

The Amateur Genealogist

by Celia Lewis, MA, Genealogy consultant

Before you start – STOP! Develop a Master List first.

TIP: Never ever put private information on a public site – online is the last place for you to place your tree!

You've been enthralled watching those TV shows - Ancestors in the Attic, and Who Do You Think You Are? You've talked with Aunt Ethel who seems to have the scoop on your mother's side of the family. You've learned the correct spelling of genealogy (from "genea" the Latin word for family). But there's so much information on the Internet and you're wondering how to share a family tree with other family members.

Before you pay hundreds of dollars to an online genealogy company and before you put your private family information in an online tree – Stop! Take the time to begin in an organized manner, and whittle the problem into a manageable size, step by step.



Start by listing what you do know: names in full, maiden names of married women, dates and places of birth, baptism, marriage, death, burial, and occupations. Starting with yourself as #1, develop a **Master List**, numbering your direct ancestors in this standardized way: your dad is #2, your mom is #3, your dad's father is #4, your dad's mother is #5, your mom's father is #6, your mom's mother is #7, and so on back as far as you can go.

Email me Celia@RootsBasic.com for a FREE copy of a 5-generation chart to help you do this. Notice that all the men in your tree are even numbers (2/4/6), women are odd numbers (3/5/7). To add details of brothers/sisters (known as siblings) to any of these people, list them on separate pages, with their parents identified by the original # on this Master List.

Carpenters and tailors say "Measure twice, cut once." The same applies to you, the amateur genealogist: "Check details twice, input once."

Questions? Celia@RootsBasic.com

TIP: Get free software for your family tree at www.legacy.com by downloading the free "standard" version. Another option: www.familysearch.org and download the "PAF" (Personal Ancestral File) software (right bottom corner). Both these free software programs are easy to use and best of all, free.