

# Unit 5: GENEALOGY

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### About the Cultural Skills Program

Sons of Norway's Cultural Skills Program provides a framework for learning about traditional and contemporary Norwegian culture. Each unit consists of three levels of skill-specific activities to guide you as you learn. You can complete the units on your own, through your lodge or through a special class or group. For each level, you'll complete a few activities, email (or mail) them to a lodge or district officer, and earn a pin in recognition of your accomplishments. As a benefit of membership, the Cultural Skills Program is available only to members of Sons of Norway.

When you complete part 1 of your first unit you'll receive a Cultural Skills pin, a skill bar, and a level 1 bar. You'll receive additional level bars when you complete parts 2 and 3 of that skill, and new skill bars when you complete part 1 of a new skill.

### Going Further with Cultural Skills

Want to take your skills to a new level? Members who have completed multiple units or mentored others in the program can earn special recognition.

- A Master of Cultural Skills is someone who has completed multiple units. Finish all three parts of any three units for the bronze level, all parts of six units for the silver level and all parts of nine units for the gold level.
- A Cultural Skills Mentor instructs or guides others to learn about Norwegian cultural skills. If your instruction has helped other members earn Cultural Skills awards, you can earn a mentor pin.

For more information about the Sons of Norway Cultural Skills Program, call (800) 945-8851 or email [culturalskills@sofn.com](mailto:culturalskills@sofn.com).

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the genealogy unit of Sons of Norway's Cultural Skills Program. This unit is intended to help you get started on researching your roots. In your research you will have the opportunity to get to know your ancestors – who they were, where they came from, and what they did with their lives. It begins with some background information about Norwegian history and culture, and goes on to describe in detail some of the most important genealogical resources in both North America and Norway.

For each part you will complete a few activities and compile your work in a simple report. As you go on you will gradually build an ancestor chart (or family tree) while documenting your research and citing your sources. You will also complete charts of your family, write down a family story, and choose a Learning Activity to further your studies.

Whether you are new to genealogy or need to brush up, read the following pages of background information about Norwegian society, history and culture to help you get started or to help you continue on your research.

### What is Genealogy? What is Family History?

Genealogy is a word derived from Greek that means tracing the descent of a family or individual. In this sense it simply means charting the vital facts; the full names, birthdates, marriage dates and so forth of one's ancestors. Typically this sort of information is compiled into a chart called a pedigree. "Pedigree" is a word derived from French meaning "crane's foot" because the chart used in early genealogies was a three-line mark that resembled the footprint of a crane.



## OVERVIEW:

- For Part 1, you will complete one section of the Ancestor Chart and two Family Group Sheets.
- For Part 2, you will complete an additional section of the Ancestor Chart and four Family Group Sheets.
- For Part 3, you will complete an additional section of the Ancestor Chart and three Family Group Sheets.
- For each part, you will cite your sources, tell a story about yourself or one person on your Ancestor Chart and complete one Learning Activity (pages 20-21). When you're done, complete the Pin Application Form and Evaluation Form.
- Whether you have Norwegian ancestry or another heritage, you can earn a Cultural Skills pin in Genealogy. The resources in this unit are specific to searching in Norway, but the process of research and documentation applies to all backgrounds.
- If you have a question regarding any part of this unit, please send an email to [culturalskills@sofn.com](mailto:culturalskills@sofn.com) or call (800) 945-8851.

Family history is genealogy plus much more. It includes collecting documents, recording stories, making scrapbooks, storing and sharing photos, videos and memories. Learning and writing about the life, times and traditions of the people on your chart will help you make connections to the past that defined and shaped your life and attitudes.

This unit will guide you through both disciplines. We acknowledge that not all Sons of Norway members have ancestors from Norway, and some of you may encounter special challenges connected with adoption or divorce. Many of you will be working primarily in resources from North America. Therefore, because the aim of the Cultural Skills Program is to cultivate a knowledge of and appreciation for the culture and heritage of Norway, we have chosen to emphasize the Norwegian genealogical record sources and to give you a short introduction to the main tools that are available for you to use when tracing your family in Norway and in Norwegian-American communities.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF NORWAY AND NORWEGIAN SOCIETY

Before you get started, it will help to know a little bit about the social history of Norway, how the language has changed over time and how surnames were determined.

Although it's difficult to imagine today, in the early 1800s Norway was one of the poorest countries in Northern Europe. Although only about 3% of Norway's land has ever been good for farming, Norway was an agrarian society that had changed very little since feudal times. Norwegian society was highly stratified, and nearly every citizen belonged to the state Lutheran church, which closely regulated the private lives of the Norwegian people.

The early 1800s were a time of growing unrest in Norway. For the first time since the Black Plague of the 14th century, the population was swelling. Cities were becoming more crowded, and farms were less able to produce food for their inhabitants. When the Napoleonic Wars climaxed between 1807 and 1814, the British blockade of continental Europe crippled Norwegian trade. Denmark, which had politically dominated Norway for nearly 400 years, was so devastated by the war that in 1814 the country went bankrupt and was forced to forfeit control of Norway, which soon entered into a union with Sweden that was to last until 1905. Around this time Norway also experienced waves of religious dissidence, as radicals like Hans Nilsen Hauge began traveling the country protesting the authoritarianism of the state church. At the same time, a new country across the ocean was growing. As the United States added more and more territory, it badly needed people to populate its expanding borders.

The first known group to emigrate from Norway left Stavanger in 1825 in a small vessel called *Restaurationen*. Although the voyage of *Restaurationen* is widely acknowledged as the official beginning of Norwegian emigration, the great exodus did not truly begin until the late 1830s. From that point on until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, social agitation in Norway and the lure of personal opportunity abroad inspired mass waves of emigration that would, by 1914, deprive the country of one quarter of its population.

### Patterns of Emigration

Emigrants did not leave Norway in a steady stream. Instead, they left home in waves, as detailed in Ingrid Semmingsen's essay *Norwegian Emigration to America During the Nineteenth Century* (Norwegian-American Studies, Vol. XI, p. 66). According to Semmingsen, Norwegians left Norway for America every year from 1836 on, but the movement had its first peak between 1849 and 1854. A period of decline followed, ended by a brief and dramatic increase between 1860 and 1862 at which point the Civil War and the Dakota Uprising abruptly curtailed emigration. The first major emigration lasted from 1866 to 1873, when 110,896 Norwegians left their homeland. Another lull followed until 1879, when the second enormous migration began, lasting until 1893, claiming 256,068 Norwegian citizens. Smaller waves followed in the late 1890s, and again in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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## WHAT'S IN A NAME? -SEN, -SON, SØN SURNAMENES AND ETHNICITY

Many people assume that if your last name ends in -son you must be Swedish, and if it ends in -sen you must be Norwegian (or maybe Danish). Although these rules do hold true in many cases, the whole truth is a bit more complicated.

The Norwegian, Danish and Swedish languages are all closely related. For about 400 years, Norway was part of an unequal political "union" with Denmark during which time Norwegians learned to write and spell according to Danish rules. This applied even to names, and so lots of Norwegians (and Norwegian-Americans) still have last names spelled according to Danish standards. The most common are names ending in -sen like Hansen or Thomsen. Sweden, on the other hand, developed spelling standards of its own, and so most Swedish patronyms were spelled with an ending of -søn.

When immigrants arrive in a new place they often have to adapt their names to language and culture of their new country. We've all heard the story that government authorities changed names when immigrants came through Ellis Island – and it may be true in some cases – but more often immigrants changed or adapted the spellings of their names on their own initiative. Many Scandinavian immigrants were eager to fit in in their new country, and so they adopted spellings they thought would be easier for native English-speakers to understand. For example, lots of (especially Swedish) immigrants named Svenssøn changed their names to Swanson because of a widely-held belief that the "Swanson" spelling was more American. For Swedes with -søn names, the easiest change was often to drop the "ö" in favor of "o" and so many names ending in -son are Swedish in origin. However, some Norwegian immigrants may have chosen to change their -sen names to -son, thinking it would make them seem less foreign. Others simply kept their -sen spellings, or chose a different last name altogether.

In short, American names are American, and may – or may not – tell you much about where they came from originally.

## Norwegian Society in the Nineteenth Century

Another important key to finding your relatives is having an understanding of the social structure of the country they left. Depending on which class your ancestors belonged to, you may have an easier – or more difficult – time tracking them down. Most Norwegian-Americans can trace their ancestors to one of two broad social categories, the *bønder* or the *husmenn*.

Norway has not had its own native aristocracy since the Black Plague. Most agricultural land in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries was owned by the *bondeklasse*. The *bonde* (farmer) class was made up of farmers who owned the land they worked. Although they were rarely rich in monetary terms, the *bønder* (that's the plural form) were considered wealthy inasmuch as they owned, rather than rented, their land. To own one's own property was to be guaranteed a livelihood for oneself and dependents. It also carried with it great responsibility; the *bonde* was expected to provide for everyone – wife, children and servants – who lived on his farm. To own land was a sacred trust that was passed down from father to child (beginning in 1854, a daughter had equal inheritance rights, and prior to that, if the oldest child was female, she inherited 50% of her father's land). The *bønder* were also important to church and local government authorities because property taxes collected from the *bønder* made up the lion's share of the government's finances.

The *husmann* (literally "house man," but often translated as "cotter") was one step down the social ladder. He was the head servant or foreman on a farm, and typically rented a small acreage of his own on the estate where he was employed. Unlike the *bonde*, he could be hired and fired, and so his position on the farm – and, in turn, in society – was not as secure as the *bonde*. Ancestors of the *bønder* and *husmenn* are much easier to find than others for one simple reason; they paid taxes. Because they were taxed the government kept detailed records about them, their families and their property, many of which are widely available to this day.

Another important social category is the *leilending* or *bygselmann*. A *leilending* was a tenant farmer who rented his land under a contract called a *bygselbrev*. A *leilending* would rent his land often for as little as a year at a time, and there was no guarantee the lease would be renewed. Paradoxically, the *leilending* could often pass his lease to his son, and if the farm went bankrupt, the renter could not have his property seized, as he did not own it. This category is less common, and harder to trace in farm and community histories.

## NORWEGIAN NAMES

Although some upper class families used surnames – last names that remained the same from generation to generation – as far back as the 1500s, the vast majority of Norwegians from Viking times up until the about the mid-nineteenth century (and in some cases, until much later) used *patronyms*. A *patronym* is a name taken from one's father. Simply put, everyone's last name was their father's first name with the suffix for "son" or "daughter" added on the end. For example, if Jon Olsen has a son named Thor, his name will be Thor Jonsen. In turn, when Thor's son Ole is born, he will take the name Ole Thorsen. Jon's daughter Marie will be named Marie Jonsdatter. When she has children, they will take a patronymic last name from their father.

Those patronymic suffixes (-sen, -datter) have a number of different spellings (-søn, -sen, son, døtter, etc.) because of the way the Norwegian language has changed over time. (For an explanation of this, skip ahead to page 4, *The Norwegian Language*.) Because there were relatively few names in use, the patronymic system by itself could be confusing. Therefore, in addition to the patronym, many people also took an additional "name" from the property where they lived or worked. For example, if Jon Olsen works on a farm called Røen, he might identify himself as Jon Olsen Røen. These farm names

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were more like an address than a personal identifier, so if a person moved to a different farm, they would take a different farm name. Thus, when Jon Olsen Røen moves to the farm Tveitun, his name becomes Jon Olsen Tveitun.

Norwegian immigrants to America naturally adopted the naming conventions of their new country. The tradition of changing the patronym every generation, which was already going out of style in Norway, stopped completely in America. Some immigrants decided to keep their patronym as their last name, while others kept their farm names. As a rule, if your last name ends in *-sen* or *-son*, your last name is probably a patronym, and if you do enough research you will eventually find the Norwegian *stamfar* (arch ancestor) who gave you your family name. On the other hand, if your Norwegian family name is anything else (like Heiberg or Brandjord or Ness), your name probably refers to the farm, estate or village that your ancestors came from. If that is the case, you will have a much easier time tracing your roots. If you are really lucky, your name might be the name of a place in Norway that is still in existence and that you can find on a map – and maybe even visit.

Here are a few more hints about Norwegian names:

- Sometimes people were identified by their occupation. Examples: Jon Olsen Gårdmand (farmer), Jon Olsen Klokker (sexton), or Jon Olsen Lendsmann (sheriff).
- Women did not adopt their husband's name. Marie Jonsdatter used that name her entire life. The suffix *-datter* is often abbreviated *d.*, *dt.* or *dtr.*
- The first son was usually named for the father's father. Example: Jon Olsen will name his son Ole, who will then be Ole Jonsen. The second son will be named for the mother's father. The same pattern follows for girls; the first is name for the father's mother, the second for the mother's mother.
- If a parent dies before a child of the same sex is born, the child receives the parent's first name. Example:
  - Elling Aslesen died three weeks before his son was born, and the child was named Elling Ellingsen.
  - The first child in a new marriage is often named for the deceased spouse.

### Names of Norwegian Farms

Nearly every Norwegian *gård*, or farm, has its own name. The name of a farm often describes its location, condition or ownership. *Ødegård* would be a deserted farm, while *Jonsrud* means "Jon's Clearing." Many contain descriptions of direction; *Østerdal* means "Eastern Valley," while *Midtrevollen* means "Middle Meadow." The suffix *-ie* is a means simply "property of" or "belongs to," and typically indicates a husmann's place. *Glesneeie* is a husmann's place on Glesne.

When found at the end of a name, the suffixes *-en*, *-a* and *-et* are indicative articles, meaning "the." *Røen* means "the clearing" (*rø* = clearing, *en* = the).

Some common words used in place names:

bakk – hill  
berg – mountain  
bo – dwelling  
bråte – burned clearing  
dal, dale, dahl – valley  
eng – meadow  
gard, gaard, gård – farm  
haga, hage – garden  
haug – hill, mound  
krog, krok – corner  
land – land, country  
li, lie – mountain meadow, hillside clearing  
mark – field  
mo – heath  
nes, ness – peninsula  
plads, plass – place  
rud – clearing  
set – place  
seter – mountain pasture  
skog – forest  
stad, sted – place  
stein – stone  
stova, stue – cottage  
strand – beach  
sve – burned over place in the forest  
vang – grassy spot  
vik – bay  
voll – grassy meadow  
øde – deserted  
øy, øya, øyo – island

## THE NORWEGIAN LANGUAGE

Today Norway has two official written forms of its language, and over 80 officially recognized spoken dialects. Although most of the sources you will be working with will be in one of the many forms of Norwegian (or, if it's old enough, Danish) you do not need to be fluent – or even formally educated – in any of them to make progress. With a little practice, you will be able to recognize enough words to understand most of what you need. Here you will find a very brief guide to the history of the Norwegian language and a word list of important terms you are likely to come across when doing genealogical research.

In the late 1300s Norway entered into a "union" with Denmark that would last until 1814. At the time the union was instituted, all the Scandinavian languages were quite similar and formal standards for writing and spelling were just developing. Under the rule of Denmark, however, Norwegian more or less ceased to be a written language. Instead, Norwegians learned to write their language according to Danish rules, although spoken Norwegian continued to evolve relatively unaffected. Starting in the mid-1800s, many Norwegians began demanding a new written language that more closely reflected how they spoke, especially in the rural districts of the country, where the language had been much less affected by Danish domination.

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Others felt that keeping the Danish form of the written language would preserve intellectual and commercial connections to Denmark, which had always been the more prominent country. From this debate, the two written standards of Norwegian evolved, *bokmål* (meaning “book language,” the Danish-influenced form) and *nynorsk* (the “new Norwegian,” a language constructed by Ivar Aasen based on old dialects). To further complicate things, each of these languages has changed its own rules over time.

For English-speaking genealogists, what this means is that between the different sources out there that are available, there is essentially no one linguistic standard that defines them all. Depending on what you’re looking at, you may come across three or more different spellings for the same word or name. Another important thing to know is that the Norwegian alphabet has three more letters than the English one, namely æ, ø and å. In older documents, these same letters may appear as ä, ö and aa respectively. Don’t try to substitute English letters for these; they are different letters representing different sounds and changing them will often change the meaning of the word, or, in place names, mislead the reader; Alnes and Ålnes, for example, are completely different places.

To navigate this tricky situation, you are going to need a good dictionary. The best one is *Norwegian-English Dictionary* by Einar Haugen, available from the University of Wisconsin Press. Haugen’s dictionary is widely considered to be the best for English speakers, and unlike many other Norwegian-English dictionaries, it includes words from *nynorsk* and a few of the major dialects. Another good one is the *Blåordbok* (Blue Dictionary) from Kunnskapsforlaget in Norway. These are extremely good, but somewhat more difficult to use if you do not speak Norwegian, as all of the reference information is in that language.

Another dictionary that may prove helpful is one that has been developed and maintained by a resident of Norway and Norwegian researcher, Otto Jørgensen. His Norwegian-American Dictionary is available at <http://home.online.no/~otjoerge/files/word.htm>.

### Norwegian Vocabulary

Here are a few important Norwegian words you may encounter when doing your research.

Barn/born/børn – child/children  
barselseng – childbirth  
bestefar/bestefedre, bestefedrar – grandfather/grandfathers  
bestemor/bestemødre – grandmother/grandmothers  
bonde/bønder – farmer/farmers  
bror/brødre – brother/brothers  
bruk – small farm  
bruker/brukar – user/farmer  
budeie – dairy maid  
bygselbrev – lease  
døpt, dopt – baptized  
døyde, døde, døydde – died  
dreng – boy, hired man  
ekte – legitimate  
ektefelle – spouse  
elv – river  
enke – widow  
enkemann – widower  
far/fedre, fedrar – father/fathers  
fattig – poor  
fetter – male cousin  
fjell – mountain  
flytter – moves, moving  
foreldre – parents  
forpakter – caretaker



### AN ONLINE LANGUAGE-LEARNING RESOURCE JUST FOR GENEALOGISTS!

Interest in the Norwegian language and family history consistently rank as top interests among Sons of Norway members. Often these two interests intersect – in order to understand many genealogical records or to read old documents like family letters, the Norwegian-American genealogist must have some knowledge of the Norwegian language.

Learning Norwegian is never easy, however, especially for adult learners who may not have access to university extension programs. Even those who are lucky enough to study in a classroom often find that their instruction in modern standard Norwegian is not always useful for understanding older documents or texts written in the minority language form.

That’s why Sons of Norway created Norwegian for Reading Comprehension, an innovative course in reading Norwegian for general understanding. This program covers the many historical forms of Norwegian, and teaches you innovative reading strategies for understanding anything from modern web pages to old immigrant letters.

Best of all, it’s free to Sons of Norway members. Check it out in the “Members Login” section of [www.sonsofnorway.com](http://www.sonsofnorway.com).

født, fødd – born  
gammel, gammal, gamle, gamla – old  
gård, gard – farm  
gårdmann, gardmann – farmer  
gift – married  
gjeter, gjetar – shepherd  
husmann – cotter  
innerst – farm laborer  
kirke, kyrkja – church  
kone – wife  
kusine – female cousin

led – generation  
leiefolk – hired help  
leilending, leilender – renter  
mor/mødre – mother/mothers  
odelsbonde – freeholder  
oldefar – great grandfather  
oldemor – great grandmother  
pike, pige – girl  
prest – pastor  
selveier, sjølveigar – owner  
seter – mountain dairy

sjø – ocean, sea, lake  
skjøte, skøyte – deed of sale  
slekt – family  
stue – cottage, living room  
svoger – brother-in-law  
søster, syster – sister  
tjeneste, teneste – service, servant  
uekte – illegitimate  
ætt – clan, lineage

Because *bygdebøker*, or rural chronicles, are often based on old property tax records, they frequently use archaic terms for weights and measurements you may not find in modern dictionaries.

alen – about 2 feet  
daler, dalar – Norwegian money unit, banknote and coin, prior to 1875  
lass – load (usually of hay)  
lispund – 20 settings, or about 18 pounds  
mål – 1000 square meters, 0.247 acres  
pund – 498 grams, just over a poundriksdalar – silver coin used until 1875, ca. 4 kroner  
setting – about 9/10 of a pound

skinn – 1360 riksdalars  
skilling – coin, worth 1/120 of a dalar  
skippund – 20 lispunds, or about 350 pounds  
skjepp – 1/2 bushel  
spesidalar – coin used until 1873  
tønne – barrel, about 4 bushels  
våg – 39.5 pounds of dry measure

## NORWEGIAN GEOGRAPHY

Another key to unlocking your ancestors' past is figuring out where exactly they came from in Norway. Because of its unique history and language answering that question can be more complicated than you might expect. For clarity, we will begin this section by describing Norway's current administrative divisions and then moving back in time to talk about how things have changed.

Today the mainland of Norway is divided into 19 administrative districts called fylker in Norwegian (there are 20 if you include the far northern island Svalbard which is subject to special administrative regulations). The word fylke is usually translated as "county" in English but fylker are the largest unit of local government, analogous to states in the US. Next, each fylke is divided up into local municipalities called *kommuner*. A *kommune* is the smallest unit of local government in Norway. There are currently 430 kommuner in Norway.

Another way to talk about places in Norway is in terms of its geographic regions:

Østlandet: Eastern Norway  
Vestlandet: Western Norway  
Sørlandet: Southern Norway

Trøndelag: Area surrounding Trondheim  
Nord-Norge: Northern Norway  
Troms og Finnmark: The very northernmost region

These regions have no governmental meaning, and the boundaries between them are not always totally clear. However people living within them share certain cultural and linguistic similarities. Think of these regions as being analogous to the way people in the US talk about "the Midwest" or "the East Coast."

Similarly, Norway can also be described in terms of its traditional districts:

### Østlandet (Austlandet\*)

- Eiker
- Follo
- Grenland
- Gudbrandsdalen
- Hadeland
- Hallingdal
- Hedmarken
- Land
- Midt-Telemark
- Numedal
- Odalen
- Ringerike
- Romerike
- Solør
- Toten
- Valdres
- Vestfold
- Vest-Telemark
- Vinger
- Østerdalen
- Østfold
- Øst-Telemark

## Vestlandet

- Dalane
- Hardanger
- Haugalandet
- Jæren
- Midhordland
- Nordfjord
- Nordhordland
- Nordmøre
- Romsdal
- Ryfylke
- Sogn
- Sunnfjord
- Sunnhordland
- Sunnmøre
- Voss

## Sørlandet

- Agder
- Kristiansand regionen
- Lister
- Setesdal

## Trøndelag

- Fosen (or Fosna\*)
- Gauldalen
- Innherred (or Innherad\*)
- Namdalen
- Orkdalen
- Stjørdalen

## Nord-Norge (Nord-Noreg\*)

- Helgeland
- Hålogaland
- Lofoten
- Ofoten
- Salten
- Vesterålen
- Finnmark
- Troms

\*Why two spellings for one region? For a quick primer on the unique situation of the Norwegian language, see page 4.

Some of these traditional districts align with political borders, and some do not.

Over time, the borders between political and cultural units of Norway have changed as have the words that described them. At other points in history fylker have been called *amt*, *len* or *sysse*.

In addition to governmental jurisdictions, the Norwegian state church also recognizes its own administrative districts typically called parishes in English and *prestegjeld* in Norwegian. These are important for genealogical research because the church kept so many vital records of Norwegian citizens. For more on using church records, see page 8.

## Parishes

A list of the main parishes of Norway (approximately 1,650) can be found on [www.sonsofnorway.com](http://www.sonsofnorway.com). The list provided is not complete, nor does it conform to the Norwegian church's own administrative plan; instead, the parishes are listed by fylke.

## GENEALOGICAL RECORDS AND SOURCES

In this section, we will describe in basic terms what the most important types of records and sources of information are, and give you some tips on how to find and use them.

### Bygdebøker – Community Histories

There are dozens of different documents and resources you can research to answer the vital questions about an ancestor's life. Of all of these, the easiest to use is the local *bygdebok* which is a historical work that usually focuses on the history of the farms in a particular area. Although each *bygdebok* is different, they typically list the owners of each farm, when they lived and died, who their descendants were, and so forth. They may also contain information about how much the farm was taxed in a given year, or even bits of narrative history and hints on where people moved when they left their home farms. Because of the depth and reliability of the information they provide, the *bygdebøker* (plural of *bygdebok*) are the most important resources you will use. For a simple list of common terms used in *bygdebøker*, turn to the Norwegian Word List, page 5.

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## Norwegian Census Records

In recent years the Norwegian National Archives have made available a number of different censuses taken in Norway during the era of mass emigration. Many of these, especially those made during the 19th century, are of variable quality. Some were taken in only certain districts, while others counted only landholders. Still others (*mannatal*), conducted for military purposes, counted men only. To search those censuses now available online, check out: <http://arkivverket.no> or the Norwegian Historical Data Center: <http://www.rhd.uit.no/nhdc/census.html>

Here are a few tips specific to different censuses:

**1665:** A head tax list with names and ages of landowners and boys over the age of 12. Some areas are not included.

**1701:** Lists only males in rural areas, while parts of eastern and southern Norway are missing.

**1769:** A *sjeleregister* (a kind of church record) by parish, has only a small percentage of people listed and has very spotty coverage.

**1801:** The first complete, nationwide census. There is an index of farms and an index by given name. Major cities are listed separately. The columns in the census, from left to right, are: residence, name, position in family, age, marital status and occupation. Available online here: <http://digitalarkivet.no/>

**1865:** Taken closer to the time that many Norwegians emigrated, so you may find your complete family here. The columns in the census records, from left to right, are: personal number, household number, last name, position in family, occupation, marital status, age, sex, birth place and finally, a toll of household possession. The 1865 census is available online here: <http://digitalarkivet.no/>

## Norwegian Church Parish Records - Kirkebøker

Most vital records in Norway were kept by the state church. Today church records are available going back the late 1600s and early 1700s. These records contain information on births, deaths, baptisms, confirmations, engagements and marriages, as well as records of vaccinations and who moved in or out of the parish and more. Many of *kirkebøker* (church books or parish records) have been scanned and are available online at [www.arkivverket.no/digitalarkivet](http://www.arkivverket.no/digitalarkivet). An option to view the site in English is available.

The early records are sometimes difficult to use. The format varies from parish to parish and over time, and they are typically written by hand, often using Gothic or blackletter script that can be hard to read. Later records, beginning in the early 1800s, were kept using a printed, pre-formatted book which is much easier to use. You will still find some variation depending on the type of church book the record is taken from.

Here are a few pointers on specific pieces of information you may find in the church books. This list is by no means exhaustive, but will help you make sense of the most common issues related to Norwegian church books.

**Baptisms:** Late 1600s, early 1700s and on. Early records may list only the baptism date and may not tell the mother's given name (the child will only be listed as the son or daughter of the father). Later records will list the child's full name, the parents (sometimes with ages and occupations) and the sponsors. Births out of wedlock will be noted. The amount of information varies with time and the record-keeper.

**Introductions:** 1700s-1814. In the older records it was customary to introduce a mother back into the church after giving birth. Sometimes this introduction will list a mother's given name, depending on the record-keeper.

**Vaccinations:** Recorded from 1814-1876 and lists the child's name, age, address and father's (or parent's) name.

**Confirmation:** Began about 1738 and recorded the name, age and address of the confirmand. After 1814 the baptism date and the names of the parents were added. A Norwegian citizen had to be confirmed to be married.

**Engagements:** 1736-1799. *Trolovelser*, or betrothals, were recorded with names and witnesses.

**Marriages:** Late 1600s, early 1700s and on. Early records list only names and witnesses, while later ones include ages, occupations, and sometimes places of birth and fathers' names.

(Continued on page 9)



**Deaths:** Late 1600s, early 1700s and on. May include name, age, address, and occupation, cause of death, surviving spouse or parent. Women may be only identified as the wife of a husband; women's given names are generally not included.

**Moving in and out of the parish:** 1814-1876. There are sections that tell where new members came from and where those who left went. These are very valuable for genealogists who are tracing families from one parish to another or abroad because they often list exact destinations.

### Church Record Terms List

Here is a brief explanation of some of the terms and columns listed in Norwegian church records after 1814. These may vary somewhat depending on the specific kind of church book you are using. The first column of each section is the record number, omitted here to save space.

#### Birth section will have columns like these;

1. År og datum – Year and date of birth
2. Barnets fulde navn – Child's full name
3. Døbens datum enten i kirken eller hjemme – Baptism date either in church or at home
4. Foreldrenes navn, stand, håndtering og bopel – Parents' names, rank, occupation and residence
5. Faddernes navn, stand og opholdsted – Sponsor's name, rank and residence
6. Hvor anført i det Almindelige Jevnførelsesregister – Where listed in the index
7. Anmerkninger – Remarks

#### Marriage section will have columns like these;

1. Brudgommens navn, alder, håndtering og opholdsted – Groom's name, age, occupation and residence
2. Brudens navn, alder, håndtering og opholdsted – Bride's name, age, occupation and residence
3. Hvem forloverne er – Sponsors
4. Vielsesdagen – Wedding date
5. Om vielsen er forrettet i kirken eller hjemme, og i sidste tilfælde bevillings datum – If the wedding was in church or at home, and in the latter case, the license date

#### Death section will have columns like these;

1. Dødsdagen – The date of death
2. Begravelsesdagen – The date of burial
3. Den dødes for- og tilnavn – The first and last name of the deceased
4. Stand, håndtering og opholdsted – Rank, occupation, residence
5. Alder – Age

#### Confirmation section will have columns like these;

1. Confirmandens navn og opholdsted – Name and residence
2. Foreldrenes eller husbondens pleieforeldrenes navn og bopel – Parents', guardians' or step parents' names and residences
3. Confirmanden alder efter dag og datum udvist ved døbeattest – Confirmant's age according to the baptism record
4. Dom angående kundskab og opførsel – Evaluation of knowledge and conduct
5. Naar og af hvem vaccineret – When vaccinated and by whom

#### Immigration (Tilgangsliste/Inflyttere) sections will have columns like these;

1. Navn – Name
2. Alder – Age
3. Håndtering – Occupation
4. Hvorfra ankommen – Where the person came from

#### Emigration (Afgåede/Udflyttere) sections will have columns like these;

1. Navn – Name
2. Alder – Age
3. Håndtering – Occupation
4. Hvorhen bortreist – Where the person went

### Emigration Records

Various records were made and kept when emigrants left the country. When an emigrant informed the church of their intention to leave, they were often issued an *utflyttingsattest*, or emigration certificate. A typical *utflyttingsattest* lists the name, birthplace and birth date of each person who left in a family. However, because many emigrants did not "sign out" with the church, you may not be able to find an *utflyttingsattest* for every ancestor.

Beginning in 1867, the police in Norway were responsible for keeping lists of emigrants. These records are called *emigrantprotokoller*. They list the person's name, age, occupation, marital status, last place of residence, the amount of money taken out of the country, the agent's name, the name of the ship, sail date and the cost of the ticket. Even if you know where they came from, this will give you the name of the ship they took and the exact date they left. Many of these records are available through [www.arkivverket.no/eng/content/view/full/629](http://www.arkivverket.no/eng/content/view/full/629) under the section "Emigrants."

(Continued on page 10)



## PART 1: GETTING STARTED

Whether you are an accomplished genealogist or just starting out for the first time, the most important thing to do is to start with what you know. This means beginning with yourself and working backward in time, writing down everything that you know (or think you know) about your closest relatives. This is important to do because the farther you go back in time, the more confusing things will become. Many genealogists take pride in being able to trace their heritage further back in time than anyone else. Although this is an accomplishment, starting from someone you assume to be an ancestor and working forward can be extremely frustrating. Moreover, the further back in time you go, the more ancestors you will discover you have, and tracing the “correct” line through their descendants down to yourself may prove impossible.

The first thing you need to do is write down all the vital facts that you know about yourself and your family. Charting what you know will give you an organized way to keep track of vital information. You may copy the enclosed charts, buy charts from a local genealogy group or use charts from your computer software.

Put your name in the number 1 space on the Ancestor Chart. Spaces 2 and 3 are your father and mother. On pedigree/ancestor charts, the father is always listed first on the next generation, so that the father’s number is always double the number of the child and is an even number. The mother’s identification is always the next odd number.

Next, look for family documents. You might be able to find birth, baptism, confirmation, school, marriage or death certificates, obituaries, old letters or newspaper articles and photographs that you have access to already.

Then ask your relatives to tell you about the family background, and to fill you in on dates and places that you do not have. Family stories can often be a problem because many times they are hard to prove and over time the stories tend to change. But oral traditions add value to family history and can be an incentive to look for other clues.

### Part 1 Activities

#### Activity 1: Complete one section of the Ancestor Chart (page 27).

Fill in the information for you, your parents and one set of grandparents on the Ancestor Chart, using the form provided (page 27). A form from another source that requests the same information may be substituted.

You may run into a problem at this point caused by the peculiarities of Norwegian surnames (see page 3). However you choose to identify your Norwegian ancestors is up to you; you may use just the first name and patronym, or you may use the farm name if you wish. To indicate this, farm names are listed in brackets in the examples.

The chart should include complete names.

- I. In North America: First, Middle, Surname (and for married women, married name)
  - a. Example: Elizabeth Ann Peterson Brown
- II. In Norway: First, Patronym, [farm name]
  - a. Example: Odd Jonsen, Siri Narvesdatter [Rodnes]

The chart should include complete dates in the order day, month, year. For example;

- I. Born 9 May 1869
- II. Died 15 October 1942

### ANCESTOR/PEDIGREE CHART

PEDIGREE/ANCESTOR CHART

### FAMILY GROUP SHEET

FAMILY GROUP SHEET

Husband's Name			Wife's Name		
Name	Date	Place	Name	Date	Place
Born			Born		
Married			Married		
Death			Death		
Burial			Burial		
Mother			Mother		
Father			Father		
Other			Other		
Wives			Husbands		

CHILDREN OF COUPLE

Name	Date	Place	Name	Date	Place
Born			Born		
Married			Married		
Death			Death		
Burial			Burial		
Children			Children		

SOURCES LIST

For each part of this unit you will add a certain number of people to your ancestor chart. For each person you add to the ancestor chart, describe your heritage with as many primary sources and records as possible. One your sources for completing this list of sources, include the type and location of each source you used for each person. Remember, you only need to complete this information for two people in Part 1, four people in Part 2, and six people in Part 3.

PERSON: \_\_\_\_\_

SOURCES: \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_

PERSON: \_\_\_\_\_

SOURCES: \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_

PERSON: \_\_\_\_\_

SOURCES: \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_

### SOURCES LIST

(Continued on page 11)

The chart should contain complete place descriptions.

- I. In North America; City/Town/Township, County, State/Province
  - a. Example; Bemidji, Beltrami County, MN
- II. In Norway: Farm or City, Kommune, Fylke, Country.
  - a. Example: Rodnes, Sigdal, Buskerud, Norway.

### **Activity 2: Family Group Sheets.**

Complete at least two Family Group Sheets. You may include three if you choose to enter a group sheet for person #1 on the Ancestor Chart.

The Family Group Sheets should contain the first five people on your Ancestor Chart. Enter complete names and dates. Use primary sources such as birth, marriage and death certificates for your proof. To locate the information you may also need to use clues from secondary sources such as census records, obituaries, family Bibles, Norwegian farm histories and relatives.

### **Activity 3: Cite your sources.**

For each person you add to the Ancestor Chart, document your findings with as many primary sources and records as possible. Cite your sources by completing the Sources List on page 28 or by attaching your own list. You do not need to submit copies of the documents themselves, just make a record of where the sources or documents were found. Examples of primary sources include birth records, marriage records, death records, baptismal records and emigration records. If you have trouble finding primary sources, list whatever secondary sources you used instead (bygdebøker, etc.)

**Note:** Rather than sending in your Ancestor Chart, Family Group Sheets and Sources List to Sons of Norway, your lodge Cultural Director or another lodge officer may certify that you have completed these requirements by simply signing the appropriate line on the Pin Application Form.

### **Activity 4: Tell a story.**

In a page or two, tell a story about yourself or one of the first five people on your pedigree chart. The list is only to get you started thinking- be creative.

- The day that...(I got married/ Billy broke his arm...)
- A story my (father/mother/grandfather) told
- The schools in my life
- My best friend
- A visit to Grandma's house
- When we got our first...(radio/telephone/car)
- Christmas at our house
- My home town
- The week at the lake
- At home on the farm

### **Activity 5: Complete one Learning Activity.**

Choose from any of the Learning Activities listed on pages 20-21.

### **Submitting your work**

**Complete the Pin Application Form included in this section, and submit all of the following items:**

- Ancestor Chart
- Family Group Sheets (2-3)
- Sources List
- Family Story
- Learning Activity
- Unit Evaluation Form

**Send materials by email or mail to your lodge or district cultural officer, who will order your pin from the Lodge Leader Supply Store.**

- Send materials by email or mail to your lodge or district cultural officer, who will order your pin from the Lodge Leader Supply Store.
- Keep a copy of your report for your records.

## PIN APPLICATION FORM - GENEALOGY PART 1

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: (required)

Membership #: \_\_\_\_\_ District #: \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge #: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1. Activities 1, 2 and 3

- **Submit your Ancestor Chart, sources list and Family Group Sheets. Have your lodge cultural director (or lodge officer) sign here to verify that you have completed these requirements for Part 1.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Lodge Cultural Skills Admin/Officer)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

#### 2. Family Story

- Attach a copy of the family story you completed for Activity 4.

#### 3. Learning Activity # \_\_\_\_\_

- If your Learning Activity requires you to write a short summary, attach it as a separate document.

#### 4. Evaluation Form

Have you received Cultural Skills Program pin awards previously?  Yes  No

If yes, please list: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





## UNIT EVALUATION FORM - GENEALOGY PART 1

For each of the four questions below, please check the box that fits your opinion most accurately.

	Agree	Disagree
1 Instructions for this part were easy to follow.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Requirements for this part were reasonable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Learning Activities provided a lot of choices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Required activities were interesting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

This part has (check all that apply):

- Helped me gain a better appreciation of Norwegian heritage & culture.
- Increased my involvement with other lodge members (such as participation in formal & informal discussions, presentations, formal group activities, etc.).
- Increased the interest of my lodge in the Cultural Skills Program because of my participation through special interest groups, presentations, or cultural fairs.
- Offered me an opportunity to involve or pass on this skill/interest to family members or other interested individuals.
- Helped prepare me to participate in the district and/or International Folk Art Exhibition & Competition.

**FEEDBACK:** To improve the unit, please add comments and suggestions. Your comments are confidential and in no way affect the awarding of your earned pin or bar.

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Scan and email this form to [culturalskills@sofn.com](mailto:culturalskills@sofn.com) (preferred) or send it by mail to:

Cultural Skills Program  
Sons of Norway  
1455 West Lake Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55408



## PART 2:

In Part 2 you will continue your research and expand on your Ancestor Chart. Just like Part 1, you'll also cite your sources, share a story and complete a Learning Activity. When you submit your Part 2 report, be sure to save or make copies of all your research before you send it in; originals will not be returned.

### Part 2 Activities

#### Activity 1: Complete one section of the Ancestor Chart (page 27).

Complete the information for four more people on your Ancestor Chart. You may choose which four. This will mean that there will be nine names completed on your chart in total.

#### Activity 2: Family Group Sheets.

Fill out Family Group Sheets for the people that you added to your chart. Remember to be as complete and as possible with names, dates and places.

#### Activity 3: Cite your sources.

For each person you add to the Ancestor Chart, document your findings with as many primary sources and records as possible. Cite your sources by completing the Sources List on page 28 or by attaching your own list. You do not need to submit copies of the documents themselves, just make a record of where the sources or documents were found. Examples of primary sources include birth records, marriage records, death records, baptismal records and emigration records. If you have trouble finding primary sources, list whatever secondary sources you used instead (bygdebøker, etc.)

**Note:** Rather than sending in your Ancestor Chart and Sources List to Sons of Norway, your lodge Cultural Director or another lodge officer may certify that you have completed these requirements by simply signing the appropriate line on the Pin Application Form.

#### Activity 4: Tell a story.

In a page or two, tell a story about yourself or one of the first five people on your pedigree chart. The list is only to get you started thinking- be creative.

- The day that...(I got married/ Billy broke his arm...)
- A story my (father/mother/grandfather) told
- The schools in my life
- My best friend
- A visit to Grandma's house
- When we got our first...(radio/telephone/car)
- Christmas at our house
- My home town
- The week at the lake
- At home on the farm

#### Activity 5: Complete one Learning Activity.

Choose from any of the Learning Activities listed on pages 20-21.

### Submitting your work

**Complete the Pin Application Form included in this section, and submit all of the following items:**

- Ancestor Chart
- Family Group Sheets (4)
- Sources List
- Family Story
- Learning Activity
- Unit Evaluation Form

**Send materials by email or mail to your lodge or district cultural officer, who will order your pin from the Lodge Leader Supply Store.**

- Send materials by email or mail to your lodge or district cultural officer, who will order your pin from the Lodge Leader Supply Store.
- Keep a copy of your report for your records.

## PIN APPLICATION FORM - GENEALOGY PART 2

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: (required)

Membership #: \_\_\_\_\_ District #: \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge #: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1. Activities 1, 2 and 3

- *Submit your Ancestor Chart, Sources List and Family Group Sheets. You can either send copies of them in to Sons of Norway Headquarters, or have your lodge cultural director (or lodge officer) sign here to verify that you have completed these requirements for Part 1.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Lodge Cultural Skills Admin/Officer)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

#### 2. Family Story

- *Attach a copy of the family story you completed for Activity 4.*

#### 3. Learning Activity # \_\_\_\_\_

- *If your Learning Activity requires you to write a short summary, attach it as a separate document.*

#### 4. Evaluation Form

Have you received Cultural Skills Program pin awards previously?  Yes  No

If yes, please list: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## UNIT EVALUATION FORM - GENEALOGY PART 2

For each of the four questions below, please check the box that fits your opinion most accurately.

	Agree	Disagree
1 Instructions for this part were easy to follow.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Requirements for this part were reasonable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Learning Activities provided a lot of choices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Required activities were interesting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

This part has (check all that apply):

- Helped me gain a better appreciation of Norwegian heritage & culture.
- Increased my involvement with other lodge members (such as participation in formal & informal discussions, presentations, formal group activities, etc.).
- Increased the interest of my lodge in the Cultural Skills Program because of my participation through special interest groups, presentations, or cultural fairs.
- Offered me an opportunity to involve or pass on this skill/interest to family members or other interested individuals.
- Helped prepare me to participate in the district and/or International Folk Art Exhibition & Competition.

**FEEDBACK:** To improve the unit, please add comments and suggestions. Your comments are confidential and in no way affect the awarding of your earned pin or bar.

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Cultural Skills Program  
Sons of Norway  
1455 West Lake Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55408





## PART 3:

In Part 3 you will continue your research and expand on your Ancestor Chart. Just like Parts 1 and 2, you'll also cite your sources, share a story and complete a Learning Activity. When you submit your Part 3 report, send in only the new information you've compiled for this part. Also, be sure to save or make copies of all your research before you send it in; originals will not be returned.

### Part 3 Activities

#### Activity 1: Complete one section of the Ancestor Chart (page 27)

Add six more people to your Ancestor Chart. You may choose which ancestors to add, but if possible, try to complete the four generations behind you. However, sooner or later every one hits a dead end. If your line ends too soon, add where you can, so that you have 15 people documented.

#### Activity 2: Family Group Sheets.

Choose three families from the people you have added to your chart and fill out group sheets, just like you did for the first two parts. Remember to be as exact as possible with names, dates, places, etc.

#### Activity 3: Cite your sources.

For each person you add to the Ancestor Chart, document your findings with as many primary sources and records as possible. Cite your sources by completing the Sources List on page 28 or by attaching your own list. You do not need to submit copies of the documents themselves, just make a record of where the sources or documents were found. Examples of primary sources include birth records, marriage records, death records, baptismal records and emigration records. If you have trouble finding primary sources, list whatever secondary sources you used instead (bygdebøker, etc.)

**Note:** Rather than sending in your Ancestor Chart and Sources List to Sons of Norway, your lodge Cultural Director or another lodge officer may certify that you have completed these requirements by simply signing the appropriate line on the Pin Application Form.

#### Activity 4: Tell a story.

In a page or two, tell a story about yourself or one of the first five people on your pedigree chart. The list is only to get you started thinking, be creative.

- The day that...(I got married/ Billy broke his arm...)
- A story my (father/mother/grandfather) told
- The schools in my life
- My best friend
- A visit to Grandma's house
- When we got our first...(radio/telephone/car)
- Christmas at our house
- My home town
- The week at the lake
- At home on the farm

### Submitting your work

**Complete the Pin Application Form included in this section, and submit all of the following items:**

- Ancestor Chart
- Family Group Sheets (3)
- Sources List
- Family Story
- Learning Activity
- Unit Evaluation Form

**Send materials by email or mail to your lodge or district cultural officer, who will order your pin from the Lodge Leader Supply Store.**

- Send materials by email or mail to your lodge or district cultural officer, who will order your pin from the Lodge Leader Supply Store.
- Keep a copy of your report for your records.

## PIN APPLICATION FORM - GENEALOGY PART 3

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION: (required)

Membership #: \_\_\_\_\_ District #: \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge #: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1. Activities 1, 2 and 3

- **Submit your Ancestor Chart, sources list and Family Group Sheets. Have your lodge cultural director (or lodge officer) sign here to verify that you have completed these requirements for Part 1.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Lodge Cultural Skills Admin/Officer)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

#### 2. Family Story

- Attach a copy of the family story you completed for Activity 4.

#### 3. Learning Activity # \_\_\_\_\_

- If your Learning Activity requires you to write a short summary, attach it as a separate document.

#### 4. Evaluation Form

Have you received Cultural Skills Program pin awards previously?  Yes  No

If yes, please list: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



### UNIT EVALUATION FORM - GENEALOGY PART 3

For each of the four questions below, please check the box that fits your opinion most accurately.

	Agree	Disagree
1 Instructions for this part were easy to follow.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Requirements for this part were reasonable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Learning Activities provided a lot of choices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Required activities were interesting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

This part has (check all that apply):

- Helped me gain a better appreciation of Norwegian heritage & culture.
- Increased my involvement with other lodge members (such as participation in formal & informal discussions, presentations, formal group activities, etc.).
- Increased the interest of my lodge in the Cultural Skills Program because of my participation through special interest groups, presentations, or cultural fairs.
- Offered me an opportunity to involve or pass on this skill/interest to family members or other interested individuals.
- Helped prepare me to participate in the district and/or International Folk Art Exhibition & Competition.

**FEEDBACK:** To improve the unit, please add comments and suggestions. Your comments are confidential and in no way affect the awarding of your earned pin or bar.

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Cultural Skills Program  
Sons of Norway  
1455 West Lake Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55408



This section describes the Learning Activities you may select for each part of the genealogy unit. All the activities are appropriate for all three levels of this unit. Only one Learning Activity needs to be completed per part. If the activity you choose directs you to write a short summary or report, attach a separate document.

- 1 Record an oral history. Interview an interesting person in your family, lodge or community and record their personal history. If you're especially interested in history, focus on what this person can tell you about important historical events or periods. If you're more interested in biography focus on questions about this person's life, such as his or her early Norwegian heritage (Were they born in Norway? Did they speak Norwegian at home?). Consider submitting your interview to the Norwegian American Historical Association ([www.naha.stolaf.edu](http://www.naha.stolaf.edu)). Think about some of the topics covered in biographies you have read and ask questions of that nature. Include a summary of your interview findings with your Pin Application Form.
- 2 Join a genealogical group or historical society that shows interest in family history. Attend at least three meetings. Write up a short summary of your experiences.
- 3 Take part in genealogy classes or workshops. Attend at least three meetings. Write up a short summary of your experiences.
- 4 Start a genealogy blog. Write about your research results, process and more. Write at least three entries, and include a link to your blog on the Pin Application Form.
- 5 Review a genealogy book, evaluating its usefulness, accuracy and ease of understanding. Write up a short report, including whether or not you would recommend it to another researcher.
- 6 Review a Norwegian bygdebok. Write up a short report, including whether or not you would recommend it to another researcher.
- 7 Add the fifth generation to your Ancestor Chart. Follow the normal directions and fill it out as best you can.
- 8 Follow one line as far as it can be documented. Use the Ancestor Chart. Make note of where the trail ends.
- 9 Choose one of your ancestors and prepare a descendants chart.
- 10 Make an album of family pictures. Be sure to identify each picture. You might include items such as newspaper stories and copies of interesting documents. Write up a short summary of what you learned while compiling the album.
- 11 Research your immigrant's voyage. Include the name of the ship, dates that it sailed and ports at which it docked. Write up a short report on what it must have been like to come across on that ship.
- 12 Tell how you solved a particular research roadblock. Write up a short summary explaining how you overcame a difficult problem.
- 13 Hold a class on Norwegian genealogy at your lodge. Share what you've learned and accomplished in your research. Write up a short report about the class, or include pictures from a meeting.
- 14 Volunteer to help your local genealogy/historical society collect data on Norwegian-Americans in your area. Write up a short report on your experiences.
- 15 Organize a family reunion. Write up a short report about the experience.
- 16 Organize a family activity that will require relatives to learn something about each other and their ancestors.

### WHAT'S A SUMMARY OR A REPORT?

The writing required by a Learning Activity is used to explain what you've experienced or learned. Focus on what you learned and not on spelling or grammar; your report is not graded. And, if it makes writing easier, just imagine writing a letter to a friend! Please write a minimum of 2 or 3 paragraphs unless otherwise stated in the elective. However, if you wish to write more and would like to enclose additional photos, articles, etc. please feel free to do so.



- 17 Design and build a family history exhibit for a family reunion. Write up a short report about the experience or include some photos of the display.
- 18 Help your child/grandchild start his or her own genealogy research project. Write up a short report about the experience.
- 19 Teach a genealogy class.
- 20 Write a short report about Norwegian-American culture in your family/church/community and how it has affected your life.
- 21 Don't see the Learning Activity that you wish to do? Make a suggestion by emailing [culturalskills@sofn.com](mailto:culturalskills@sofn.com), or call (800) 945-8851 and ask for Cultural Skills.

## HELPFUL ORGANIZATIONS AND RESOURCES

Here is a guide to important resources and organizations for Norwegian genealogists.

### Norwegian-American Genealogical Center and Naeseth Library

For anyone who needs assistance with their search, the Norwegian-American Genealogical Center and Naeseth Library ([www.nagcnl.org](http://www.nagcnl.org)) in Madison, Wisconsin is an excellent option. They are professionals and charge for their services. They also have a library that is available to the public for a fee.

Among its services, the center will:

- Search library and archival collections
- Help solve genealogical problems
- Compile bibliographies and other aids
- Collect family histories
- Assemble transcripts of cemeteries, census and church records

The Naeseth library offers all the essential sources for the Norwegian-American genealogist. Their collection includes Norwegian parish records (dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup> century) that provide information about baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, and emigration, as well as bygdebøker (local community histories), privately published family histories and Norwegian census records. The Naeseth Library also offers American sources, like cemetery records and obituary files, some North American port records and American Lutheran church records.

Norwegian-American Genealogical Center & Naeseth Library  
415 West Main St.  
Madison, WI 53703  
Tel. (608) 255-2224  
Fax (608) 255-6842  
[www.nagcnl.org](http://www.nagcnl.org)

### University of North Dakota Library Family History and Genealogy Room

The University of North Dakota (UND) Library Family History and Genealogy Room offers a wealth of primary and secondary source material essential to any Norwegian genealogist. The star attraction of their archives is their collection of more than 1000 bygdebøker for 520 communities in Norway, which may be the largest single collection of the books anywhere. The Family History and Genealogy room is available to the general public, but the bygdebøker themselves are non-circulating. Anyone over the age of 18 who is not affiliated with the University may obtain a library card for an annual fee.

The Genealogy Room has its own website, through which one can browse for bygdebøker by county. It is important to note these lists are arranged according to the English alphabet, rather than the Norwegian. For example, Østfold county is listed directly after Oppland, rather than at the end of the list where it would otherwise be. Similarly, the letters "å" and "æ" are both alphabetized as the English letter "a." It is frequently more helpful to use the online card catalog, "ODIN", which features a simple search interface, and supports the use of the Norwegian vowel characters.

The University also publishes a bound list of all bygdebøker which you can obtain by contacting the library. Besides the bygdebøker, the UND library also offers a number of other locally-oriented resources that may well be of use. They include; Federal Manuscript Population Census Schedules from 1840 to 1920, Ontario and Manitoba Provincial Population Census Schedules from 1831 to 1891, North Dakota and Western Minnesota Land Tract Books, the Ontario Computerized Land Record Index, American Lutheran Church Records for North Dakota, and naturalization records for several Red River Valley counties.

Chester Fritz Library  
University Ave. & Centennial Dr.  
P.O. Box 9000  
Grand Forks, ND 58202  
Tel. (701) 777-2617  
<http://www.library.und.edu>

### Norwegian American Historical Association

The Norwegian American Historical Association at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota also offers an extensive collection of interesting material. While their focus is mostly historical, they have a wealth of information that would be of use to any Norwegian genealogist.

The NAHA collection includes a great deal of academic material (articles from academic journals, studies, theses, etc.), which can also be useful for genealogists seeking to understand the social and political environments their ancestors inhabited. The collection also features a collection of manuscripts written by Norwegian immigrants and Norwegian-Americans. The manuscripts range in subject from letters to personal memoirs to commentary on religious, political and social issues.

Using NAHA is an excellent way to broaden your research. The NAHA archive contains books, letters, journals, diaries, family histories and

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photographs that document and illuminates the “big picture” of Norwegian-American life. They also contain emigration records from major Norwegian ports from 1867 to about 1900.

If you plan on using the archives more than once, joining NAHA is an excellent idea. NAHA members receive the following benefits:

- Complimentary copy of all new publications
- 25% discount on NAHA publications currently in print
- Priority use of the archives, in person and by e-mail
- The NAHA newsletter
- Invitations to participate in educational activities

The NAHA archives are always expanding, and most material can be searched for online via a dedicated search engine called Leif, available through the NAHA website. With Leif you can perform a document search (which looks at the titles for individual documents within the collection) or a collection search (which looks through the descriptions of articles). A document search is best if you are looking for a specific letter or article by a particular person, while a collection search is best if you are looking for the writings on broad topics. The interface is very easy to use, and includes a way to add Norwegian vowels (ø, å, æ) which have to be used in order to turn up results for a search like, for example, “ættesaaga.”

Also online you will find a PDF document which includes complete bibliographical information for every item in the archive. The file is rather large (566k, 244 pages) but if you save it to your hard drive, you can search it in Adobe Acrobat Reader by using the find function (Control + F). Visitors may use the NAHA library for a daily fee. There is a discounted rate for members. If you cannot visit the library in person, NAHA does have a small staff that will assist with research at an hourly rate. The rate varies depending on the type of research needed. NAHA members receive priority, and it is necessary to schedule an appointment ahead of time. The staff will also scan or photocopy most materials from the collection, unless their condition makes duplicating them impossible. NAHA does not provide translation services, but will provide information about translators upon request.

The Norwegian-American Historical Association  
1510 St. Olaf Avenue  
Northfield, MN 55057-1097  
(507) 646-3221  
<http://www.naha.stolaf.edu>  
[naha@stolaf.edu](mailto:naha@stolaf.edu)

### The Norwegian American Genealogical Center and Naeseth Library

The Norwegian American Genealogical Center & Naeseth Library has been in existence for over 40 years and is one of America’s leading genealogical research centers. The Center maintains a library and archives devoted to Norwegian American genealogical research.

The Center provides:

- The Naeseth Library, located in Madison, Wisconsin, where resources devoted to Norwegian and Norwegian-American genealogy are collected, preserved, shared, and interpreted;
- Assistance, interpretation, education, and research by trained staff to members, patrons, and correspondents;

- Continuing education and outreach for genealogists and the public worldwide through cooperative information exchanges, publications, tours, displays, seminars, and merchandise sales.

An annual membership provides use of genealogical resources for those visiting NAGC & NL and reduced rates on research, staff assistance, translation services and seminars.

Norwegian American Genealogical Center & Naeseth Library  
415 West Main Street, Madison, WI 53703-3116  
(608) 255-2224  
<http://www.nagcnl.org>  
[genealogy@nagcnl.org](mailto:genealogy@nagcnl.org)

### Norwegian-American Bygdelagenes Fellesraad

Another important organization to know about is the Bygdelagenes Fellesraad and the various *bygdela* it represents. A *bygdela* is a club (*lag*) for people whose ancestors all came from the same community (*bygd*) in Norway. There are currently 32 *lag* in America with members across the country, loosely coordinated by the Fellesraad (central council). The *lag* often attract people who are interested in genealogy and history, so if you need guidance specific to your area of Norway, the right *bygdela* may have just the person to talk to. For complete contact for all the *bygdelagene*, go to [www.fellesraad.com](http://www.fellesraad.com).

### Norwegian-American Genealogical Association

Practicing Norwegian-American genealogists, professionals and amateurs alike, may want to consider joining the Norwegian-American Genealogical Association (NAGA). NAGA assists members with their research, and maintains a private collection of research materials. These include Norwegian census records, regional maps of Norway, ships’ lists, and a collection of other books and periodicals. NAGA holds monthly meetings in Golden Valley, Minnesota, and welcomes members from all over the world. The group also publishes a quarterly newspaper, *Avisen*, which explores research methods, and reviews the latest genealogical resources.

Norwegian-American Genealogical Association  
c/o Minnesota Genealogical Library  
1185 Concord St., Suite 218  
South St. Paul, MN 55075-1150  
<http://www.norwegianamerican.org>

Meetings are held the last Wednesday of every month, at 7:00 PM.

### The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints – the Mormon Church – offers several extensive genealogy resources. Most of these are integrated through their flagship website, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org). In addition to millions of birth records, the Church also offers research assistance through genealogy centers around the world and a phone line. Membership is not required to use their services.

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## ONLINE RESOURCES

Here are a few online resources that may be useful. Not all of these are specific to Norway, and some of them may charge for their services, so be sure to review their terms of service carefully before using them.

### **Ancestry.com**

The largest collection of family history records on the web.

<http://www.ancestry.com>

### **Ellis Island Immigrant Museum**

Passenger searches, family scrapbooks and information on the immigrant experience.

<http://www.ellisland.org>

### **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

The Archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are the collective memory of the ELCA church-wide organization, including records of predecessor church bodies, inter-Lutheran organizations, and certain records relating to ELCA synods and their predecessors.

<http://www.elca.org/archives>

### **Family Search**

The Family History Library Catalog describes more than 3 million microfilms, microfiche, books, and other items available at the Family History Library and through your local family history center.

<http://www.familysearch.org>

### **Genealogy Home Page**

Genealogy links worldwide

<http://www.genhomepage.com/>

### **Kirken.no**

This is the homepage of the Norwegian state church. Through this page you can search for contact information of parishes in Norway, who may have useful archives.

[www.kirken.no](http://www.kirken.no)

### **RootsWeb.com**

This Norway Genealogy website was first created in June 1997 to assist those who are researching their ancestors from Norway. This website has grown from about 15 pages then to over 200 now. One especially valuable listserv, Norway List, can be found at:

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~wgnorway/>

### **Norwegian Historical Data Centre**

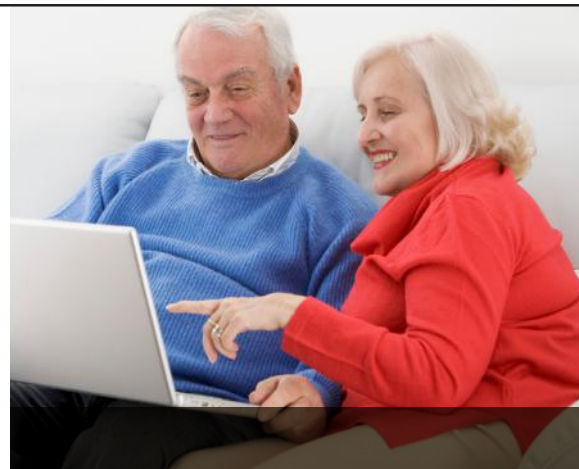
The Norwegian Historical Data Centre (NHDC) is a national institution under the Faculty of Social Science at the University of Tromsø. Their main aim is to computerize the Norwegian censuses 1865 onwards together with the parish registers and other sources from the 18th and 19th centuries.

<http://www.rhd.uit.no/indexeng.html>

### **Digitalarkivet**

Internet source of Norway church and public documents. Search and browse options can lead the researcher to birth/baptism; confirmation; marriage; death and burial; church and public migration and travel records; Norwegian census; taxes paid and more.

<http://arkivverket.no/arkivverket/Digitalarkivet>



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### Norwegian Genealogy Facebook Page

This is similar to Norway List service. Only the format is different. Many of the same volunteers in Norway List now also are members of the Norwegian Genealogy Facebook Page. The primary difference is that it is much easier to share documents on Facebook. This is a closed group. One must first be a Facebook subscriber, a free service. Then, you go to this WEB site on Facebook and request to be a member. All people who request to be a member and are researching Norwegian genealogy will be accepted. Membership is free. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/NorwegianGenealogy/>

## RESEARCH IN NORWAY

Once you are firmly established in your research you may find it necessary to start looking for sources on the other side of the Atlantic.

### The Norwegian Emigration Center

The Norwegian Emigration Center in Stavanger, Norway is the best place to start research in Norway. The Center's extensive archives contain church records on microfilm, census information and bygdebøker. The Center also offers a number of services, including:

- Help finding relatives anywhere in Norway
- Tips for finding sources on the Internet
- Classes on genealogical research

Located in scenic Old Stavanger, the Emigration Center features a reading room, with facilities for reading microfilm and microfiche, as well as broadband internet access. The reading room is available to the public for no charge. You can also hire one of the staff genealogists to do the work for you. You can fill out an inquiry form, in person or online, stating as much information as you know about your background and any specific questions that you have. The cost is \$70 for the first three hours of research, and \$30 for each additional hour. Due to the large number of requests, the average wait time for a reply is about 3 months.

Norwegian Emigration Center  
Strandkaaien 31  
4005 Stavanger, Norway  
011 47 51 53 88 60  
<http://www.emigrationcenter.com/>

### Statsarkivene and Riksarkivet

Another excellent resource in Norway are Riksarkivet and Statsarkivene. Riksarkivet (The National Archives) preserves historical government documents of national interest, while the Statsarkivene, which are divided up into local branches, contain materials specific to the areas they serve. Both the Riksarkivet and the Statsarkivene contain only materials that are at least 25 years old and out of administrative use. The central web page ([www.riksarkivet.no](http://www.riksarkivet.no)) and the local pages (see links below) all have some basic information in English, but most of the actual content of their pages is in Norwegian. These National Archives will provide you with copies of birth, death, baptismal, or marriage records, depending on what is available in their archives. Although they will not do regular research, they will send you copies of their microfilm records if they find information about a specific person. To be able to do this they will need names, birth dates, and/or other vital dates, and the names of the places your ancestors came from. Fees will vary by branch and type of research.

#### If your ancestors came from Østfold, Akershus, Oslo, Buskerud, Vestfold or Telemark, contact:

Statsarkivet i Oslo  
Sognsveien 221  
Postboks 4015, Ullevål stadion  
0806 Oslo, Norway  
Tel. 011 47 22 02 26 00  
Fax 011 47 22 23 74 89  
[statsarkivet.oslo@arkivverket.no](mailto:statsarkivet.oslo@arkivverket.no)  
<http://www.arkivverket.no/oslo>

#### If your ancestors came from Hedmark and Oppland, contact:

Statsarkivet i Hamar  
Lille Strandgaten 3, 3rd floor  
2317 Hamar, Norway  
Tel. 011 47 62 55 54 40  
Fax 011 47 62 52 94 48  
[sahamar@arkivverket.no](mailto:sahamar@arkivverket.no)  
<http://www.arkivverket.no/hamar>

**If your ancestors came from Buskerud, Vestfold or Telemark, contact:**

Statsarkivet i Kongsberg  
Frogsvei 44  
3611 Kongsberg, Norway  
Tel. 011 47 32 86 99 00  
Fax 011 47 32 86 99 10  
[sakongsberg@arkivverket.no](mailto:sakongsberg@arkivverket.no)  
<http://www.arkivverket.no/kongsberg>

**If your ancestors came from Aust-Agder or Vest-Agder, contact:**

Statsarkivet i Kristiansand  
Märthasvei 1  
4633 Kristiansand, Norway  
Tel. 011 47 38 14 55 00  
Fax 011 47 38 14 55 01  
[statsarkivet.kristiansand@arkivverket.no](mailto:statsarkivet.kristiansand@arkivverket.no)  
<http://www.arkivverket.no/kristiansand>

**If your ancestors came from Rogaland, contact:**

Statsarkivet i Stavanger  
Bergelandsgata 30  
4012 Stavanger, Norway  
Tel. 011 47 51 50 12 60  
Fax 011 47 51 50 12 90  
[sastavanger@arkivverket.no](mailto:sastavanger@arkivverket.no)  
<http://www.arkivverket.no/stavanger/>

**If your ancestors came from Hordaland or Sogn og Fjordane, contact:**

Statsarkivet i Bergen  
Årstadveien 22  
5009 Bergen, Norway  
Tel. 011 47 55 96 58 00  
Fax 011 47 55 96 58 01  
[sabergen@arkivverket.no](mailto:sabergen@arkivverket.no)  
<http://www.arkivverket.no/bergen>

**If your ancestors came from Møre og Romsdal, Sør-Trøndelag, Nord-Trøndelag and Nordland, contact:**

Statsarkivet i Trondheim  
Maskinistgata 1  
7042 Trondheim, Norway  
Tel. 011 47 73 88 45 00  
Fax 011 47 73 88 45 40  
[satrandheim@arkivverket.no](mailto:satrandheim@arkivverket.no)  
<http://www.arkivverket.no/trondheim>

**If your ancestors came from Troms og Finnmark, contact:**

Statsarkivet i Tromsø  
Huginbakken 18, Breivika  
9293 Tromsø, Norway  
Tel. 011 47 77 64 72 00  
Fax 011 47 77 64 72 01  
[satrandheim@arkivverket.no](mailto:satrandheim@arkivverket.no)  
<http://www.arkivverket.no/tromso>

**Norsk Utvandremuseum –  
The Norwegian Emigrant Museum**

The Norwegian Emigrant Museum in Ottestad, Norway is an independent museum commemorating the emigration of the Norwegian people. The museum features an extensive open air display of emigrant cabins, barns and artifacts. The museum also maintains a research center and library including:

- Thousands of letters from America
- Thousands of emigrant photographs
- An emigrant agent archive
- Archives from Norwegian missionary activity
- Hundreds of tape recorded interviews with emigrants
- Microfilms of church records from Norwegian congregations in America
- American census information

Norsk Utvandremuseum  
Åkershagan  
Ingrid Semmingsensvei 10  
2312 Ottestad, Norway  
Tel. 011 47 62 57 48 50  
Fax 011 47 62 57 48 51  
[admin@emigrantmuseum.no](mailto:admin@emigrantmuseum.no)  
<http://www.emigrantmuseum.no/>

## FAMILY GROUP SHEET

Husband's Name:		
	Date:	Place:
Born:		
Baptized:		
Married:		
Died:		
Buried:		
Mother:		
Father:		
Other Wives:		

Wife's Name:		
	Date:	Place:
Born:		
Baptized:		
Married:		
Died:		
Buried:		
Mother:		
Father:		
Other Husbands:		

## CHILDREN OF COUPLE

Name:		
	Date:	Place:
Born:		
Baptized:		
Married:		
Died:		
Buried:		
Spouse:		
Children:		

Name:		
	Date:	Place:
Born:		
Baptized:		
Married:		
Died:		
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Spouse:		
Children:		

Name:		
	Date:	Place:
Born:		
Baptized:		
Married:		
Died:		
Buried:		
Spouse:		
Children:		

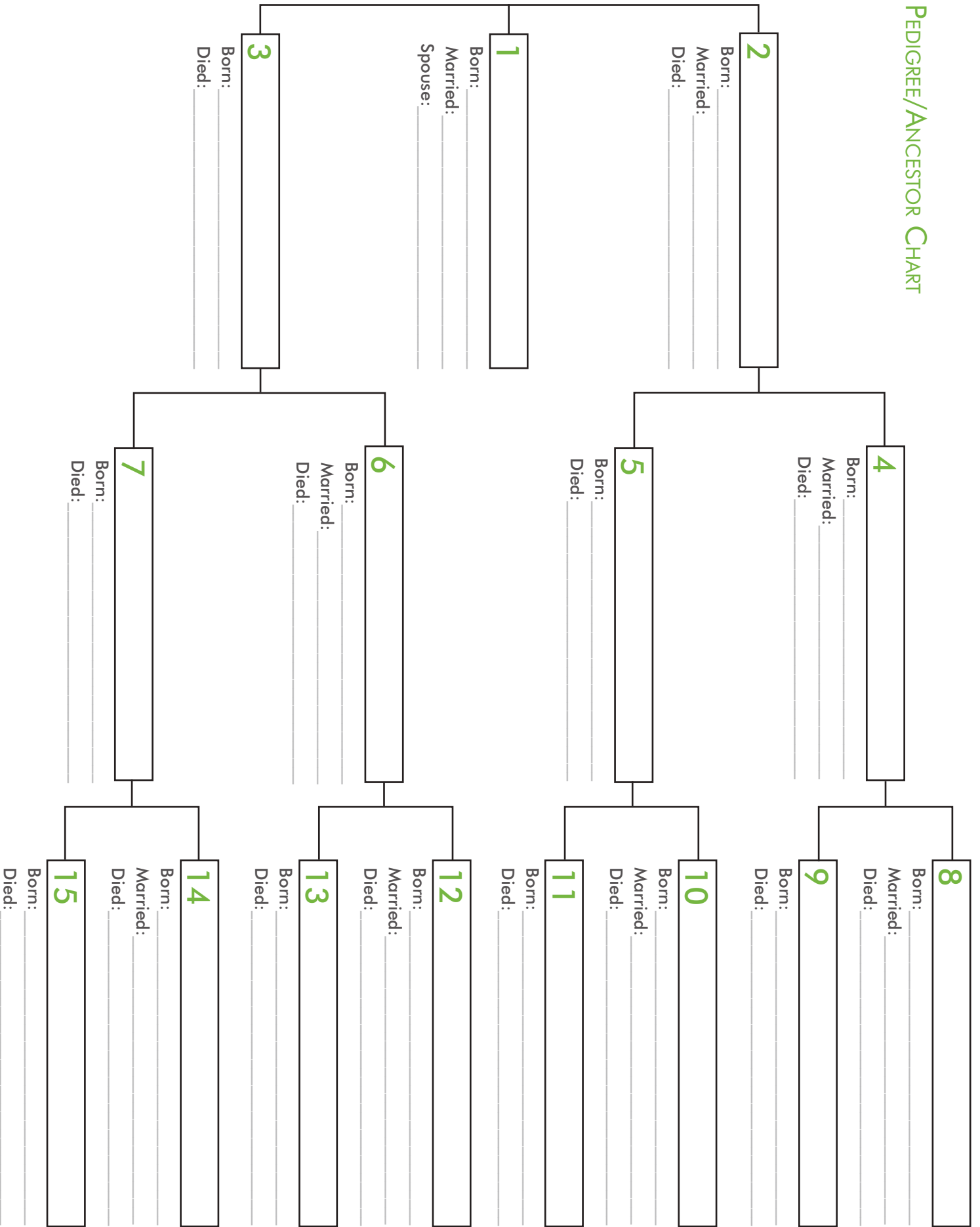
Name:		
	Date:	Place:
Born:		
Baptized:		
Married:		
Died:		
Buried:		
Spouse:		
Children:		

Name:		
	Date:	Place:
Born:		
Baptized:		
Married:		
Died:		
Buried:		
Spouse:		
Children:		

Name:		
	Date:	Place:
Born:		
Baptized:		
Married:		
Died:		
Buried:		
Spouse:		
Children:		



# PEDIGREE/ANCESTOR CHART



## SOURCES LIST

For each part of this unit you will add a certain number of people to your Ancestor Chart. For each person you add to the Ancestor Chart, document your findings with as many primary sources and records as possible. Cite your sources by completing this list of sources. Include the type and location of each source you used for each person. Remember, you only need to complete this information for five people in Part 1, four people in Part 2, and six people in Part 3.

PERSON:

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SOURCES:

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LOCATION:

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PERSON:

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LOCATION:

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