Creating Beautiful Family Trees Using Online Chart Companies

<u>Decisions</u>
1) What are you printing a chart for? This is a key item to understand. Are you printing this to take to a family reunion? Are you expecting people to be able to write on the chart? Do you care if the chart gets accidently ripped? Are you displaying this chart in your home? Are you creating a chart as a gift for family members? Answering these questions about what you are printing this chart for is critical before you get started so you can plan for what you need.
2) Color – Is it only black and white? Do you want photos on it? Do you want colors? Are the generations color-coded? The number of colors and/or photos can affect the price of the chart.
3) Do you need multiple copies? If you're giving this chart as a gift to multiple family members, then do you need more than one copy of it. Do you need extra copies for a family reunion? Make sure you know this before ordering your chart.
4) Sizing – Most charts printed using online companies are not small charts. Think poster size (24"x36") to start. How big do you need this chart to be? If you're displaying this at home, then what size wall space do you have to display this? Measure twice, cut once is a saying that carpenters use to make sure they don't make mistakes. It applies here – how big of a chart do you need?
5) Durability – Do you want something that lasts? This does go back to the first decision as well – do you care if this chart gets ripped at a family reunion. At that reunion, will it be displayed on a wall, or is it so big it needs to be on the ground where people can walk on it? This can make a difference in the paper stock (how thick a paper is) you order for the chart.

<u>Chart Styles</u>
Tree charts
Pedigree – starts with a home person and moves backwards in time. Typically printed left to right on a page. Can be done vertically also.
Descendant – starts with a couple/person and moves forwards in time.
Circular – variation of the descendant or pedigree chart that plots the family starting from a central person.
Hourglass – starts with a home person and moves forwards and backwards in time below and above the central person.
Bowtie – Starts with either a single person and traces paternal line on the left and maternal line on the right or starts with a couple and traces one person on the left and another on the right.
Timeline Charts – can start with a person and go back in time on a line. Can depict lifetimes of people as horizontal bars. Significant world events can be added to this to see the history of people's lives.
Fan Charts – starts with a single person and moves backwards in time in a semi-circle fan shape. Some variations will move forward in time as well for 2-3 generations. Can be changed to be a full 360 degree circular chart.

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Decorative Charts – these can be a variety of any of the above charts printed with a background image or a stylized border or some other decoration. Many companies offer these by default.

Custom Charts – if you can dream it, it can be printed. The question here is: What do you want the chart to show?

Chart Sizing

Poster Sizes – some start at 16"x20" and go as large as you want.

Circular – can be useful for more compact charting. Plots ancestor generations in rings starting with a single person. Can still end up with a large chart when there are many ancestors.

Printing from your program

Online genealogy companies offer a variety of printing options.

Online charting companies may require you to send them your chart in a PDF format.

Some online companies work with specific genealogy programs as well.

Make sure you have the page setup correctly. Make sure the paper size and layout are correct before saving as a PDF. Most Mac and PC programs allow you to save as a PDF. **Preview your chart before you save to make sure it's on one page.**

Customize Paper size – Mac and PC print functions allow you to customize the paper size. It could be under page layout or page setup depending on your program. Make sure you know what size chart you want to order and set your paper size accordingly for printing. You may have to adjust paper size a few times to get it on one sheet of paper.

Online Companies

What format does the company need your information in? PDF, GEDCOM, or Genealogy Program file? This is key. Some online printing companies work with the major genealogy programs for the PC and/or Mac and can accept those files to make it easier to print charts with them. Some only accept PDFs or GEDCOMs.

1) Cyndi's List of chart vendors - http://www.cyndislist.com/charts/vendors/
2) Ancestry Graphics & Printing – works with a large amount of PC & Mac software - http://www.ancestryprinting.com/
3) Family Chartmasters – works with most PC programs. Offers a variety of blank charts. https://familychartmasters.com
4) Genealogy Wall Charts – http://www.genealogywallcharts.com Works with data from Family Search Family Tree (http://familysearch.org).
5) Heartland Family Graphics – http://www.familygraphics.com
6) My Canvas – Ancestry.com only. https://www.mycanvas.com/products/family-tree-posters/
7) My Heritage – lots of printing options under the Family Tree menu – http://www.myheritage.com