

Genealogy Basics – Getting Started, Friends of Irish Research Approach

By Joe Petrie

Friends of Irish Research (FIR) is a CBGHA Affiliate. One of the many services that FIR offers is an introductory seminar, a PowerPoint presentation with hand-outs. It is offered to individuals and groups who want to know: how to start; what information to collect; where to find information; and when to conduct genealogy research. The PowerPoint Seminar is available on the FIR web site, www.friendsofirishresearch.org in the School of Irish Genealogy tab. This document only covers the HOW, WHAT, WHERE and WHEN portion of the Seminar.

In the Seminar, FIR provides a beginners guide – patterned after a CBGHA document. Also, FIR covers Got Genealogy's 10 Golden Rules. In addition, FIR includes a workshop on two of the basic forms, the Pedigree Chart and the Family Group Sheet. Finally, FIR offers free consultations with FIR volunteers on most Friday evenings at Friends of Irish Research (FIR), 899 North Main St., Brockton, MA 02301.

To cover the HOW TO START, FIR focuses on gathering information from family sources and transcribing the information on genealogy forms that are commonly used or plain white paper.

- Start with your immediate family
- Move on to your families – call or visit the elders, grandparents etc.
- Ask about their families
- Ask to see photos
- Ask to see documents

About WHAT TO COLLECT: The goal is to compile vital information on each family member; specifically, date and place of birth, christening, marriage, death, burial and facts about careers, hobbies etc. Realistically, all the information may not be available. To fill blanks, FIR volunteers often use web sites to collect Census records, military records, immigration records, naturalization records, passenger records, border crossing records, obituaries, cemetery records, newspaper articles etc. FIR covers personal preferences like:

- Is Baptism/Christening information really vital?
- Recording unmarried couples with children?
- Recording spouses where a client can't find a surname especially a maiden name?

About WHERE: Identify repositories and web sites. Critical questions are:

- As the Internet coverage increases, do I really need to visit repositories?
- Why use a Family History Center?

About WHEN: When is there an appropriate time and place?

- Do I ask questions at weddings, funerals, wakes etc.? One tip is to collect telephone numbers and email addresses at the event and ask whether the individual is receptive to a call or an email to discuss family genealogy.
- Another is to collect obituary information from a newspaper, at a wake or funeral and call family later.

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Your comments and suggestions are important to me. My address is: joe-apg@norwoodlight.com

Joseph F. Petrie

Founding Member, Friends of Irish Research (FIR)

Member, Cape Breton Genealogy and Historical Association (CBGHA)

Member, Family History Society of Newfoundland and Labrador (FHSNL)

Member, New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS)

Member, Association of Professional Genealogists (APG)