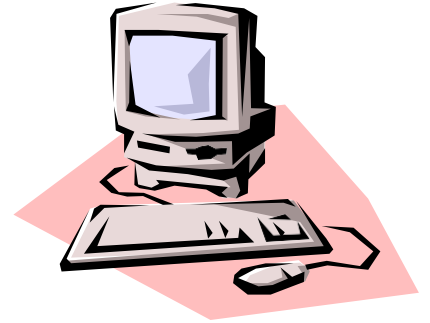# COMPUTER
CORNER
Software Charts

by Philip Spivey, AGS President

As genealogists and family historians, we love our charts! We jump on Ancestry, start plugging in relatives and off we go. Many of us also go out and buy genealogy software to build even more charts for our own computers. Best of all, we can brag to our fellow genealogists about the thousands of people in our "trees."

Well as fun as all that is, sometimes a regular tree just won't cut it. That approach is fine for a simple basic tree like the one you see below:
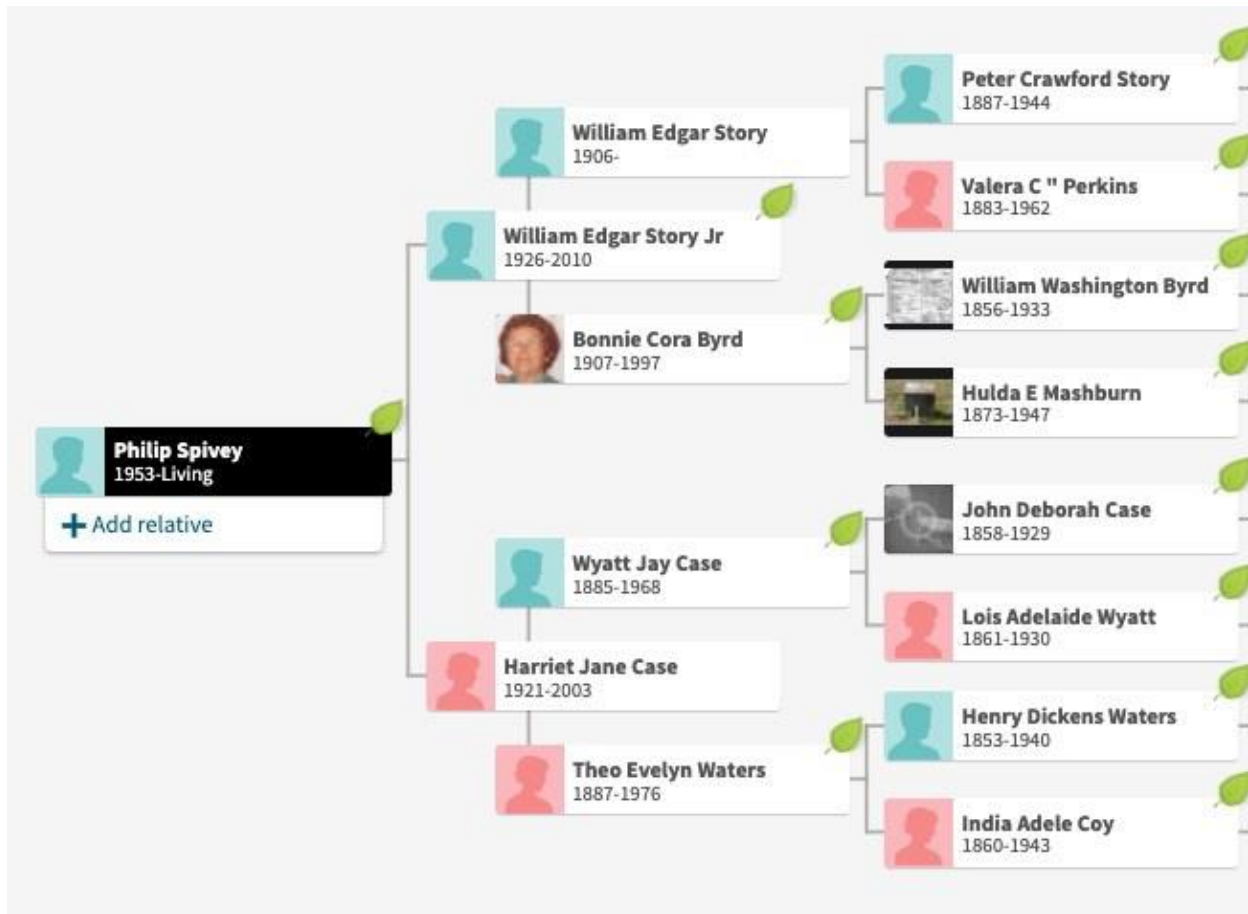
The problem though is that relationships in the real world are not all that simple. What about great uncle George, with his three "official" wives and those two "friends." There are the bio kids, step kids and the foundlings. Any tree of any size can quickly get complicated.

Genealogy is also about figuring out other kinds of relationships and charts. This is particularly true when it comes to using DNA. We know that a 200cM match is probably a second cousin, but it could be a lot of other things and what side of the family is it on? How do we represent that? How do we compare lines of descent and multiple relationships? For that matter, how do we even look at a tree with a thousand people in it? There is really no way of doing that without special charts. One of the best tools out there for handling tasks like this is Lucidchart. This is a cloud-based charting and diagraming tool at: *https://www.lucidchart.com/pages/*.

Basically, the program allows you to build charts so that you can visualize pretty much any type of relationship. You create them online, but you can save them to your computer and insert them into Word, PowerPoint and many other programs you work with on a regular basis. It is possible to do this kind of thing in Word and other programs directly, but Lucidchart makes the process so much easier.

First, let's look at situations where something like this might be needed. We've done DNA testing at Ancestry and we have four good matches. We've built trees for all of the matches and we have now figured out how they relate to me. Matches like this could be scattered all over a traditional tree, so how do you show this in a meaningful way?
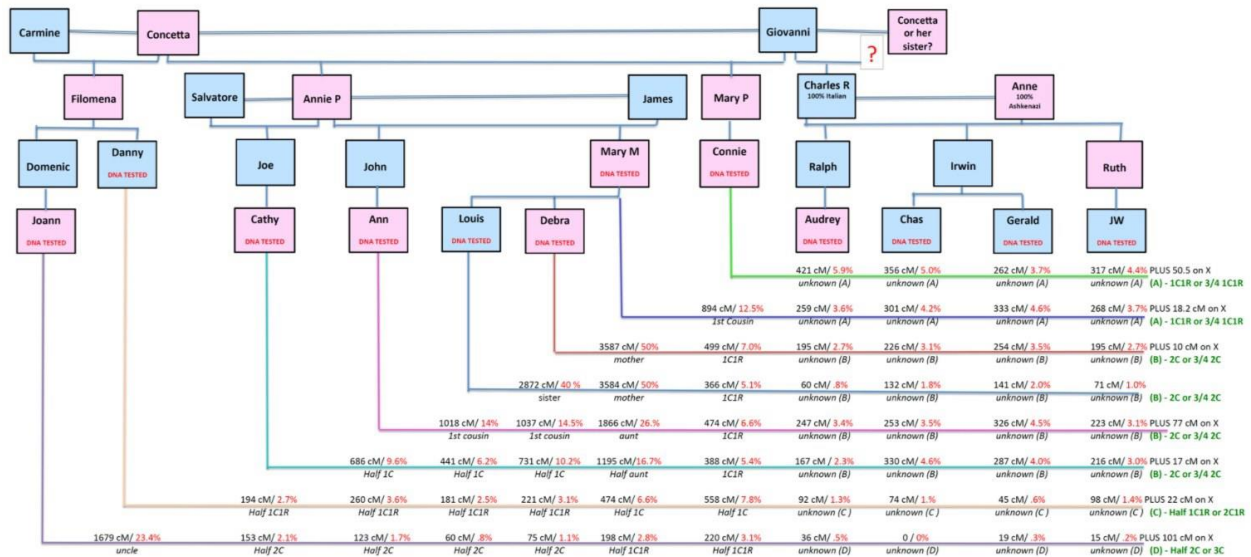
The following would be an example:
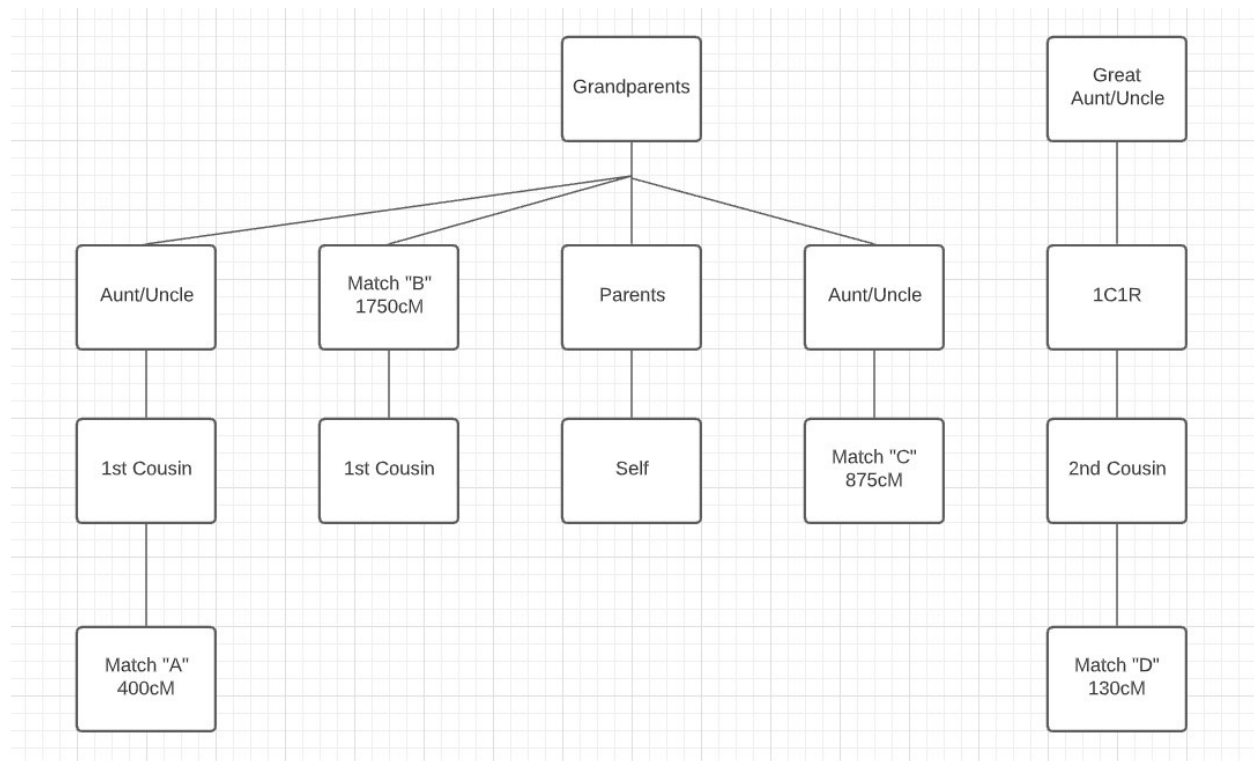
With a diagram like this, it is easy to see how the four matches relate to each other. You can even color code the boxes and add whatever additional information is needed, such as segment data, births, deaths or a picture. Lucidchart makes creating something like this quick and easy.

Comparing DNA matches can get very complex. A couple of years ago, Lauren McGuire developed a way to visualize relationships between matches when you have many of them. Genealogists refer to this as the McGuire method and it was featured in Blaine Bettinger's blog: *https://thegeneticgenealogist.com/2017/03/19/guest-post-the-mcguire-method-simplified-visual-dna-comparisons/*

An example can be seen below.

The McGuire Method

As you can see, this represents relationships from all over a family and a vast amount of DNA information.

Sometimes though, all people want is a simple tree, but they don't want to rely on Ancestry or have to buy special tree building software. Lucidchart can do that as well and even offers plug and play templates, such as at right.

There are many ways this can be used to diagram information. It can give us a way to organize the data we collect from sources at an archive and to create mind maps.
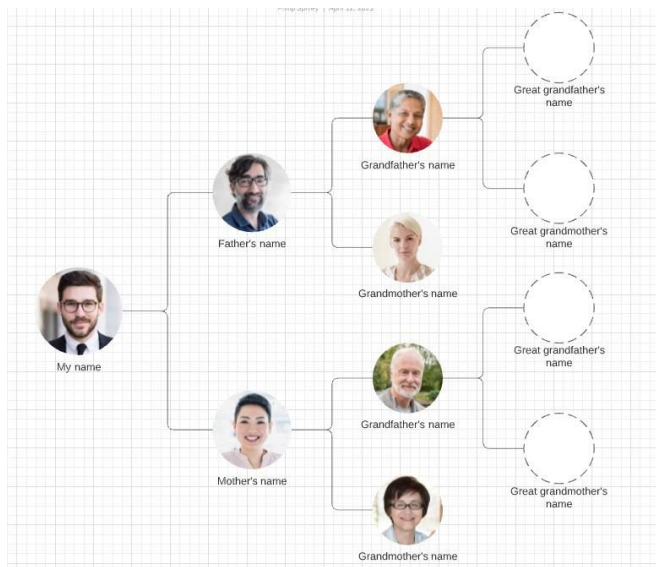
You simply choose the shapes you want and drag them onto the grid and add the information. Connecting lines, adding colors and shape changes are relatively simple. You can share your diagrams online or keep them on your own computer. You can even import pictures and ancestors and other images into your Lucidchart, as you see here.

Another aspect of genealogy that can be made easier with Lucidchart is mind mapping. Sometimes, the best way to identify an ancestor is to look at how they relate to many different sources. Is this ancestor in different places at the same time? How are they associated with the people around them? How do they fit into our genealogy FAN club (Family, Associates and Neighbors). Mind mapping is useful for this and Lucidchart handles that task with ease. Here is an example from Ron Arons:
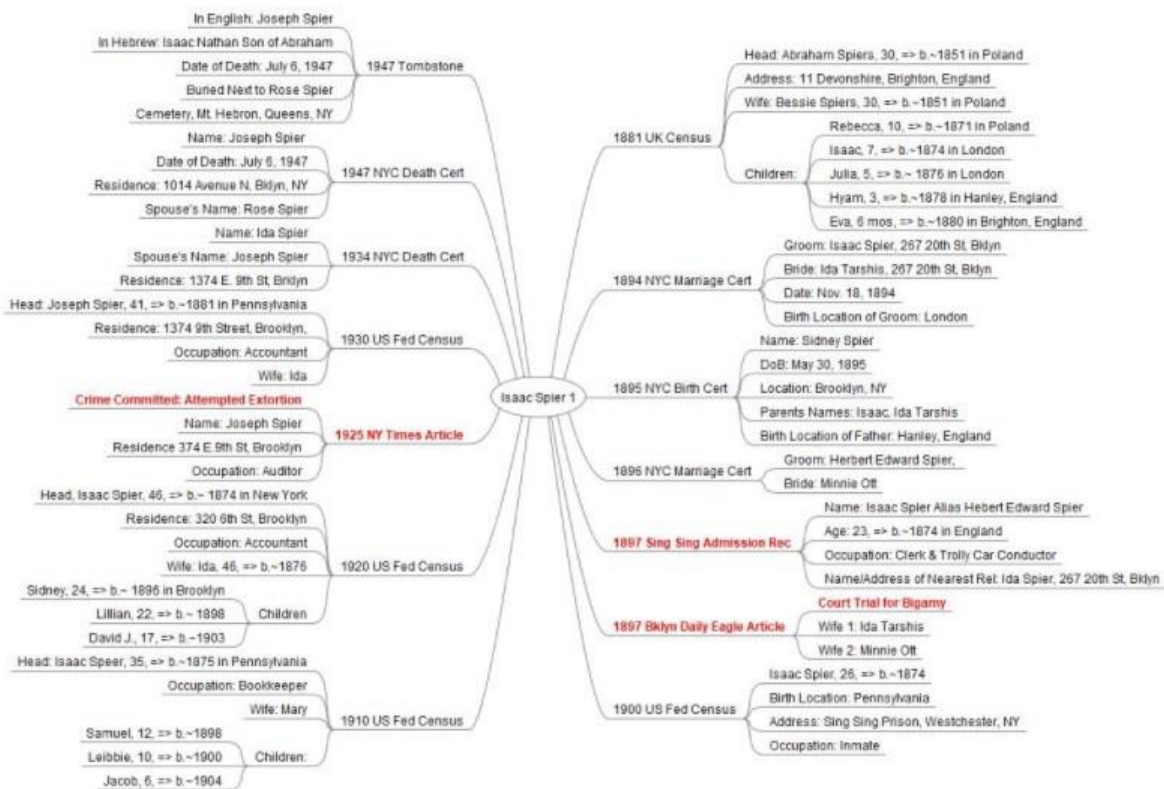
In English: Joseph Spier
In Hebrew: Isaac Nathan Son of Abraham
Date of Death: July 6, 1947 — 1947 Tombstone
Buried Next to Rose Spier
Cemetery, Mt. Hebron, Queens, NY

Name: Joseph Spier
Date of Death: July 6, 1947 — 1947 NYC Death Cert
Residence: 1014 Avenue N, Bklyn, NY
Spouse's Name: Rose Spier

Name: Ida Spier
Spouse's Name: Joseph Spier — 1934 NYC Death Cert
Residence: 1374 E. 9th St, Bklyn

Head: Joseph Spier, 41, => b.~1881 in Pennsylvania
Residence: 1374 9th Street, Brooklyn, — 1930 US Fed Census
Occupation: Accountant
Wife: Ida

Crime Committed: Attempted Extortion
Name: Joseph Spier — 1925 NY Times Article
Residence 374 E 9th St, Brooklyn
Occupation: Auditor

Head: Isaac Spier, 46, => b.~ 1874 in New York
Residence: 320 6th St, Brooklyn
Occupation: Accountant — 1920 US Fed Census
Wife: Ida, 46, => b.~1876
Sidney, 24, => b.~ 1896 in Brooklyn
Lillian, 22, => b.~ 1898   Children
David J., 17, => b.~1903

Head: Isaac Speer, 35, => b.~1875 in Pennsylvania
Occupation: Bookkeeper
Wife: Mary — 1910 US Fed Census
Samuel, 12, => b.~1898
Leibbie, 10, => b.~1900   Children:
Jacob, 6, => b.~1904

Isaac Spier 1

Head: Abraham Spiers, 30, => b.~1851 in Poland
Address: 11 Devonshire, Brighton, England — 1881 UK Census
Wife: Bessie Spiers, 30, => b.~1851 in Poland
Rebecca, 10, => b.~1871 in Poland
Isaac, 7, => b.~1874 in London
Children: Julia, 5, => b.~ 1876 in London
Hyam, 3, => b.~1878 in Hanley, England
Eva, 6 mos, => b.~1880 in Brighton, England

Groom: Isaac Spier, 267 20th St, Bklyn
Bride: Ida Tarshis, 267 20th St, Bklyn — 1894 NYC Marriage Cert
Date: Nov. 18, 1894
Birth Location of Groom: London

Name: Sidney Spier
DoB: May 30, 1895
Location: Brooklyn, NY — 1895 NYC Birth Cert
Parents Names: Isaac, Ida Tarshis
Birth Location of Father: Hanley, England

Groom: Herbert Edward Spier, — 1896 NYC Marriage Cert
Bride: Minnie Ott

Name: Isaac Spier Alias Hebert Edward Spier
Age: 23, => b.~1874 in England — 1897 Sing Sing Admission Rec
Occupation: Clerk & Trolly Car Conductor
Name/Address of Nearest Rel: Ida Spier, 267 20th St, Bklyn

Court Trial for Bigamy
Wife 1: Ida Tarshis — 1897 Bklyn Daily Eagle Article
Wife 2: Minnie Ott

Isaac Spier, 26, => b.~1874
Birth Location: Pennsylvania — 1900 US Fed Census
Address: Sing Sing Prison, Westchester, NY
Occupation: Inmate

https://www.ronarons.com/product/mind-maps-for-genealogy/
Ron has a great little book on using Mind Maps for Genealogy, which you can order from his website.

While doing this type of thing is possible in Word and PowerPoint, it is far more tedious. Lucidchart's grid system makes it easy to get your images properly placed and spaced. Getting lines to seamlessly connect can be challenging in other software platforms, but Lucidchart makes it painless. If you regularly work in Word and PowerPoint, the various tools for inserting text and other images will look familiar and intuitive.

A new tool will always come with a bit of a learning curve, but Lucidchart makes it as painless as possible. There are built-in videos on the Lucidchart website, and many others can be found

on YouTube. Blaine Bettinger has a formally produced video on this topic at Legacy Family Tree Webinars: *https://familytreewebinars.com/download.php?webinar_id=1232*

This little video on YouTube isn't fancy, but it shows you how simple the process is: *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sr1u1PebTks&t=82s*

There is a free version that will allow you to build three charts, so you can check it out for yourself. The free version is OK to see how it works, but a paid version is really needed if you expect to use it on a regular basis. If you decide to buy it, an individual license is $9.95 a month or you can knock that down to $7.95 a month if you pay annually. The individual license is probably everything you need unless you have a big company.