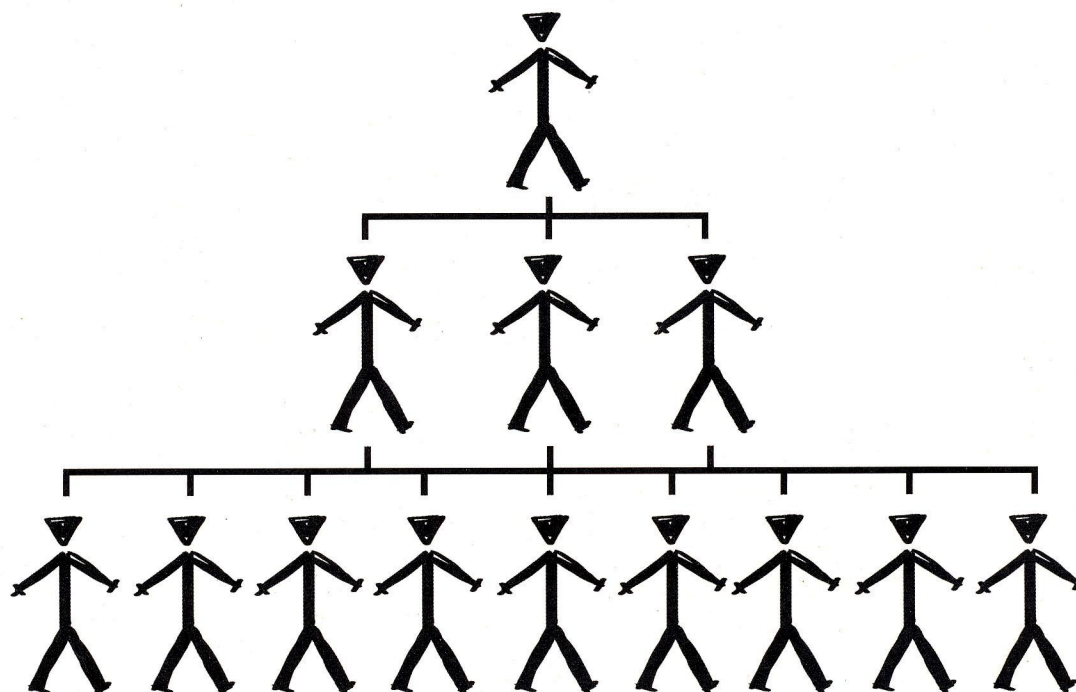


Cousins Explained

Christine Woodcock helps us to make sense of those family relationships



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MOST OF US LAUGH WHEN WE hear the chorus "I'm my own Grandpaw", but do we really understand the familial connections we share? Understanding these relationships, and being able to speak intelligently about them, is an important part of being a genealogy buff.

The first generation relationships are fairly easy: mother, father, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, cousin. Beyond that, confusion often sets in. Let's try to simplify our understanding.

Greats and Grands

We know that our parent's parents are *our* grandparents. Beyond that generation, they are great-grandparents. We add

another "great" for every generation we go back. But to help others keep up with our understanding, it is so much easier to say "my five times great" grandmother, rather than repeating "great" five times. This signals that the woman you are talking about is seven generations back from you (your parents are one generation, grandparents second generation, then one more generation for each "great" making it a total of seven generations).

Siblings of your grandparents are great aunts or great uncles. Similarly, siblings of your "greats" are X-times great aunts or X-times great uncles. These are also often referred to as great-grand aunts and great-

grand uncles. Although, this may be a smoother way for the words to flow off the tongue, it does not change the relationship. A great-great aunt and a great-grand aunt are the same thing.

Cousins and Their Removal

Most of us understand the cousin relationship. The children of my aunts and uncles are my cousins. Beyond that, our understanding tends to wane. But it doesn't need to. My cousin's children are still my first cousins. But they are one generation younger than me, so we say they are once removed. Similarly, my cousin's grandchildren are still my first cousins (they come from my first cousin), but they are now

Relationships

lived near one another. For instance, my miners would have worked for the same coal company, and would have lived in the miners housing provided by that company. I can see in the 1861 census returns for Slamannan that they lived within blocks of one another. Often next door, or just a few doors down.

Slamannan is a village in southeast Stirlingshire, Scotland. There were a number of small mines in the area of Slamannan and, although the village has been around for centuries, it developed primarily into a mining village in the mid 1800s. The total population of the village in 1861 was 482. Of those, 28 were my Fowler ancestors. By looking at the 1861 census records, it is easy to connect siblings living with their spouses and chil-

dren. These are the same names that I find as informants on death registrations, witnesses on marriage records, or even as "those destined to" on immigration records.

Similarly, in Roughrigg, a small mining village in Shotts Parish, Lanarkshire, Scotland, there were two families: the Crawfords and the Fowlers. Certainly these weren't the only families, but they were large families. As you go through the children of these two families, you find that there were three separate intermarriages. Three of the 10 Crawford children married three of the 11 Fowler children. When these sets of siblings from separate families marry, their children become what is known as *double cousins* in that they share the same four grandparents, as well as all of

the same maternal and paternal aunts, uncles and other cousins. (This is when it feels like you might really be your own grandpaw!)

When it comes to emigrating, you will often find that family groups migrated together. Ships lists will show parents and several children. In my husband's family, three of the other passengers aboard the same ship as his paternal great-grandparents married into the family once they arrived in Canada. This group settled in the same town and worked at the same factories. They were witnesses at each other's weddings and christenings. They lived within a three block radius of one another. They attended the same church and show up together in the church registers. They are buried in the same cemetery. One daughter, in particular, seems to be in the place where new immigrants went to live. She is listed as a next of kin on several sets of attestation papers and her address is used as the home address for the enlisting soldiers.

Knowing the people in your ancestors cluster helps you to better know your ancestors. You just have to find them!

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How to Use a Relationship Chart

Common Ancestor	Child	Grand child	Gr. Grand child	2x Gr. Grand child	3x Gr. Grand child	4x Gr. Grand child	5x Gr. Grand child	6x Gr. Grand child
Child	Sibling	Niece / Nephew	Grand Niece / Nephew	Gr. Grand Niece / Nephew	2x Gr. Grand Niece / Nephew	3x Gr. Grand Niece / Nephew	4x Grand Niece / Nephew	5x Gr. Grand Niece / Nephew
Grand child	Niece / Nephew	First Cousin	First Cousin 1x Rem.	Second Cousin 1x Rem.	First Cousin 3x Rem.	First Cousin 4x Rem.	First Cousin 5x Rem.	First Cousin 6x Rem.
Gr. Grand child	Grand Niece / Nephew	First Cousin 1x Rem.	Second Cousin	Second Cousin 1x Rem.	Second Cousin 2x Rem.	Second Cousin 3x Rem.	Second Cousin 4x Rem.	Second Cousin 5x Rem.
2x Gr. Grand child	Gr. Grand Niece / Nephew	First Cousin 2x Rem.	Second Cousin 1x Rem.	Third Cousin	Third Cousin 1x Rem.	Third Cousin 2x Rem.	Third Cousin 3x Rem.	Third Cousin 4x Rem.
3x Gr. Grand child	2x Gr. Grand Niece / Nephew	First Cousin 3x Rem.	Second Cousin 2x Rem.	Third Cousin 1x Rem.	Fourth Cousin	Fourth Cousin 1x Rem.	Fourth Cousin 2x Rem.	Fourth Cousin 3x Rem.
4x Gr. Grand child	3x Gr. Grand Niece / Nephew	First Cousin 4x Rem.	Second Cousin 3x Rem.	Third Cousin 2x Rem.	Fourth Cousin 1x Rem.	Fifth Cousin	Fifth Cousin 1x Rem.	Fifth Cousin 2x Rem.
5x Gr. Grand child	4x Gr. Grand Niece / Nephew	First Cousin 5x Rem.	Second Cousin 4x Rem.	Third Cousin 3x Rem.	Fourth Cousin 2x Rem.	Fifth Cousin 1x Rem.	Sixth Cousin	Sixth Cousin 1x Rem.
6x Gr. Grand child	5x Gr. Grand Niece / Nephew	First Cousin 6x Rem.	Second Cousin 5x Rem.	Third Cousin 4x Rem.	Fourth Cousin 3x Rem.	Fifth Cousin 2x Rem.	Sixth Cousin 1x Rem.	

Abbreviations: Gr. = "Great"

Rem. = "Removed"

To find the relationship between two individuals with a common ancestor, follow these instructions. Assuming Individual "A" is the 3x Gr. Grand child of the common ancestor, place him in the 3x Gr.

Grand child portion along the top of the chart. To make things simple, assuming that individual "B" is also a 3x Gr. Grand child of that common ancestor, place him in the 3x Gr. Grand child of portion along the left hand side of the chart. Follow both lines to their intersection, and you will find that they are Fourth Cousins to each other.

(Courtesy Dave Hunter and The Island Register:
Source Code and Graphics © 1997)

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two generations younger, and so we say they are first cousins twice removed. Her great-grandchildren are three times removed and so on down the line.

My children and my cousin's children are second cousins. The common ancestor they share is further back in time, making the connection less distinct. As with first cousins, the descendants are always second cousins, but one generation removed for every generation further descended, or further away from the common ancestor. So, my second cousin's children are *my* second cousins once removed. My second cousin's grandchildren are *my* second cousins twice (two generations) removed and so on.

A Cousin By Any Other Name

In reality, although we may be second cousins, or first cousins once removed, we often still tend to refer to each other as "cousins" as if it were a first generation connection. It is really only in terms of genealogy that the true distinctions matter, and more for our individual understanding than of the actual connection to us. In my family, we refer to my parent's cousins as aunts and

uncles, more out of respect for their age than to distinguish their relationship to us.

Beyond the spectrum

To complicate things even further, our ancestors often referred to people as their aunts, uncles or cousins even though there was no actual kin relationship. These endearments might have been given to close neighbors, parent's friends or other people who were important to the family. This can sometimes come into play in records such as immigration records where our ancestor has to declare "to whom you are destined". They may state they are destined to their cousin, but that person may in fact have no kin relationship with them whatsoever. This is where it becomes necessary to research deeper and perhaps to branch out to their "clusters".

Cluster Genealogy

Do you remember this snippet of a song from the popular PBS television show, *Sesame Street*?
*"Who are the people in your neighbourhood....
They're the people that you meet,
When you're walking down the street,
They're the people that you meet
each day."*

Well, that's important to consider about your ancestors too. Who were the people in their neighborhood? Examining the connections to your ancestors, whether cousins, workmates or neighbors is a great way to learn more about their day-to-day lives, and is really a key way to understand their social history, while adding context to their lives.

The official term for this type of genealogical research is "Cluster Genealogy." It is getting a lot of press lately, but for many of us, it is the way we have been doing business for years. An ancestor's "cluster" is their extended family, their friends, their neighbors, their workmates. Census records, passenger lists and wills are great ways to identify additional family members.

Now that we understand the concept of "moving across the lines" relationships, it might also be worthwhile searching for in-laws and neighbors as well. Why neighbors, you ask? Well, in many instances, neighbours may actually turn out to be relatives. If a family were farmers, miners or fishermen, quite often you will find that they not only shared a common occupation, but also that they

Relationship Charts

For help in keeping the relationship lines straight, there are a number of websites where you can find a chart which can be printed off for personal use and kept close at hand during your research.

Here are a few examples:

www.islandregister.com/cousin.html (The Island Register website, Prince Edward Island genealogy)

http://rwgguide.rootsweb.ancestry.com/chart_relations.htm (Rootsweb)

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~gentutor/chart.html> (Rootsweb)

<http://genealogy.about.com/library/nrelationshipchart.htm> (About.com/genealogy)