

## QUICK TIPS

### Feeling lost in understanding family history terminology?

Here are some explanations that may help.



**Ancestral File**- A genealogical system developed by the Family History Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that links individuals to ancestors in pedigree, family group, and descendant formats. It contains genealogical information about millions of people from many nations. The current version of Ancestral File is available online as part of [FamilySearch Genealogies](#).

**Brick Walls**- A point in family research where you are unable to move forward with something — a kind of dead end.

**Census Records**- An official enumeration of the population in a particular area. In addition to counting the inhabitants of an area, the census generally collects other vital information, such as names, ages, citizenship status, and ethnic background.

**Christian or Given Name**- Names other than a person's last name.

**Common Ancestor**- Person through whom two or more persons claim descent or lineage.

**Descendancy Research**- Involves choosing an ancestral couple and identifying all of their descendants. The church has authorized members to perform temple ordinances for these descendants (our cousins) if they were not born within the last 110 years.

**Direct Lineage vs. Collateral Relatives**- Direct ancestors are people to whom you are related through parent-child relationships only. Aunts, uncles, siblings, and all other family members who are not direct ancestors or descendants are called “collateral relatives” or “cousins.”

**FamilySearch**- Otherwise known as the Family History Department, FamilySearch is the genealogy organization operated by the church. Previously known as the Genealogical Society of Utah, it maintains a collection of records and resources designed to help people with their family history. The FamilySearch.org website includes Family Tree, searchable historical records, the catalog of the Family History Library, the FamilySearch Research Wiki, FamilySearch indexing and other aids to help in family history.

**Family Group Sheet**- A form that presents genealogical information about a nuclear family.

**FamilySearch Family Tree**- The part of FamilySearch.org that displays your pedigree and has information about your ancestors. Family Tree is a collaborative effort where everyone is contributing to the same tree.

**GEDCOM**- (acronym) [GEnealogy Data COMmunications] A standardized file format for family trees.

**IGI**- (acronym) [International Genealogical Index] A resources of the Family History Library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that contains more than 300 million names; it is an index of the people submitted as part of family trees, or who were extracted from microfilmed church or public records (from as far back as the 1500s).

**Pedigree Chart**- A family tree that records only the direct ancestry of a given individual — that is, the person’s parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and so on, without siblings, aunts, uncles, or cousins.

**RootsTech**- The world’s largest family history conference held annually. It is sponsored by FamilySearch International. Family History Leadership Instruction for leaders and all those involved in family history is held during RootsTech. It is streamed live and is also available online after the instruction.

**Source**- The document, record, publication, manuscript, etc. used to prove a fact.

**Vital Records**- Birth, marriage, death, burial and divorce records.

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