



How to Complete a Family Tree

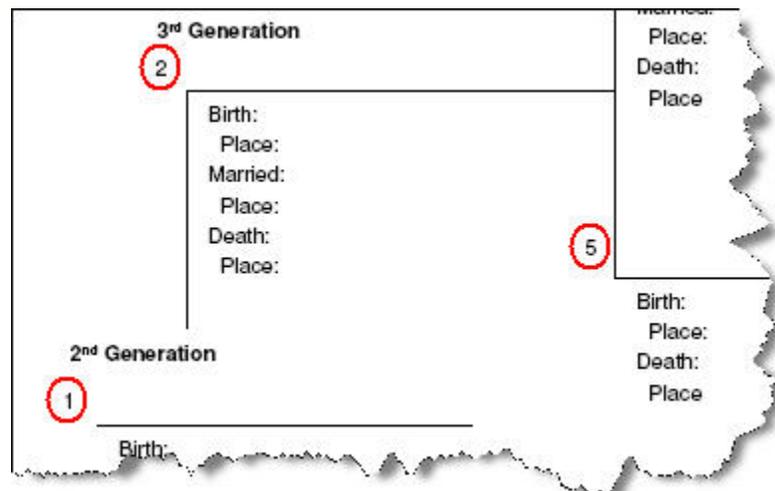
There are a lot of different types of family tree charts. The chart you downloaded with this ebook is called a Six-Generation Pedigree Chart. Really what that means is that it is a basic way to track your family tree going back six generations (we'll explain the generation part shortly).

Don't get caught up in how things look. At the beginning stages, you want to focus on getting solid information about your ancestors. When you've gone back a ways, you can then turn your attention to developing a formal, beautiful archive. You can give your records to a professional scrapbook maker or similar modern day scribe to cull your research into a true work of art your family will cherish.

For now, we're focused on content and filling out a family tree chart properly.

Mastering the Six-Generation Family Tree Chart. To get things rolling, you need to understand the different parts of the chart and how they all come together as a research tool. Make sure you have a print out of the chart in front of you.

First off, you'll need to understand the numbers for each entry. These are the numbers next to the lines on the chart.



Each of these number represents a person you will be searching for. Once you've found this person, you'll enter their information on the line next to the number. (We'll talk about who these people are in a little bit.) The second generation on the first chart is you!

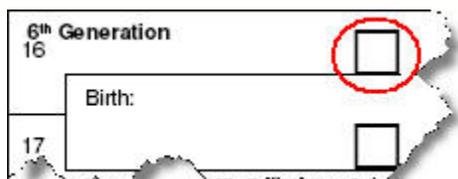
Next let's discuss the "Chart Number", this is the number you enter in the upper left hand side of the page.



If you are just getting started, you'll put a number one here. The idea is that when you reach the 6th generation you'll use the chart number to continue on to subsequent generations. This begs further explanation.

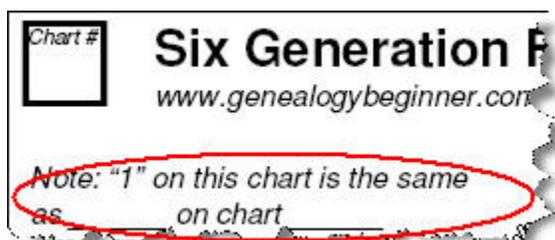
First off, notice how the chart fans out as you move to the right. Like branches of a tree, the chart starts with a single line (you) and "branches out" to two others, these each have two added, and then another two and the overall "tree" expands exponentially. On the example in front of you, while it is only six generations, at the sixth generation, your looking at 16 great-great grandparents (more on this later).

When you do get to the sixth generation, you continue on to the seventh by moving to a new chart. For example, take person 16, the first line under the 6th generation column (the most top-right "slot"). See the box to the right of this line?



This box is used to reference the "chart number" that is used to continue on from the current chart. So, if you were going to start to log ancestors for the great-great grandparent in this spot, you might put a "2" in this box and then when you print out a second six-generation pedigree chart, you'd put a "2" in the the top-left "Chart #" box.

This is where the script under the "Chart #" box comes in.



If this was chart #2 and intended as a continuation to the person in slot number 16 on Chart #1 than we'd make a note here to say that "1 on this chart is the same as 16 on chart 1". The "1 on this chart" refers to slot number one or the first person for whom you are listing information. If you were continuing the tree on to the seventh generation than you would simply copy the information for person 16 on Chart 1 to person 1 on Chart 2. Make sense? A bit confusing if this is the first time you are hearing this but give it a try and think through the logic of it all and it'll come together.

Step-by-Step: Generations One Through Three. With these basics on the parts of the chart in place, we can talk about the actual generations and who you fill in. The first slot, slot number one on the first chart, chart number one is you! That's right, get things started by writing your name down next to item one.

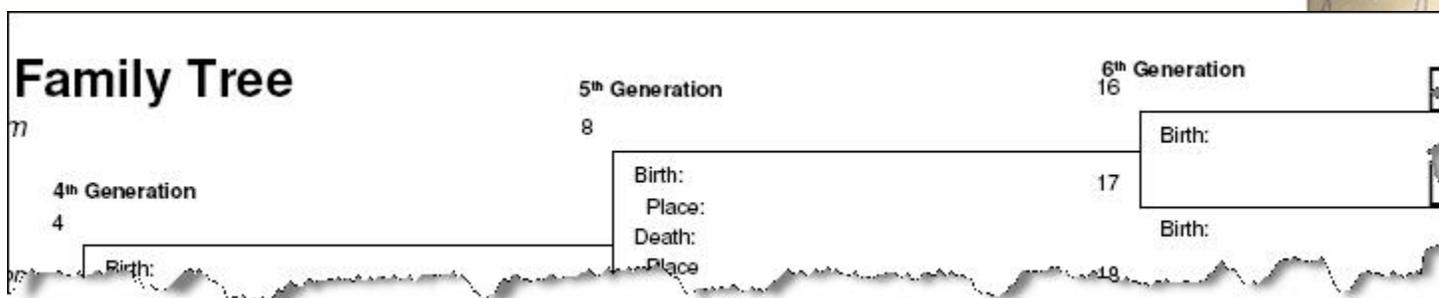
Now... here's the thing, write your name there in pencil. This is a secret that many professional genealogists use to keep track of what formal records they have on file. When they have a hunch or even a pretty good idea of who should go on the tree, they put the name and any other information about the person in pencil. Then, when they have the formal documentation on file to prove it, they switch the information to pen. Pretty neat huh? This makes it so much easier to know what you've researched completely and what you're exploring as leads.

You see, for each person you enter (even yourself) you want to have up to three files on hand. A birth certificate, a marriage certificate, and a death certificate. These documents will provide you with what you need to confirm the next generation back. The birth certificate is the most critical and as you can see, as you move further out on the chart, this becomes the only item you're expected to maintain. Why? because the birth certificate will list the Mother and Father. These names will define the next generation back and get you going on your next search.

So, you've got yourself in slot one. If you have children they are technically the 1st generation on your tree so list them below. You're the second generation, and your parents are the third generation. List your Father as person 2 and your mother as person 3. There you have it. Generations one through three complete. Now it's time to move on to generations four through six.

Step-by-Step: Generations Four Through Six. The fourth generation is your grandparents. You'll see that there are four slots for each of the four grandparents. Two for your Father's folks and two for your Mother's folks. You'll likely be able to get this far with a little work (but not too much). If you're lucky enough to have your parents living (or even your grandparents) than you can speak

to them directly. Later chapters in this guide will help you with how to interview your family to get this critical genealogy information.



The fifth generation, your grandparents' parents (or your great grandparents) is where you'll likely have to start to do some research (also detailed later in this guide - along with a lot of great free resources). This will include eight people and you'll fill them in to slots 8 through 15 as appropriate.

Finally the sixth generation is where you'll start to develop some research skills and have to dig in. You have the information from prior records to get hints to towns, dates, and other items about when and where people were born. As you learn about your great-great grandparents, you'll have developed a total of 31 people. The subsequent chapters in this guide will tell you how to locate public sources in these local areas (without having to visit them personally) to get you the information you need.

Seven Generations and Beyond. And when you have the sixth generation completed, where do you go from there? You start a new chart and tackle the next six generations (bringing you to 12 generations back when you complete it). If you do this for each of your great-great grandparents, you'll have seventeen pedigree charts and really have a full boat of research to tackle. This is how people spend a lifetime developing their family trees.

There is a whole lot more to the art of genealogy. Many genealogists (professional and hobbyists) will archive pictures, family stores, and other records such as deeds, military service records, immigration papers, and other documents that represent the record of a family's history. However, these are the basics of building a family tree and I hope you find it lays the foundation for the rest of this guide.

So... you have no excuse. Read on to the next chapter, follow the action items at the end of each to keep yourself going, and use the links after each subsequent chapter to visit the online research tools. I've tried to identify the free resources so you can minimize your costs.