Why this system was developed

Using designated numbers to represent specific families is a more efficient method for filing large collections of genealogical material. Computers process numbers faster than names; numbers are faster to write on papers for filing than a full name, and names change frequently due to:

      phonetic spelling (writing produced by how something sounds)

      changes in spellings at immigration due to different letter characters representing sounds

      changes brought about by scribes who misunderstood what was heard

      changes introduced by clerks taught to write letters differently in different court hand.

The main goals are to

File information easily and accurately
Retrieve information quickly
Preserve documents

How is this done?

Items providing evidence on the life of a person should stay filed with that person.
Genealogy computer software programs automatically assign unique numbers to people.
Supportive papers are filed behind numbered tabs that match those assigned by the program.
Rules selected by the user determine how materials are filed and retrieved.

Background

Genealogists keep track of direct-line individuals using pedigree charts, and collateral family members using family group records. A family group can be any unit of people who lived together.

Because a person could live in several family groups throughout a lifetime, genealogy computer software programs provide a unique individual number as well as a unique family group number.

Most genealogy computer software programs have options to print a family group number somewhere on the printed record.

An individual whose sibling(s) is/are known can always be part of a family group even if he/she has no current parents listed at the present time.

Copies of paper files should be filed where they can be kept secure, easily accessed, and re-evaluated when necessary. Family History Notebooks fill these requirements.

Filing Choices

At least four choices need to be made by the fi¬ler once the system is set up. These choices guide the fi¬ler as well as future users. Select one bulleted filing option from each of the four numbered tabs below. The next page will illustrate how these basic filing rules can be merged into your personal filing steps. Your Filing Steps would then be placed in the front of your notebooks along with a statement of where these records should go in the event of your death.

1

A document containing the name of an individual in my system will be filed behind the family group numbered tab where that person lived with his or her:

First family group (if the person is not known to have married)

OR

Latest famil y group (last spouse, for example),

OR

Under any family group where the person lived at the time of an event as indicated on the document to be filed.

2

A document that applies to multiple people in the same family group (such as everyone is listed on a federal census record) will be filed:

Under a SURNAME tab repre-senting the individual's last name (but still transcribing the docu-ment as explained previously).

OR

Under the family group number tab of the eldest, direct-line family in my family after a transcript of the document has been made and pasted into the notes for each of the other family members so the evidence is with each of them, but I will only file one copy of the original document.

3

A document that applies to multiple people with the same or different surnames and in different family groups (such as a published genealogy) will be filed:

Behind a SURNAME tab but when the information behind that tab contains more documents than can be quickly reviewed in less than a minute, then the SURNAME information will be broken down by LOCATION (country or state, then county, then city or township) then by SUBJECT such as SMITH, AZ, Census, or SMITH, CA, Monterey Co., Vital Records

OR

Behind a SURNAME tab and the document's transcription will be copied and pasted in the notes area of each person the document involved

4

A document that applies to multiple people with different surnames (and it is not known if they are related to the family as yet or not) will be filed:

Behind a LOCALITY tab subdivided by country (if working on several coun-tries) or by state if working only in the U.S. However, when the information behind that tab contains more documents than can be quickly reviewed in less than a minute, then the information will be broken down by smaller units such as the county and then city or township; and also by SUBJECT such as AZ, Census, or CA, Monterey Co., Vital Records

OR

Behind a tab labeled "TO BE DATA ENTERED" and once data entered, placed under that surname tab.

Explain Your Steps

Where to Find Sources of Evidence for Each Person

Sources are entered in the notes field for each individual. A source is comprised of 1) a sentence listing all important data (such as the library where the book or microfiche was found, the title, author, call number, and page for the record) for someone else to find that same record, 2) a transcript, extract, or abstract of the words in the record, and 3) when necessary, an explanation by the researcher to explain something in the record.

If multiple people are listed in the same record, the source citation, transcript, and explanation is copied and pasted into the notes for each person in that record who has a potential relationships to the individual being researched.

Where to Find a Paper Copy of the Sources for Each Person

A document providing information on one individual will be found behind the family group numbered tab. That tab number corresponds to the family group number where the individual is listed as a husband or wife. The number is assigned by the computer software program used to produce the family group printout.

If the individual's marriage was unknown or a marriage never occurred, the documents would be filed behind the family group numbered tab that corresponds to the individual's parents.

If the person married several times, all documents regarding the individual were placed behind the family group numbered tab representing the last marriage.

How to Locate an Individual's Family Group Number

Direct-line ancestors are found by looking behind a tab labeled Pedigree Charts found in the front of the first binder in the Family History Notebooks. Across from each marriage date is a number which refers to the family group numbered tab. For direct-line individuals, using the family group numbers on the pedigree chart is the fastest way to find a person.

Family group numbered tabs run in numerical order throughout the Family History Notebooks. On the spine of each notebook is given the series of numbered tabs in that binder. The family groups are in the order in which each family group was created. Go to the corresponding tab in the notebook to find a copy of the family group with the documents filed behind it that provide the evidence for members of that family.

All other collateral individuals are found by referring to a list behind the tab labeled Alpha Index in the front of the first binder in the Family History Notebooks. The report labeled Alphabetical Index with Family Group Numbers, is designed to list alphabetically every individual in the file, and then across from the name to list every family group number with which the individual was listed. Find the person's name, jot down the numbers, and then find the corresponding numbered tab in the binders.

Some genealogy software programs actually cross-reference on the family group other family groups associated with it. For example, a person's parents would be cross referenced, as well as every marriage for the person's children. Look for the family group numbers across from every marriage as explained in www.FileYourPapers.com.

When to File Papers Behind Named Tabs

In every family are found documents that do not apply to one particular individual or family, such as published family histories, journals, indexes to state census records, documents which cover more than one surname of interest, or records which provide historical information about areas that give support to evidence, or how research is done is specific areas. These papers are filed as follows:

Documents that cover not only more than one family of the same surname, but those families lived in multiple locations, were filed under a surname tab. For example, pages from the Morton Families of the South, The Morton/Morten Families of New England, and The Descendants of Robert Morton would be labeled as follows:

Surname | Example: | Morton Family

When there were many documents which covered the surname as described above, they were all in one location (such as Ohio, or England), and that location is too big (as now filed in the binder) to be searchable in seconds, the documents were further subdivided by location behind the surname. An example would be:

Surname, Locality | Example: | Morton Family, Ohio | Morton Family, England

If it still takes too long to review the documents filed under the above "Surname, Locality" tab, then the records were subdivided further, for example:

Surname, Locality, Subject

Example: | Morton Family, England, IGI Entries | Morton Family, England, Vital Records

Morton Family, Ohio, Land Records | Morton Family, Ohio, Military Records

Morton Family, Ohio, Vital Records

When documents cover more than one surname, they are not filed in the surname binder, but in a locality binder, in which documents are filed from the largest jurisdiction down to the smallest as demonstrated here:

Ohio

(If it takes longer than a minute to search through these records, go to the next level)

Ohio, Knox County

(all subjects pertaining to this county regarding all subjects)

(Once too much to find in a few seconds go to the next level down)

Ohio, Knox Co., Land

(State, County, Subject)

(Once too much to find in a few seconds go to the next level down)

Ohio, Knox Co., Land, 1845-1880

(State, County, Subject, Time Period)

Many unique subject files are found in each family. If the family had a British line, then information on the shires of England might be mentioned, as well as maps of the area. If one of the ancestral lines ended up in Mexico, there might be a tab on how to understand the notarial systems of Mexico where various pages from instructional booklets could be filed. Research planners are also documents that need to be studied often. I have chosen to put my research planners in the front of my binders after the alpha index. Subject examples found most often in these locality binders would be:

Census Indexes

Court Records
(see also Probate)

Histories

Land and
Land Indexes

Maps

(Best if filed under a locality rather than a surname)

Military Records

Probate

(Wills, Intestate, Administrations, etc.)-see also Court Records

Research Planners

(placed in the front of binders after Alpha Index)

Vital Records

(Birth, Marriage, Death, or Divorce Records)

Every Family has photographs, original marriage licenses, or other important papers that were not photocopies. These documents were filed in archival-quality polypropylene sheets in the proper areas as described above.

As new items are discovered about the family, they may be easily added to this collection which expands and contracts as easily as removing some tabs from a notebook and placing them into a new notebook. When the notebook is thus updated, update the tab numbers or subject matter on the spine label to make it easy to locate anything in the future.

As you add new families to your database, just add new Family Group Record tabs to the end of the collections. (See info at www.FileYourPapers.com)

If you merge families together, remember to pull out the old papers, file them under the new family group numbered tab, and eventually print a new alpha index.

In the Event of My Death,
I Wish These Materials to Go To: