

## First steps in Recording Your Family History

Start with yourself and work backwards through the generations. You can use the fan chart inside this information sheet to start recording your ancestors.

If you can, speak to living relatives. They won't be around forever. Record their memories now before it's too late. Don't believe everything you are told. Family stories can become embellished over the years, sometimes bearing very little resemblance to reality.

All this can only take you so far and you will then have to resort to documentary evidence. This may be in the form of family records such as a family bible, birth, marriage and death certificates, diaries, school reports, property deeds, etc. Then there are official records held in archives and libraries dotted around the country and overseas. See our information sheet number 3, **Research Guide**, for a list of resources relating to London's East End.

Many records have now been digitized and made available via the Internet. On-line sources such as *Ancestry* and *Find My Past* can be very good, but they don't contain everything. Be prepared to visit archives and record offices. The effort can be very rewarding and it's a good excuse to visit new places.

If you have a computer it is worthwhile getting a genealogy program to help you record your findings. There are hundreds available and the choice can be bewildering. Before you part with any money try one of the many free programs that are available. If you do decide to make a purchase then try before you buy. All the reputable programs offer a free trial version so that you evaluate the software to see if it's right for you.

Make sure that you note the source of the information you record. This will allow you to go back and check it at a later date. A good computer program will help you do this.

There are a great many published genealogies which can help you. Many websites hold family trees that you can view. Quality is variable. Some can be very good with the sources of information recorded so that you can verify it. Others may be wildly inaccurate, containing many mistakes and no sources to back up their claims. So beware!

There are many good books on how to start recording a family history and it's worthwhile reading one or more of these. Your local library may be able to help.

Join a society like the **East of London Family History Society**. You will find fellow members who can help you get started, answer your questions and you may even find someone researching the same family. The EoLFHS hold frequent meetings with speakers who can help you to expand your knowledge of genealogy and social history. See our information sheet 5, **Programme**, for a full listing. Our website [www.eolfs.org.uk](http://www.eolfs.org.uk) contains message boards where you can make contact with our world wide membership, ask questions, seek advice and record the surnames you are researching.

Good luck with your quest.



### Information sheet 2

# GETTING STARTED



The information in this guide is believed to be correct at the time of publication.

The East of London Family History Society  
[www.eolfs.org.uk](http://www.eolfs.org.uk)  
Registered Charity № 1094419



# 5 Generation Fan Chart

Let the EoLFHS help you fill in the blanks  
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