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The Daily Leader is pleased to announce a new feature column entitled "Connecting With Your Past," written by Liberal's Karen Rinehart, who has been involved with genealogy for 35 years. The column will run every other Sunday and also be posted on the Web site. Here is the column that ran two weeks ago, and it will be followed by her second column tomorrow or Monday.

Getting Started Genealogy is a very rewarding and an addicting hobby. Just ask another genealogist. They will tell you although it can be frustrating when hitting the proverbial brick wall, finding that elusive ancestor makes it all worth it. Doing family research is somewhat like being a detective.



Why genealogy? Genealogy is done for several reasons. While the main reason is a curiosity for where you came from, not far behind is how your ancestors lived their lives, family traditions and family medical history. Genealogy can provide a number of answers to many questions. Getting started is really quite easy. Charts are important tools in collecting the information. Pedigree charts list the direct line for a child and parents for several generations. While family group sheets list the children of a couple. These sheets can be downloaded from the Internet free of charge at [http:// www.accessgenealogy.com/free_genealogy_charts.htm](http://www.accessgenealogy.com/free_genealogy_charts.htm) or by just entering 'genealogy forms' into your browser.

A blank pedigree or family tree chart allows you to record information for ancestors that you are directly descended from. It shows at a glance your progress, allowing you to follow back in time along a particular family on just one page. The people listed on this chart are descended by blood.

Pedigree charts begin at the left of the page with yourself (or a parent or child). Branching out to the right shows the parents, grandparents, great grandparents, etc. Included are dates and places of birth, death and marriage for each individual. If you are starting the chart with yourself, your father would be No. 2, your mother would be No. 3, while your paternal grandfather is No. 4 and so on. Pedigree charts usually have information on three generations of ancestors for an individual along with vital information.

The numbering system used for pedigree charts is called an "ahnentafel" by genealogists, after the title of a book where it was first used. when looking at the chart, you can see the number of

any individual's father is 2 times that of the individual and that the mother is 2 times plus 1. Some charts have a place for the spouse of the number 1 individual, where others don't. While the individual listed as No. 1 can be male or female, all even numbered on the charts are males and all odd numbered are females. The spouse of No. 1 doesn't have an assigned number.

Family group sheets provide vital information for each family, listing parents and their children. These sheets contain information on each parent and child. Information includes: name of husband, date and place of his birth, marriage, death and burial, and names of parents, with similar information for the wife. Each child is listed, along with vital information, including spouse of each child. There are also spaces for places of residence, occupation, church affiliation and military service, with additional places for additional marriages for either husband or wife and citation or source of each piece of information. Children from other marriages of your ancestors are listed on separate family group sheets. Adopted children may be listed if the adoption is noted.

This brings us to an important issue when filling our charts, dates. It is important, when recording dates in genealogy to remember that you are recording information from other generations and countries. The standard established in genealogy for recording dates is 12 Jun 1929. This format is used on pedigree charts, family group sheets and most genealogy programs default to this format. However, Family Tree Maker, a popular computer program, defaults to the date June 12, 1929, but can be changed to read the standard way.

Formatting dates to be read in this manner is to prevent misunderstanding. When we simply use numbers in dates, such as 6/12/29, there are way too many questions. For example, one of the biggest problems with writing the date in this manner is, what year is it? When writing checks, filling out forms or addressing letters, we are writing these in the here and now. Writing that date for genealogical purposes, there could be a number of centuries involved.

Another problem when writing the date in our sample of 6/12/29 is determining between the month and day. In some European countries, when the date is written in this manner, it is actually the second number that is the month, while the first number is the day. So, the researcher isn't certain if it is actually June 12 or December 6. If you adhere to the standard of 12 Jun 1929, other researchers reading your information will not question the date.

Places should always be recorded from the smallest to largest known division. In the United States, it would look like, "Liberal, Seward Co, Kansas." The county has been included along with the abbreviation, Co for county. You will want to spell out the states. Many researchers, this one included, have gone to postal abbreviations for the states, but this is a mistake for the same reason as the dates cannot be all numbers. Genealogists not living in the United States, may not recognize the abbreviation NE as Nebraska, instead it could be misconstrued as New England.

When you only know the county and state or the shire and country, it is good to place it on the charts as such. An example would be, instead of Seward, Kansas, you would want it recorded as Seward County, Kansas. Recording in such a way will prevent other researchers from finding your work confusing or looking for localities such as Seward as a city when it is a county. This

happens more than you would think it would.

Sources are the most misunderstood. New researchers sometimes don't see the purpose of recording sources. Citing your sources as you go will keep you from duplicating research that has already been done. While standards aren't intended to make searching your family difficult, adhering to them will make your research easier in the long run. You will be able to converse with other individuals without causing confusion with dates and places you share.

Happy Hunting!

EDITOR'S NOTE: Karen Rinehart has been involved with genealogy for 35 years. Anyone with a specific question should address them to: news@hpleader.com. Please put "genealogy" in the subject line, and include your name, city of residence and a contact number if Karen should decide to contact you with further information. Your questions will be answered at the end of Karen's column, and only your initials will be used.

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