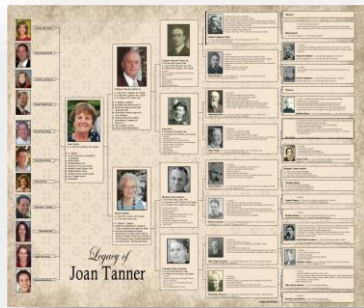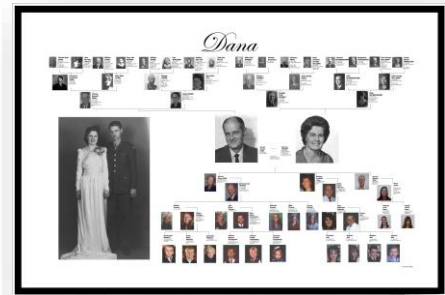# *Voila: 101 Ways to Design a Pedigree Chart:*

Presented by Janet Hovorka
janet@familychartmasters.com

The visual expression of a family's history can be a powerful communication and research tool for the genealogist as well as the non-genealogist. Charts are an inspiring way to show a span of a family. Over the 15 years that we have been printing charts, we have had people ask us for all sorts of charts that have been used in many different ways. I'm excited to share with you the different charts we have seen created.   Whether you use a printing service, or draw one out yourself, charts can really help you see the big picture and get more work done.
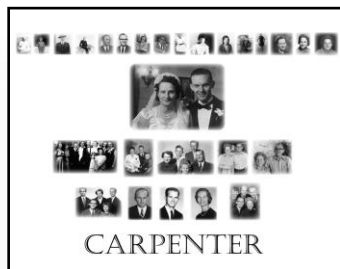
Who to include:
Ancestors.
Descendants,
Siblings and their families, In-laws and their ancestors and descendants, Divorces, Adoptive Families, Step-families, Everyone in the file, Collapsing lines,
Pets (?!?)

What to include?
Typical birth, marriage and death dates and places give a chronological and geographical frame of reference.   You can add spaces to fill in missing information, family quotes and titles, health issues or genetics, stories (how the couples met!), pictures, immigration (Mayflower, pioneer, first-families), ethnicity, languages, talents, religions, accomplishments and offices, quotes, maps, flags, military service, documents, current address, age, physical attributes, character attributes, religious events (baptism, bar-mitzvah, offices held), criminal records, royal lineage, education, occupations, nicknames, heritage and culture, personality, citizenship, telephone numbers and social networking information

Formats:

Most people don't realize how quickly a family can grow. The largest generation determines the size of most charts. Your 20th generation of ancestors has over ½ million (524,288) people in it. Each generation doubles, so your 21st generation has over a million people in it. A family in the 1800s who had 10 children can have well over 10,000 descendants now.

More Samples:
http://familychartmasters.com/embellishments.html/#gallery
http://www.familychartmasters.com/php/custom.php
http://thechartchick.blogspot.com/search/label/charts
http://www.pinterest.com/janethovorka/pedigree-charts/
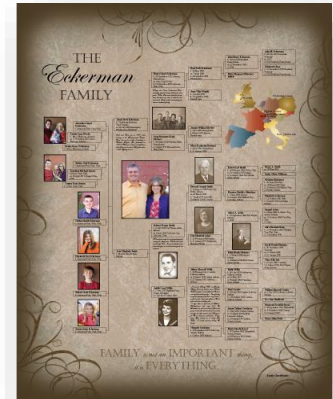

Fitting it all in
There are as many reasons to create a genealogy chart as there are genealogists. Some of those reasons for the person doing the research can be:

- Charts can get your research out where you can see it and keep it in front of you where you can mull over ideas. Sometimes getting things off the computer and out where you can see them can help you think of other research ideas
- Charts can help you find errors or problems you didn't realize were entered wrong.
- Charts can keep comparisons of unproven lines straight.
- Charts can be good for collecting information from living relatives (especially descendancy charts.)
- Charts can help you stay organized.
- *Charts can help engage the non-genealogists in your family with their family's history.*
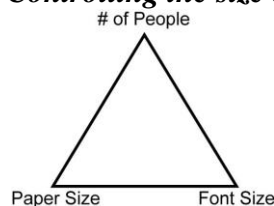
For clients and non-genealogist family members:
- Charts explain the research that has been done to someone who hasn't been involved.
- Charts can engage a person in their family history and surround them with the feeling of love that comes from knowing they are enveloped in a family.
- Charts foster the confidence of realizing the potential embedded in their inherited traits.
- Charts can nurture emotional healing by creating more understanding of the family's past history.

Different designs serve different purposes and can help researchers in different ways. In the end it usually boils down to three areas: •*Share and expand your Research* •*Inspire your Family Members* •*Honor your Ancestors.* When creating a chart, you will want to evaluate the purpose of the chart, who it is created for and how it will be used. A "working" family history chart printed to collect information at a family reunion needs plenty of space to add information and prompts for which information needs to be included. It probably won't need to be printed on paper designed to last long but may be printed on a durable material. A "decorative" chart intended for long term display to inspire non-genealogists will need lots of captivating information, documents and pictures and will need to be printed on archival paper so it will last for generations.
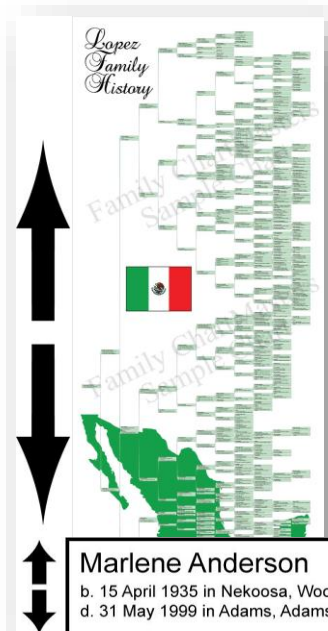
Controlling the size of your chart

When the size of a chart gets unwieldy, there are three items to consider: paper size, font size and the number of people on the chart. One of the three needs to give in order to accommodate the other two items. If a large font is desirable, a chart would either need to be on a large piece of paper, or have a smaller amount of people in order to enlarge the font size.
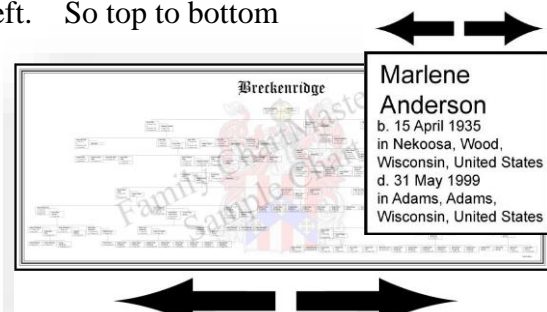

A circle chart is good to get multiple generations into a small amount of space and leave blanks to show where more information is needed. However, circle charts are not ideal to add extra information such as extensive geographical information, stories or pictures. Regular box charts are ideal to be able to add extra information and leave space for additional images.

Left to Right (or right to left) and Top to Bottom (or bottom to top) charts can be very different in size depending on the information a chart displays. With large amounts of people/generations, a left to right format can save about 1/3 the space because of the way the boxes layout. The chart size is determined by the size of largest generation. On a left to right chart each individual box can be laid out to take less space in the overall generation. For a top to bottom chart, each individual box has to be a certain width to accommodate long names and the way our language moves from right to left. So top to bottom charts have to be larger to have room for each individual's information.

Creating Charts

There are also as many ways to create a genealogy chart as there are genealogists. You can draw one out, paint one on the wall, create one with genealogy software, or use a charting service.

Moving your data to a robust charting situation.

You will want to use the latest version of your genealogy information (your conclusion tree) to create a chart. Conclusion trees in online databases such as Ancestry,

FamilySearch and MyHeritage have charting programs available with their databases. More robust charting programs can be used with online databases such as Ancestry or My Heritage by downloading a GEDCOM to move the data. Directions for downloading information for each database can be found at http://familychartmasters.com/ancestry, http://familychartmasters.com/myheritage and http://familychartmasters.com/familysearch.

Moving data between software programs to create a family chart can be done with a GEDCOM. GEDCOM files, though an old standard, can hold all the basic information needed for a chart. Pictures and documents will need to be transferred separately. Creating a GEDCOM file is usually an export/import function.

Genealogy softwares with good charting capabilities include:

- Legacy Family Tree (http://legacyfamilytree.com) a modern, fast program that includes clean controls and many options for a charts including DNA and color coding. Users can move sections of the chart.
- RootsMagic (http://rootsmagic.com/) currently being rewritten, RootsMagic's chart tool allows editing in the program and adding additional information and people.
- Ancestral Quest (http://ancquest.com) A large variety of charts including the largest (13 generation) circle chart which can include geographical locations.
- Family Tree Maker (http://familytreemaker.com) Includes an extended view chart that shows everyone in a file by creating descendancy charts and then showing where the charts connect. 2006 version created a vertical all-in-one chart to show the whole file.
- Charting Companion (https://progenygenealogy.com) The only software that can create a descendancy circle, some options for free form charts and embroidery.

Family ChartMasters Printing and Design Service (http://www.familychartmasters.com/consult) offers a free consultation and can exceed the current software capabilities to include any design.

In Conclusion: Visualizing Your Family Tree

No matter how you choose to do it, having your family history out where you see it every day will affect your family's life. I'd love to hear about your family history displays at janet@familychartmasters.com.