Genealogy Tips and Tricks

Where to Start:

- Begin with most recently deceased family member
- 4-5 Tier chart with basics - Birth, Marriage, Death, Residence.
- Census, land, court & tax records, city directories, Wills/Probate records.
- Vital Records - birth and death indexes/certificates, marriage records, obituaries.
- Military records - pensions, draft cards, service records.
- Ship Passenger Lists and Emigration/Immigration records
- Gather family stories from your older relatives

Vetting, organizing, and recording family history:

- Make a timeline of family history events for each ancestor (Name of event, Date, Source)
- Create a Research Log to track your progress and sources for each ancestor
- Gather proof of family lore thru newspaper articles, family bibles, legal records, gravestones.
- Research history of town or county where your ancestor resided.
- Don't rely by one source! Use multiple sources to corroborate information. Trust but Verify!
- Organize your research! Create a folder/binder for each ancestor with their timelines & sources
- Google "FamilySearch Organize Your Genealogy" for best tips to organize family history
- Travel is inevitable. Keep a jump drive or cloud account to store & access info.

Other resources and tips:

- Contact Genealogy societies, Family History Centers, University special collections, and Genealogy Libraries. Librarians can be your best friend!
- Circle around thru extended family members - include the in-laws
- Research potential neighbors, local employers, church members, local schools, etc.
- Native American - Dawes Rolls, Oklahoma Historical Society, Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Adjust keyword search methods: alternate spellings of names, broaden searches, etc.

Example of Irish Census 1700s

Carnegie History Center
111 South Main St. Bryan, TX. 77803 : Ph. 979-209-5630
Monday - Friday: 10 AM - 5 PM

Recommended records and their content:

Vital Records (Churches, Clerks' offices):
1. Birth Records: parents, godparents names, residence
2. Death Cert: parents, spouse, child names, residence, place of origin, cause of death
3. Marriage/Banns: spouse – some w/parents' names, residence

Local / U.S. Census (before 1850):
1. Heads of Household & Boarder houses
2. Residence
3. Number of females & males each of different age groups
4. Number of female & male slaves of different age groups
5. Occupation

Local / U.S. Census (after 1850):
All mention:
1. Find persons in each household
2. Ancestor country/state of origin
3. Ancestor parents' state or country of origin
4. Occupation
5. Approximate age
6. Place of residence
7. Neighbors & other family members
8. Race (after 1870)
9. Boarders

Each census has different supp info such as:
1. Literate in English or not at all
2. Disabilities (deaf, dumb, insane, idiocy)
3. Veteran status
4. Rent or Own land/house
5. Language spoken
6. Born citizen, Naturalized or Alien

Tax Rolls/Ag. Census (Assessment of Property)
1. Residence
2. Original land grantee
3. Proof land ownership, acres/labors, value
4. Property and livestock (carriages, horses, heads of cattle, etc.)

Maps/Land Records:
1. Original land owner/grantee(s)
2. Trustees, PoA, and Dowars (wives)
3. Plat sizes and abstract & tract numbers
4. Neighbors & other family members
5. Historic Boundaries
6. Bills of Sale (kept w/land records)

City Directories & Phone Books:
1. Residence & Occupation
2. Businesses and service companies

Wills and Probate:
1. Find immediate and extended family members
2. Land and property information
3. Willed slaves, often named
4. Family situation and wealth

Slave Schedules (1850-1860):
1. Lists slave owners (not named slaves)
2. Number of slaves w/ages and gender
3. (B)lack or "(M)ulatto"
4. Number freed or "manumitted"

Military & Pension Records:
1. Records of Service and Combat
2. Family members
3. Birth and Death dates
4. Residence (Draft Cards).
5. Bounty Land awarded
6. POW Status
7. Missed census? Check here.

Ship Passenger Records
1. Family members traveling w/ages
2. Country of origin
3. Year of immigration
4. Ship name

Naturalization and Immigration Records
1. Names of applicant, spouse, children
2. Country of origin
3. Port of entry
4. Vital information
5. Residence & Occupation
6. Physical attributes

Local History and State Sources:
1. TSLAC
2. Published County Histories
3. Handbook of Texas
4. Periodicals of genealogy societies
5. Bound family histories
6. Cemetery records
7. Scanned books online (Google/Internet Archive)