones useful to genealogists are the 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, and 1891 census's (there is a Privacy 100 year Government rule so we can only look at the 1901 census from 1st January 2002). These census's can be found as above in Libraries, Record Offices etc and some have been indexed (see our Publications Page for our

covered areas) and they contain details of Families where they lived - the 1841 one contains their names, ages (over 16 they're rounded down to multiples of 5, ie if someone was 28 they're shown as 25 years old), marital status, Occupation and if they were born in the County or not. 1851 onwards they also show their relationships to the head of the household, where they were born and the County, and their ages are not rounded down anymore,

So using the **Census Sheet** you can copy the relevant information off the census entry you find, and add to your information.

Parish Records

These are mainly Baptisms, Marriage and Burial record entries which can go back to the 1600's in some cases, and are mostly held at your local County Record Offices (the Lancashire Records Office at Bow Lane, Preston for our area) or may still be at the Church if they are fairly recent. So if you know where someone was born, married or passed away, find out the Churches for that area, find out where the Parish records are held and the dates covered, look up the relevant records there and using the **Parish Record Sheet** note down the relevant information.

Well that should be enough to get you started. Next you should start to read some books on researching your Family Tree/History and there are numerous booklets specialising on particular topics like Parish Records, Wills (another good source), St Catherine's index etc, maybe join a Local Family History Society (like ourselves!) or one that is for the area that your ancestors came from, and seek advice from other genealogists who should be only too happy to help you - after all we all started this sometime ourselves!

GOOD HUNTING!

**THE ORMSKIRK & DISTRICT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM**

website: www.odfhs.org.uk email: secretary@odfhs.org.uk