

# Doing Genealogy

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## A. BASIC STEPS IN DOING GENEALOGY

1. Sort out your reasons for wanting to get into doing genealogy and what you are hoping to achieve. Discussing your interest with others, including an active genealogist, can be helpful.
2. Decide the scope of your interest; i.e. what generations you wish to include (e.g. Canadian, Russian, Prussian) and what it is you wish to know e.g. dates, places, profession, stories, etc.
3. Write down what you know about your family. Check out all the written family sources, e.g. autobiographies, obituaries, diaries, birth certificates and other documents, photos, etc.
4. Through calls, interviews and letters go to the living next of kin, relatives and friends of the family for information. Pursue all the clues they provide. Involve as many relatives as you can in the project.
5. Visit centres for genealogical research where staff can give further direction. See the suggested centres and resources below.
6. Decide on a method of recording and filing the information. Use a numbering system and an appropriate legend. Be sure to document carefully all the sources from which your information is taken.

7. Decide on and develop a format of organizing the information for the purpose you intended it e.g. family tree, listings, charts, etc.

See also "On tracing roots and making family trees" by Lawrence Klippenstein and Alf Redekopp's "Genealogy - Where does one begin?" in the "Introduction" of *A Guide to Genealogical Resources at the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Winnipeg, Manitoba*.

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## **B. WINNIPEG CENTRES FOR GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH**

1. Mennonite Genealogy Inc. [Margaret Kroeker](#), Director, 790 Wellington Ave. (mailing address Box 393, R3C 2H6). Tel. 772-0747. Brochures which indicate the services provided are available.

2. Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies (CMBS), [Ken Reddig](#), Director. Address: 1310 Taylor Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, R3M 3Z6. Tel. 669-6575. A Guide to Genealogical Resources at the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies by Alf Redekopp is a compilation of the resources available there.

3. Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives (MHCA), [Alf Redekopp](#), Director; Address: 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., R3P 0M4. Tel. 888-6781.

4. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Family History Centre, 45 Dalhousie, R3T 5R9. Tel. 261-4271. *The Library: A Guide to the LDS Family History Library*, eds. John Cerny and Wendy Elliott, is available at MHCA and CMBS.

## **C. BASIC GENEALOGICAL SOURCES AT MHCA - Mennonites in Prussia.**

Besides relevant subjects in the *Mennonite Encyclopedia* and *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, other articles and books on Mennonite life in Prussia, MHCA (as well as CMBS and the Church of the Latter Day Saints) has available on microfilm numerous of the Prussian Mennonite church records. Several aids (on the reference shelf) are available to determine

which records to survey:

1. A listing of the "Materials on Mennonites in Prussia" (records of births, baptisms, marriages, deaths) held on microfilm at the MHC Archives listed by Jim Suderman, 9 May 1989 and "West Prussian Mennonite Villages (c. 1540-1820)" compiled by Glenn Penner. In this latter record Glenn cross references the villages/Gemeinden to other book sources e.g. Horst Penner's *Ansiedlung Mennonitischer Niederländer im Weichsel Mündungsgebiet ...*, etc.
2. "Index of Prussian Locations : An Alphabetical Listing of Prussian Place Names Listed in the Mennonite Church Books," prepared by Alan Peters, Fresno, California, October 1988.
3. Listings by Adalbert Goertz entitled:  
"Mennonite Villages in the Danzig District, 1818" and  
"Mennonite Villages in the Marienwerder District, West Prussia."
4. Geographical orientation is frequently helpful in tracing ancestors whose location is known.
  - a. William Schroeder and Helmut Huebert, *Mennonite Historical Atlas* (Winnipeg: Springfield Publishers, 1990). Copy on MHCA reference shelf.
  - b. Reference Maps: two volumes of photocopied maps from various sources, with a separate index. See MHCA map collection.

#### **D. BASIC GENEALOGICAL SOURCES AT MHCA - 1870s Immigrants to Canada from Russia**

1. See "Passenger Lists 1874-1880 of Mennonite Immigrants to Manitoba with annotations by Cathy Barkman" published in the book entitled *Bergthal Gemeinde Buch* (Steinbach : Hanover Steinbach Historical Society, Inc., 1993).
2. See the indexes of [Church registers](#) for the Bergthal/Chortitzer Church, Sommerfelder Church, Reinlaender Church and Kleine Gemeinde families.
3. See the *Reinländer Gemeinde Buch 1880-1903 Manitoba, Canada* edited by John Dyck and William Harms (Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 1995)

## **E. BASIC GENEALOGICAL SOURCES AT MHCA - Mennonites in Russia**

1. **Bergthal Gemeinde Buch.** The Bergthal Colony was founded in 1836. This register was begun in 1843 and brought to Canada during the 1870s migration. It was published by the Hanover Steinbach Historical Society in 1992 together with the Quebec passenger lists and the 1881 Federal Census data for the communities where the Mennonites settled in Manitoba.

2. **Schönhorst Register.** This church family register book was begun by 1844 in the village of Schönhorst in the Chortitza Colony (Flemish church). The original was brought to Canada after World War II and photocopies deposited in the archives.

3. **Fürstenland Colony Baptism Register.** 1885-1926.

## **F. GENEALOGICAL SOURCES AT MHCA - 1920s and later Immigrants to Canada from Russia.**

1. The Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization records 1924-30 and 1947-56 are deposited at the MHCA. These are immigration records (registers and certificates) of Mennonites who emigrated from the USSR to Canada. They are located in boxes labeled Volumes 3390-3412; also on microfilm #48-53. A further seven volumes contain the financial ledgers for the period 1923-30 and one 1947-64. An index consisting of the name of the head of household entered on the immigration certificates has been compiled.

2. The many published and unpublished genealogies that may tie into various families being researched. The CMBS has a complete listing. The holdings for MHCA and Mennonite Genealogy Inc. would be similar, with exceptions.

## **G. GENEALOGICAL SOURCES AT MHCA - Mennonites of Swiss origin.**

MHCA has virtually no genealogical records for persons from a Swiss (or



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Toll Free 1-866-888-6785  
T: 204-888-6781  
F: 204-831-5675  
E: [office@mennonitechurch.ca](mailto:office@mennonitechurch.ca)  
W: [www.mennonitechurch.ca](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca)

Third World- origin) Mennonite family. However, the following could be helpful:

1. Conrad Grebel Genealogy Resources compiled by Sam Steiner and Gord Isaac, December 1989. These include listings of books, microfilms (of census returns for Ontario counties), cemetery records, Bibles, about 295 genealogies (including some Russian Mennonite ones).
2. A Bibliography of Mennonites in Waterloo County and Ontario. 2nd edition. Calvin W. Redekop.
3. Mennonite Family History, a surname index (of Mennonites, Amish and Brethren) in two volumes. Published by Mennonite Family History, J. Lemar and Lois Ann Mast, P.O. Box 171, Elverson, PA 19520-0171, U.S.A.