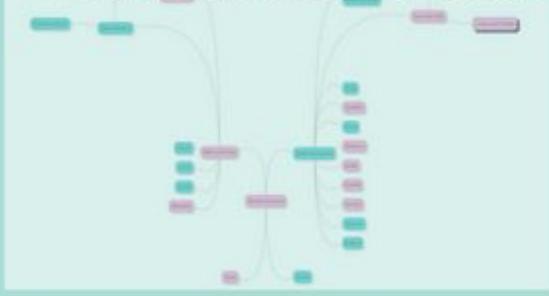# Look At Your Family in a Whole New Way with a Mind Map

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**The History of Mind Maps**

Mind maps have been around for as long as people could draw diagrams showing their thought processes. The term "mind map" was coined by Tony Buzan in the 1970's and has been used in all areas of learning for brainstorming, visual thinking, and problem solving.

If you've ever drawn out a complicated genealogical problem connecting circles you've created a mind map. Now with computer technology, you can use a simple program to map complicated problems, enabling you to make connections and see things in a whole new way.

**Uses of Mind Maps in Genealogy**

Genealogy requires us to use our brain and for the visual learner, what better way to visualize the many pieces of data that we accumulate. With a mind map we can move that data around and assemble it in a way that makes sense to us.

Technology enables us to add to or subtract from our mind maps as new discoveries unfold. We're only limited by our imagination. Here are just a few of the ways you could make use of mind maps in your genealogy and family history:

- Customize your pedigree charts to show relationships.
- Analyze various pieces of evidence from a single source.
- Create timelines and chronologies to make sense of your family's migration.
- Compare men of the same name to sort out your ancestor.
- Plan your research or writing project.
- Make connections using indirect evidence.
- Analyze DNA results.
- Show connections with your ancestor and his FAN club.
- Analyze family data.
- Brainstorm brick wall solutions.

**Which program to use?**

Many mind mapping programs are available via the internet. An open source, free, and intuitive program is MindMup 2.0. Many key features make it perfect for the genealogist.
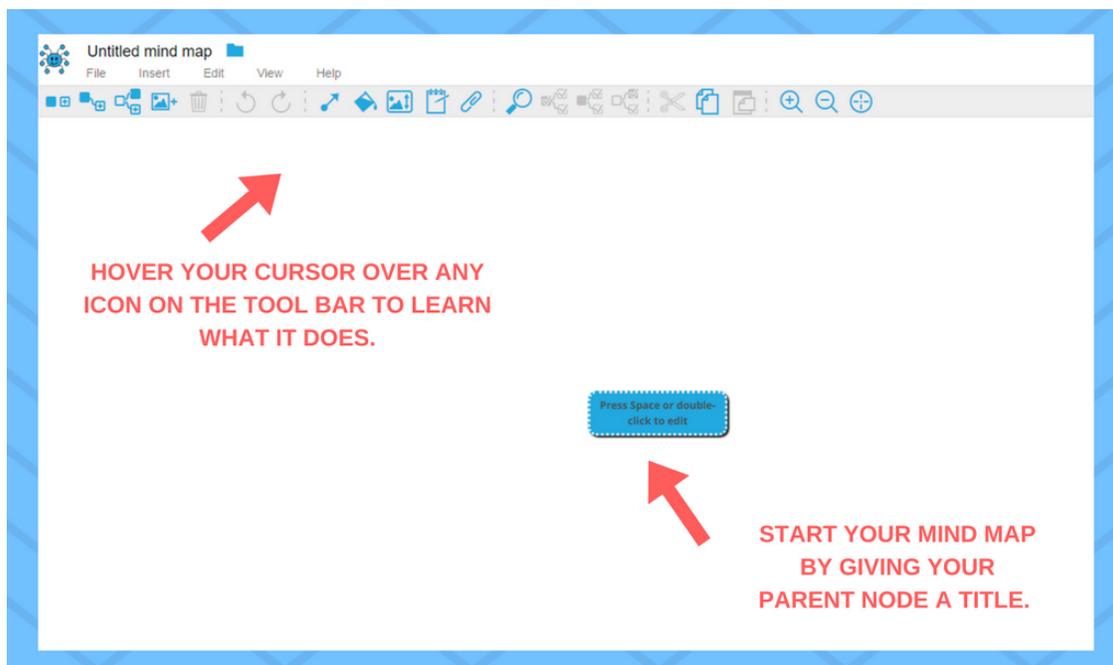
- Cloud-based technology lets you access your maps on any device.
- Integrates with your [Google Drive account.](#)
- Automatically saves your mind maps, you'll never lose your hard work.
- Gives you the option to easily share your mind map and invite others to collaborate.
- Ability to link your genealogical documents saved in Google Drive to your mind map.
- Lets you easily add images from your Google photo account.

**How does it work?**

Mind maps use nodes (symbols like rectangles) that you label and connect with lines. You start with a parent node, then add children or siblings. Color and label the nodes any way you like.

**Getting started with MindMup 2.0** - free, cloud based, open source software
- Go to [https://www.mindmup.com](https://www.mindmup.com) and add it to your Google Chrome toolbar.
- The blue spider icon will now appear next to other Google icons.
- Allow permission for MindMup 2.0 to work with your Google Drive account.
- Now you're ready to create your first mind map. From the opening screen, select "create a new mind map."
- You'll see a blank screen with a toolbar across the top and a blue rectangle in the center, this is your parent node.
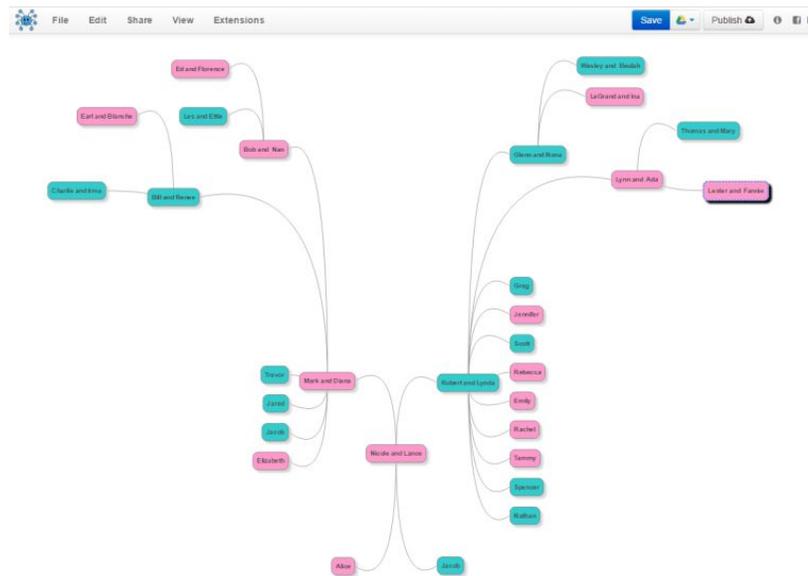
**Creating Your Mind Map**
- Decide what you're trying to accomplish with your map.
  - The example below maps the 1834 will of William Bryan and eventually will show relationships and connections between all the individuals mentioned in the document.
- Enter a title for your parent node by typing in the blue box, this can be edited at any time.
- Start adding children by right clicking on the parent node and selecting the action.
- Right clicking any node gives you options to:
  - Add text notes to any of the nodes.
  - Change the color of the node.
  - Insert an image for the node.
  - Add a parent, child, or sibling node.
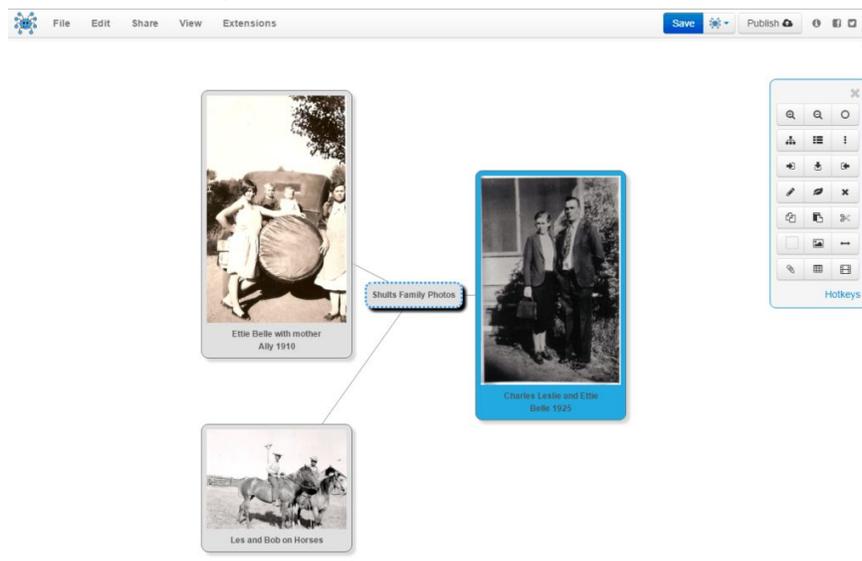  - Attach a file from your Google Drive - a document, report, etc.



**Storing your Mind Map**
- Your mind map will be automatically saved in your Google Drive account. Each time you access it, you will be asked to verify your account then you'll be directed to your mind map.
- By clicking on "File" you can move your mind map to any folder you have set up on Google Drive. You could store your mind map in an ancestor's folder, or have a folder just for mind maps.
- Also accessed through "File" are the many download options including PNG or PDF.

## Create Your own Pedigree Chart



## Add images to your mind map



## More on Mind Mapping for Genealogy

Elizabeth Shown Mills, "QuickLesson 6: Mindmapping Records," *Evidence Explained: Historical Analysis, Citation & Source Usage* (https://www.evidenceexplained.com/content/quicklesson-6-mindmapping-records : accessed 28 April 2017.

Diana Elder, "Look at Your Family in a Whole New Way: With a Mind Map," *Family Locket* (http://familylocket.com/look-at-your-family-in-a-whole-new-way-with-a-mind-map/ : accessed 28 April 2017.)