



Do you ever wonder who your ancestors were, where they lived, or what stories shaped your family's past? Our new **Genealogy Corner** is here to help you uncover those connections! Each month, we'll share resources, tips, and tools to guide you through the rewarding process of researching and preserving your family history.

Whether you're just beginning to trace your roots or have already filled your family tree, you'll find ideas to help you organize your discoveries, explore new databases, and capture the stories that bring your heritage to life. We hope this will help you to keep learning, connecting, and celebrating the generations that came before you.

May 2026: Ready, Set, Digitize

Do you have family photo albums or boxes of slides and negatives? Maybe you have home movies too—but no projector to view them. Converting these items to digital formats allows you to edit, share, back up, and preserve your treasured memories for years to come. The prospect of digitizing your family memories may seem daunting, but breaking the process into steps can make the project more manageable.

Start by creating an inventory of all the items you'd like to digitize. Once you have a list, prioritize items based on condition, importance, and ease of digitization. Next, you'll need a way to do it. There are several options, ranging from do-it-yourself methods to online services to professional help. Here are a few suggestions to get you started:

Scanning services offer mail-in options for slides, negatives, videos, and photos. Popular services include iMemories, ScanCafe, and ScanMyPhotos. **Home scanners** may be worth the investment if you have a large collection, though they typically require a connection to a computer. Some technical skills are often needed for successful use. **Scanning apps** are easy to use on your smartphone and can detect photo edges, crop, and edit images. Two popular options are Adobe Scan and Photomyne. You can try their basic versions for free.

Locally, you can search for companies that will digitize your items, so you don't need to purchase equipment or software. Exeter Public Library offers a Digital Preservation Center where you can convert film reels, slides, photos, CDs, VHS tapes, camcorder tapes, negatives, and DVDs for free. Visit their website to book an appointment with a tech librarian. Here at the Hampton Falls Free Library, you can also make an appointment with our tech specialist, Wendy Harrington, for help and advice on any of these digitizing options.

Finally, consider taking photos of family heirlooms, the rooms in your home, and your outdoor spaces. You might even record a video walkthrough, describing what you see. You—and your descendants—will be glad you took the time to preserve these family treasures.

April 2026: Bringing Your Family Tree to Life: Creative Ways to Share Your Research

After spending hours researching names, dates, and stories, the next step is one of the most rewarding—sharing your family history with others. Whether your audience is tech-savvy or prefers something hands-on, there are plenty of meaningful ways to bring your family tree to life.

Social media can turn family history into an ongoing conversation. Tip: Keep posts short and story-focused—people engage more with a compelling anecdote than a list of dates. Some specific ideas to try; post a “This Day in Family History” feature with photos or short anecdotes, share vintage photos and ask, “Does anyone know who this is?”, try themed posts like “Mystery Monday” or “Throwback Thursday.”

Create a Printed Family History Book. There’s something special about holding your family story in your hands. Tip: Create a short “starter” version (20–30 pages) for relatives who might feel overwhelmed by a full genealogy. Compile biographies, photos, and documents into a book and organize it by family line, location, or theme. Use simple tools like Google Docs or design platforms like Canva to format pages and print copies through services like Shutterfly or Blurb.

Host a Family History Night. Turn your research into an experience! Set up stations with photos, documents, and charts. Include a “mystery photo” table for group detective work. Record relatives telling stories (these are priceless!) These ideas work beautifully at reunions, holidays or other small gatherings.

No matter how you choose to share your family tree, remember: stories matter more than statistics. A single vivid anecdote can spark curiosity and connection far more than a page of names and dates.

March 2026: Chat GPT and Genealogy

Genealogy + ChatGPT is a sneaky-powerful combo. Think of ChatGPT as your research assistant, translator, organizer, and brainstorming buddy. There are many practical ways to use ChatGPT for family tree research, from beginner to deep-dive. ChatGPT can easily transcribe old handwriting after you paste in a photo of a census, will, or letter. Unsure what historical terms such as “cordwainer” mean? ChatGPT can explain them in context. For family trees with foreign records, ChatGPT can help translate and interpret documents in many languages.

ChatGPT can be useful for turning your research into stories, not just charts. Ask what daily life was like in a place or year. Ask about major events during the time of your ancestors. Write sharable ancestor biographies from the dry facts you have collected. Ask for clean timelines from scattered dates. With help from ChatGPT, your family tree can come alive for you and your extended family.

ChatGPT doesn’t replace records—it helps you think better about them. AI is a powerful tool. It’s also an imperfect one that can sound confident while being completely wrong. The best way to use ChatGPT with genealogy is to be willing to verify.

If you are new to ChatGPT and want help getting started, stop by the Library on a Friday between 2 and 4 pm during our Digital Discovery time with Wendy who is experienced with both ChatGPT and genealogy. May your sources be primary and your AI outputs verified!

February 2026



FamilySearch (familysearch.org) is a wonderful starting point for anyone new to genealogy and curious about discovering their family history. Created and maintained by the nonprofit FamilySearch International, the site offers free access to billions of historical records from around the world, including census data, birth and death records, immigration lists, and more. Beginners can start simply by entering what they know about a parent or grandparent, and the site's guided search tools help suggest possible matches and next steps. FamilySearch also features an easy-to-use family tree, step-by-step learning articles, short videos, and webinars that explain research basics and common challenges. Experienced with genealogy? Family Search provides records and documents that are easily accessed to add and verify your family tree data. With its intuitive design, extensive educational resources, and no-cost access, FamilySearch makes exploring your family story approachable and rewarding for all ages and experience levels.

Ask for our Genealogy guidebook at the front desk for more help with genealogy research. Additional links are on our website hamptonfallslibrary.org, click on Resources-Genealogy.

JANUARY 2026

Just getting started in family research? Family Tree Magazine is in Libby!



Family Tree Magazine is a friendly, practical starting point for anyone new to genealogy. It breaks down family history research into clear, manageable steps, offering beginner guides, how-to articles, and tips for using records, DNA tests, and online databases. With inspiration, worksheets, and real-world examples, the magazine helps newcomers build confidence as they begin exploring their family stories, making it an excellent resource to highlight in the library for first-time researchers.

Family Tree Magazine is available for FREE in Libby! Not using Libby eReading app yet? Stop into the Library for help to get started and subscribe to the many magazines available in Libby. A few print copies of Family Tree Magazine are available as well, ask for our Genealogy Research Binder at the front desk.

DECEMBER 2025



Discover a Treasure-Trove for Family History: Cyndi's List

cyndislist.com

If you're just starting your genealogy journey—or you've been researching for years—**Cyndi's List** is a remarkable resource to keep on hand. **Cyndi's List** is a **free and publicly accessible directory** that organizes tens of thousands of links to genealogy, local history, archival, and family-history websites.

The site currently lists **over 317,000 links**, all arranged into more than 200 categories. Because of its size and breadth, it works not only as a starting point, but also as a reference you can come back to again and again.

The “Beginners” category gives a comfortable place to start and because it is free, open, and very well organized, beginners won’t feel lost. New links get added regularly (and broken links reported and updated), the site remains current and can serve both casual hobbyists and serious researchers alike.

Cyndi’s List is more than just a list—it’s a well-organized gateway to the online genealogy world. For library patrons wanting to explore their family history, whether starting from scratch or refining a long-running search, it offers a trusted, comprehensive map of hundreds of thousands of resources. Ask for our Genealogy guidebook at the front desk for more help with genealogy research.

NOVEMBER 2025



This month, we’d like to share a resource that our Library provides, **Ancestry Library Edition**.

Ancestry Library Edition lets you search through historical documents like birth, marriage, and death records; census records; immigration and travel records; military and school records; photos and maps; and more. Ancestry Library Edition is very similar to Ancestry.com, the largest online genealogy database in the world, but differs in some important ways.

Ancestry Library Edition is only available when you are logged into our Catalog page in your web browser. From our home page at hamptonfallslibrary.org, click on “Browse the Catalog”. Next, login on the top right with your patron number and password (your 10-digit phone number). You will find the link under “Electronic Resources”.

You can use **Ancestry Library Edition** without having to create an account. This version of Ancestry makes searching through your family’s history simple without having to pay to see historical documents. It does not allow library users to save records onto a family tree. However, patrons can download records, take screenshots to use on a family tree independent of the Library edition. Ask for our Genealogy guidebook at the front desk for more help with **Ancestry Library Edition**.