

# Tracing your family tree

This is the third article in a series offering a step-by-step guide for the amateur genealogist.

BY TRISH MICHAEL  
SPECIAL WRITER

**Select a Record to Search**  
The fifth step is to select a record to search. Prior to beginning your search in archives and libraries, your research will be more productive if you know your options. There are two major categories of genealogical records. They are original records and compiled records of previous research.

An original record is an account of a specific event, written at or near the time the event took place. For example, many churches kept records of events about their members. They recorded births and deaths, along with dates for religious events such as christenings, baptisms and weddings. Various laws of governments have also kept records of important events. Original records can provide invaluable information to the researcher.

Some examples of original records are vital records (birth, marriage and death). Most states began keeping them around 1900. You may begin your research process, on the ancestor you have chosen, at a state office of vital statistics. For earlier records, especially marriage records, the clerk's office at the county courthouse may be the easiest source.

Current addresses and fees for obtaining a copy of vital records from each state are given in a booklet "Where to Write for Vital Records: Births, Deaths, Marriages,

and Divorces" (Hyattsville, Md.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Aug. 1987. Publication No. [PHS] 87-1142).

Your local library may have this booklet, or you may purchase it by writing to the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

If vital records are unavailable for the time and region you are researching, a church your ancestor may have attended might have records of christenings, baptisms, confirmations, marriages or burials. If you know an ancestor's religious and where he lived, you may write or visit the church in that area.

Another helpful original record is cemetery records. From time to time in your research, a cemetery might provide names and dates unavailable anywhere else.

Often, family members are buried near each other so headstones or cemetery records will often carry the names of family members. The epitaphs can sometimes be helpful in establishing relationships between ancestors.

Other original records are census, military, probate and immigration records.

Census records reside at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., and throughout the country in regional archives. Call your local library to find the nearest to you.

The U.S. government has taken a census every 10 years since 1790. Since 1860, census records have listed every member of the household, along with

sex, age, country or state of birth, and occupation. Prior to that, only the head of the household was listed. Census records are especially helpful in determining where your ancestors lived.

The federal census is available to the public through 1920. Right-of-privacy laws preclude disclosures after that date. Many public, historical and genealogical libraries have copies of the census records, and these may be accessed on-line, for those who have Internet linkages. The Mormon Church also has a complete set of the census records available on microfilm through its Family History Center.

The names of individuals who served in the military or who were eligible for military service appear in military records.

For copies of most records of service through June 30, 1917, write and request NATE Form 50 from the General Service Branch (NRRG-P), National Archives and Records Administration, 7th and Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20408. For copies after June 30, 1917, write and request NA Form 1349 from the National Personnel Records Center (MPR), 9700 Page Blvd., St. Louis 63132.

This guide was prepared for The Eccentric by West Bloomfield resident Trish Michael, director of public affairs for the Bloomfield Hills State of the Mormon Church. The Family History Center, a genealogical-research library, is on the church grounds at 425 N. Woodward, Bloomfield Hills, and is open to the public.

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## Cerebral Palsy grant awarded

United Cerebral Palsy Association of Metropolitan Detroit (UCP/Detroit), received a \$433,011 grant from United Way for its Turn Obstacles into Opportunities program for people with disabilities.

The grant was announced by Elmer Cerano, executive director of UCP/Detroit, and Al Lucarelli, chair of United Way Community Services' Fund Distribution Committee.

UCP/Detroit's programs are intended to work to help people with disabilities live independently and to promote opportunities to make their own decisions and be included in regular social activities.

Through its collective fundraising, United Way supports many charitable and community service groups. Its Community Services arm works to meet human service needs in the area.

"These allocations are possible because the people of this community care about their friends and neighbors in need. They generously gave \$59.2 million to the Torch Drive to support the essential services provided by agencies like United Cerebral Palsy of Metropolitan Detroit," said United Way Community Services President and CEO Virgil H. Carr.



Admission \$5.00

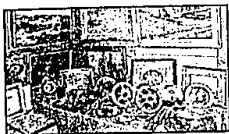
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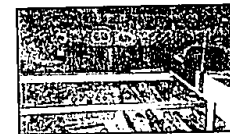
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18th & 19th century furniture, 18th & 19th century furniture, 18th & 19th century furniture



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FUTURE SHOWS: September 20 & 21, Saturday & Sunday, 6am - 4pm; October 19, Sunday 6am - 4pm; November 2, Sunday 6am - 4pm. For further information call (313) 662-9453.