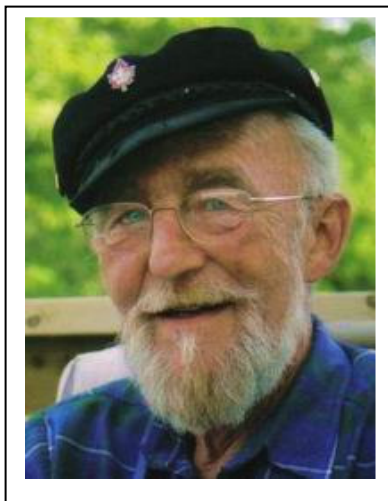


# The Family Historian

Patrick Wohler

Column #9

## Forms and Charts



Forms and charts abound in genealogy. They are intended to help us to record data in an organized and consistent fashion and to prepare reports that are clear and easy to understand. If you use a genealogy program on your computer, it is loaded with them. You enter data into them and print reports on them.

Where I find forms most useful is when I am in the field doing research. After entering my key findings, I am anxious to move on but looking at my form I note that there are several empty categories that are often overlooked like source of the information, location of the tombstone, etc. We often overlook these things because they're boring and we are ready to look for more information but they are an essential part of our research and I find the reminder helpful.

You can get too enthusiastic about forms and design one for every possible research situation but then you'll spend more time deciding what form to use than doing the actual research. There are a few basic forms used by most researchers and they are available at no cost from several sources. If you have internet access you can download a variety of these forms from the sites below.

[www.familytreemagazine.com/forms/download.html](http://www.familytreemagazine.com/forms/download.html) , [www.ancestry.com/save/charts/ancchart.htm](http://www.ancestry.com/save/charts/ancchart.htm) ,

Most introductory books on genealogy, including the one discussed below include sample forms and grant you copyright permission (if you bought the book) to photocopy the forms for your own use. The Ontario Genealogical Society sells templates for forms on card stock that you can copy as required. They do have forms for recording information from the Canadian Censuses which are very useful and not available from any of the above sources which are all American. You can reach the OGS at: [www.ogs.on.ca/](http://www.ogs.on.ca/) , select "Publications", then from the left hand menu select "Research Forms".

You can still design your own forms if, like me, you enjoy playing with that sort of thing.

### For Your Bookshelf

Croom, Emily Ann; *Unpuzzling Your Past; A Basic Guide to Genealogy*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1995

You can usually have a little more confidence in a book that has gone through several editions and this is certainly true of Croom's book. She covers all the basics of family history research and does it quite well with lots of examples. The only drawback is that it is designed for research in the United States and highlights American government institutions but if some of your ancestors have to be researched in American sources, this is not even a drawback. I found this a very helpful book and I got my copy from Chapters for a little over \$20.

### Serendipity

Horace Walpole coined this word in 1754 to mean the faculty of happening upon fortunate discoveries when not in search of them. Family historians frequently experience this phenomenon. I recently received a request from a lady in Southern California asking me for information on church records for a town in the Laurentians. She told me she was looking for information on the family of Arthur Mason and his wife Elizabeth Smith and she explained how her husband was related to them. Well... Arthur and Elizabeth are my great-great-grandparents and her husband is my second cousin from a branch that we have been unable to trace. My keyboard was almost smoking as I hurried to respond to her.

I welcome comments, queries, and suggestions at: [p\\_wohler@hotmail.com](mailto:p_wohler@hotmail.com)

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'You gotta love it when that happens.'

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