

Basic PAF (Personal Ancestral File) Skills

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- ☉ **Why PAF:** It's free. It does virtually everything I want it to do. It is continually upgraded for free. All Family History Centers around the world have people who can instruct you in PAF for free.
- ☉ **How to get it:** It is a free download at familysearch.org. It's in the bottom right hand corner of the home page. Most Family History Centers also have free CD's they can give/loan that you can use to install PAF on your home computer. On the internet site, you will need to give familysearch.org your name and email address. The users guides (separate download) are voluminous but fairly helpful. The English lessons are quite helpful (separate download). (*see the How to Begin class handout.*)
- ☉ **Files related to PAF:** 1) .paf - the database; 2) .ged - a GEDCOM file; 3) .zip - the backup file. After creating a new database, use "my computer" to see what type file is created and it's size.
 - ☉ .paf Your PAF program creates a file named .paf that can only be opened by the PAF program. It stores all your data just the way PAF likes it.
 - ☉ .zip When you backup your database, PAF creates a .zip file that crushes the data into a smaller file using about 5 times less space. The zip file can be "uncrushed" in PAF by using file, restore (and identifying where the file is) and it "magically" appears in your paf program (you can see the name of the unzipped file on the blue top of your screen).
 - ☉ .ged All genealogy programs have their own special way of organizing your data. However, all worthwhile genealogical programs agreed to use the GEDCOM format for transferring information. When you download from rootsweb or familysearch, or when you export names for temple ready or to transfer to a new family history program, all of them are gedcom files.
- ☉ **Naming and backing up files:** When you first download PAF, you will create a new file - call it your surname and today's date... such as JonesJun23. Then periodically rename the file using save as (i.e. JonesJun24, JonesJun30, etc.) to have a later version that is more updated. This will save you the agony of losing everything if a file becomes corrupted.
- ☉ Weekly or monthly, preserve your current database by 1) backing up in PAF to a .zip file and emailing that .zip file to a family member; 2) making a disk or CD copy of the .zip file to store outside your computer; and/or 3) publishing a new GEDCOM file www.rootsweb.com. (*see the Entering Your Data Right the First Time class handout.*) You control your database 100% and can remove it anytime.
- ☉ **Creating a New PAF database:** Click new and name the file; save; click general file, click prepared by (fill in), click OK.

- Ⓢ **Adding or Editing People in the Family or Pedigree Screens:** To add or edit individuals or marriages, either use the function names (add, edit, view, etc.), or the function icons (face or faces with a plus sign) or double-click in the name field of where you want to add a person. Double-clicking is the fastest and easiest method. Once in the Edit Individual or Edit marriage screen, press tab to move from field to field or double click in the field you want to edit.
 - Ⓢ Full Name: Type in mixed case starting with the first name. For non-English characters, click F7.
 - Ⓢ Sex: Type M or F or U for male or female or unknown.
 - Ⓢ All dates will automatically convert to Day Month Year format.
 - Ⓢ Christening is only for the Catholic and Protestant ordinances that were used to recognize a child's birth.
 - Ⓢ All places should be written out in full from smallest to largest location.
 - Ⓢ If you are working with LDS Ordinances, double-click in the temple field for a drop down list of temple names.
 - Ⓢ Sealing to parents: If the individual was born after the parents were sealed, enter BIC (born in the covenant) in the date field.

- Ⓢ **Deleting People in the Family or Pedigree Screens:** To delete individuals or marriages, right click on the name or the marriage box and click on delete. **There is no undo function, so be careful.**

- Ⓢ **Deleting A Lot of People using the Search Screen:** To delete large groups or pedigrees, you can click on someone (so their box is darkened), press Control F at the same time, click on advanced, change the filter to reflect whatever you want to delete, click on delete, and you will delete the ancestors or descendants or family, etc. **But there is no undo function in PAF, so be careful to back up first if you have any doubt about what you are doing.**

- Ⓢ **Changing the Information Displayed:** You can add more categories to your screen (like immigration, military, census, etc) by clicking on options for the individual; or you can change the global template (tools, template, new, arrow over, drag order, save, make active) for global changes of categories. For example, I have globally added "AKA"-also known as to my template so it is right under a person's name and in front of their sex; I use it for the numerous name variations which are census, etc.). However, most things (other than vital, temple, prefix title, occupation and AKA), I use the notes (double click on the individual, click on notepad, then type in the histories, notes, ideas, obituaries, census results, etc. and click on save

- Ⓢ **Adding Source Information:** Sources can be included in PAF by clicking on the "s" on the individual screen where you go to sources. A source is the specific place where vital information came from (vital records, family bible, census, etc.). PAF will keep a list of sources you have used previously in case you want to open an old one and not have to retype it, or you can create a new one. A source has a title (Massachusetts Vital Records), author (State of Massachusetts), publication info (book publisher), repository (if the book is in a certain library), call number (if a book), actual text (if you want) and comments (if you want). (*see the Evaluating and Citing Sources class handout*)

- ② **Adding Biographical and Research Information:** A source is different from histories, obituaries, research comments, all of which would be in the individual's notes section. In theory you would have a source for every piece of vital info, but in reality much info is a combination of things which would be reflected in the notes section of the individual. Both sources and notes should go with the data wherever you send it
- ② **Moving around in PAF:** There are 4 ways to move around PAF.
 - ② In the Family View: Click on the arrows next to the person to move the person into the highlighted box space and then double click on their name to edit them.
 - ② In the Pedigree View: Click on the arrows to advance the generations. Click on a person's name and then see the list of all members of their family and select the person you want.
 - ② In the Individual View: Scroll to the person you want. If you click on Full name or RIN (at the top), it will reverse the order of the list. Once you find the person you want, double click or highlight and click on Family view or Pedigree view.
 - ② Using the Find Individual View: Click on Search, Advanced focus filter, then click on the alphabetical or RIN circles on the top and put in who you are looking for.
- ② **Importing Files:** Click on File, Import, then select the file you want to import and click on the Import button. Read the next box and select what should be imported, then click ok. You are now importing.
- ② **Merging Files:** After importing files, PAF will ask you if you want to merge your files. Yes, you do. You can also merge files to eliminate duplicate people by clicking on Tools, Match/Merge.
- ② **Exporting Files:** Click on File, Export, then select the type of file you want to export, what you want to include in the export and who you want to include in the export and click on the Export button. You can export some or all of your data.
- ② **Printing Reports:** You can print reports that have individuals, families, group sheets, pedigree charts (with index if you want), either individually or cascading (on to the end) or you can print blank forms. You can print the data to a printer or to a file (in case you want to email it to someone) and you can select what you want to include or exclude (preferences). There are reports (file, print reports, lists) of unlinked individuals, possible problems, places sorted alphabetically and other reports... however always preview the various reports so you don't end up with 30 pages you didn't anticipate.
- ② **Customizing Your PAF Settings:** Under tools, preferences you can use/not LDS data, select a person (RIN) to show relationships of everyone in your database, capitalize surnames, attach things to a name (like RIN), changed the info of who prepared the database, change the font size, change the template. You can add multimedia (edit individual screen, click on camera) and create a disk in scrapbook that integrates the data and picture; however remember that pictures are on your hard drive, and only links are in PAF; so when you send PAF (except the creation of scrapbook), you are not sending the photos but only the address link of the photos.

☉ **Free Online Lessons for learning PAF:**

☉ BYU Religion 261 course (14 lessons)

- <http://abish.byui.edu/specialcollections/fhc/start.htm>

☉ St. George Regional Family History Center

- www.ohanasoftware.com
- click on lessons, then scroll down to Online Classes from the St. George Regional FHC; also Beginning PAF by Liz Snow; and Powerpoint Presentations for Teaching PAF5.

☉ PAF itself (if you downloaded the lessons) has 7 lessons that are quite good (PAF, help, lessons). You could also print out the PAF Users Guide (198 pages) - the book is large but quite extensive (PAF, help, users guide) although you could simply view the pages you are interested in.

The most effective way to learn PAF is at a Family History Center where someone can sit side by side and instruct and tutor you for free.