

Goldie at Home: Innovative Iowans

Activity Overview: Family trees can tell many intriguing stories about the past. To commemorate Iowa's upcoming [175th anniversary of statehood](#), this family tree activity takes on the shape of an oak tree, Iowa's official tree. Explore your own family history, the history of those important to you or a famous Iowan while adding leaves to the oak tree's branches.

Connection to Iowa History

The Iowa General Assembly proclaimed the oak as Iowa's official tree on March 13, 1961. Many people recognize the Bur Oak variety as the official state tree since it is the only native variety of oak trees found across the state. The official proclamation stated, "...chose the oak because it is abundant in the state and serves as shelter, food and nesting cover for many animals and birds... No other group of trees is more important to people and wildlife."



What is a Family Tree?

A family tree is a chart to help show family relations through generations. The bottom of the tree, the trunk, will show the youngest person and older generations are higher in the tree which creates branches. It is recommended that family trees include three different generations – the young historian, people 20 to 34 years old and people 35 years old and older.

Tips for Genealogy Research

Genealogy is the study of family origins and history. As you research a family tree, here are some helpful tips:

- *Set a goal.* How far back do you want to research? Be reasonable and realistic on how large you want your family tree to grow.
- *Keep your sources.* Finding out information online or through family members? Remember to keep track of where that information came from to help keep organized.
- *Try oral history interviews to learn more.* For tips on how to conduct oral history interviews, check out the past [Innovative Iowan activity](#).
- *Look for paper records.* Documents such as census records, birth/marriage/death records, and newspaper archives can be found online and provide fantastic information.
- *Ask about family heirlooms.* Some families have objects or photographs that have been passed down through generations. These objects can provide information about people from the past.

Instructions ([Video Instructions Available](#))

- 1 Select.** Choose the person you would like as the start of your family tree. It could be yourself, another family member, someone important to you or a notable Iowan – anyone you might be interested in researching.
- 2 Research.** Begin researching the chosen person's family history starting with either yourself or the other person and working backwards. It is recommended to go back three generations. Remember to keep notes while you research.

Instructions continued on next page

Materials

- Printer and paper
- [Oak tree and leaves templates](#)
- Marker/pen
- Glue

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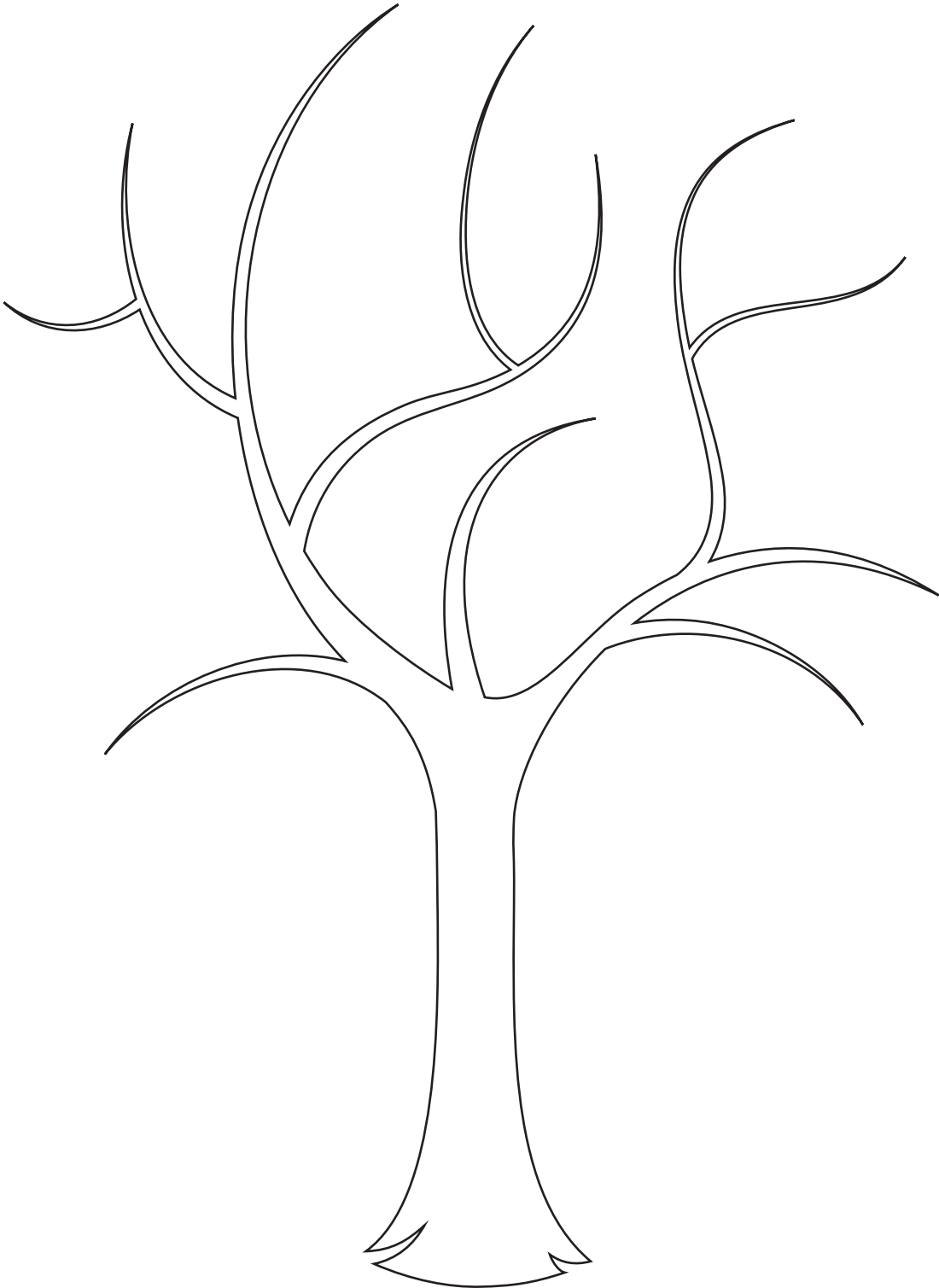
Instructions continued

- 3 **Outline.** Gather your information from research and draw a family tree outline. This will be helpful to follow as you add leaves to the tree.
- 4 **Print.** Print the provided [oak tree and the oak leaves templates](#).
- 5 **Write.** Following your notes, write the names of the family tree members on the oak leaves for the three generations.
- 6 **Color and cut.** Color and cut out the provided oak tree trunk and oak leaves. Be creative with your design!
- 7 **Glue.** Using glue, add the leaves to the oak tree. Reminder - younger people are at the bottom and the oldest are at the top.
- 8 **Share!** After you fill out your tree, share your creation with the State Historical Museum of Iowa, please email photos to museum.education@iowa.gov. We want to share your creation with other young historians!
- 9 **Questions to Spark Learning**
 - Why do you think researching people of the past is important?
 - Why do you think newspapers are helpful when trying to find out information about the past? What are other places or documents that provide historical information?
 - What are some interesting facts or stories you discovered while researching for this project?
- 10 **Additional Resources**

Explore these resources below to learn more about how to track your own genealogy.

 - [State Historical Society of Iowa Collections](#)
 - [Roots to Branches Genealogy](#)
 - [Iowa Genealogical Society](#)
 - [National Archives: Resources for Genealogists](#)

Oak Tree Template



Oak Leaves Template

