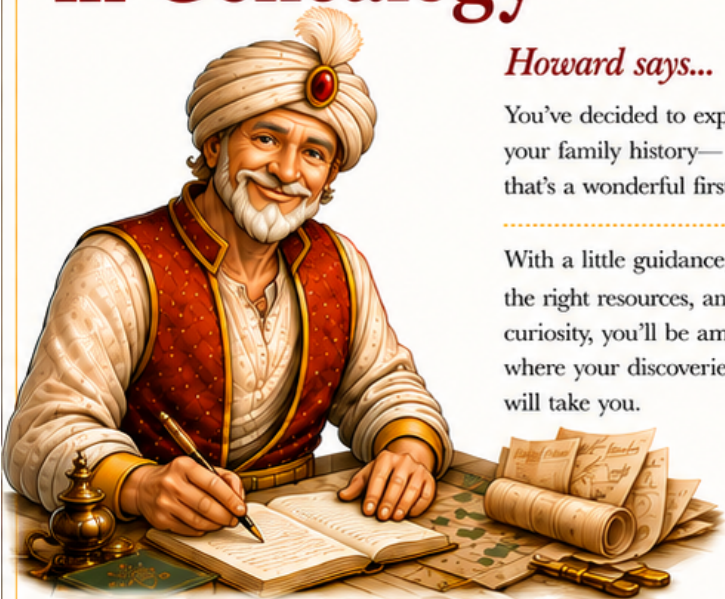


Getting Started in Genealogy



Howard says...

You've decided to explore your family history—that's a wonderful first step!

With a little guidance, the right resources, and curiosity, you'll be amazed where your discoveries will take you.



Who Can Help?

You don't have to do it alone!

- Family and relatives
- Local societies
- Libraries and archivists
- Online communities
- The Howard County Genealogical Society

Asking questions can open doors you didn't even know existed.



Start with What You Know

Begin with yourself and work backward.

- Write down what you know.
- Talk with family members.
- Gather names, dates, and places.
- Look for photos, letters, and documents.



Howard's Tip

Every family has a story. You just need the right clues to uncover it.



Use Quality Resources

Good information leads to better discoveries.

- Start with credible sources.
- Use books, records, and reliable websites.
- Take notes and cite your sources.
- Evaluate what you find.

The best genealogists are careful researchers.



Set Realistic Goals

Genealogy is a journey, not a race.

- Take it one step at a time.
- Celebrate small discoveries.
- Be patient with setbacks.

Every name you find is a door that can lead to many more.



Preserve and Share

Your discoveries are worth keeping.

- Organize your research.
- Save digital and paper copies.
- Share your stories with others.

You are not just discovering your past—you are preserving it for the future.



You're on Your Way!

Every researcher starts somewhere. The important thing is to begin.

Stay curious. Stay organized. Most of all, *enjoy the journey!*

Howard is here to help you every step of the way.



Howard County
Genealogical Society

Founded 1976



hcgsm.org



Join HCGS: hcgsm.org/join



Howard: Howard@hcgsm.org



P.O. Box 274
Columbia, MD 21045

YOUR GENEALOGY JOURNEY

1

Step 1
Welcome!

2

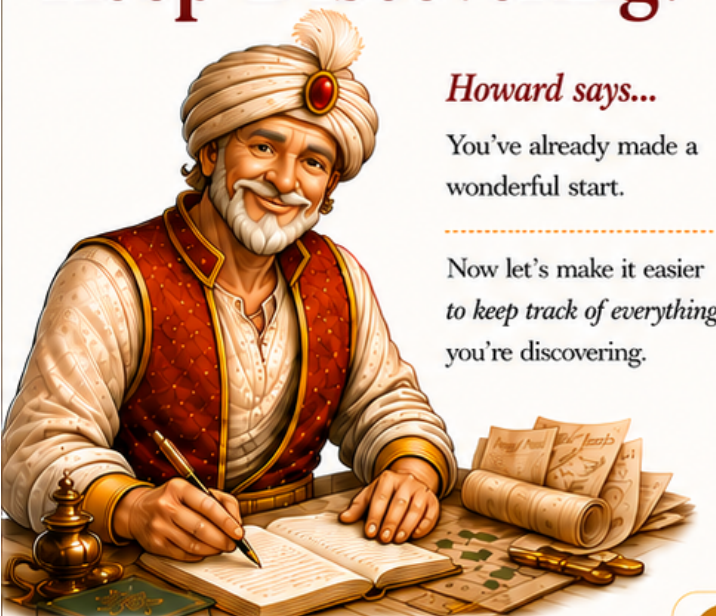
Step 2
Getting
Started



3

Step 3
First
Research

Keep Discovering!



Howard says...

You've already made a wonderful start.

Now let's make it easier to keep track of everything you're discovering.



Organize Your Discoveries

You don't need anything fancy. Just choose a system you'll actually use.

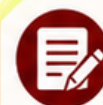
Some people like:

- ☐ A notebook
- ☐ File folders
- ☐ Three-ring binders
- ☐ Computer genealogy software
- ☐ Online family trees



Howard's Tip

Every genealogist eventually develops an organization system that works for them. Yours doesn't have to be perfect—it just has to help you find things again.



Keep Notes!

If you think of something you want to look for...

Write it down!

Otherwise... you'll probably forget before you get home.

A small notebook can become one of your best genealogy tools.



Howard's Treasures

Take a second look.

It's amazing how often you'll discover something you missed the first time.

Go back and take another look at:

- Birth certificates
- Marriage certificates
- Death certificates
- Census records
- Old photographs
- Letters
- Family Bibles



You'll be amazed how often you'll discover something you missed the first time.



Ready to Look a Little Farther?

Many wonderful genealogy resources are available online.

FREE RESOURCES

A great place to begin:



FamilySearch
familysearch.org



Find a Grave
findagrave.com



HCGS Beginner Resources
hcgsm.org



The Library of Congress
loc.gov

SUBSCRIPTION RESOURCES

These services require a paid subscription for full access.

Many libraries—including the Howard County Library System (hclibrary.org)—provide access to some subscription resources.



Ancestry
ancestry.com



Fold3
fold3.com



Newspapers.com
newspapers.com



HCGS members often have access to resources that would otherwise require a subscription.



Don't Forget Local Resources

Some of the best discoveries aren't online.



Your public library



County courthouses



State archives



Local historical societies



The Howard County Genealogical Society

You'll find even more beginner-friendly resources at:

hcgsm.org



Looking Ahead...

Soon the easy clues begin to run out...

And that's exactly when genealogy gets *even more interesting*.

That's when your *First Research Guide* becomes your next adventure.



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Join HCGS: hcgsm.org/join



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YOUR GENEALOGY JOURNEY

1

Step 1
Welcome!

2

Step 2
Getting
Started

✓

3

Step 3
First
Research