

# I Introduction

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I want to thank you for choosing the “Family History System” for organizing and reporting the results of your research into your own family history. Although I first began work on these programs for the purpose of “computerizing” the information in a family booklet prepared by a distant cousin, I have been pleased to find that this software has proven useful to so many others with similar interests.

Using this software, you will be able to build one or more “family files”, each of which may have information for more than 32000 individuals recorded in it. (Each file is limited to the size of the disk(s) on which it resides. On 360k, 5 ¼” floppies a file may have as many as 3600 names, on 720k 3 ½ diskettes a file may have as many as 7200 names, and on an HD diskette a family file can have more than 12000 names.) Provision is made for recording family relationships as well as names, dates and places. No limits are placed on the number of relationships that may exist for each individual or for the number of generations of ancestors or descendants that may be recorded.

The basic system produces Ancestor, Descendant, Relative and Family Group reports, Ancestor (tree) Charts and a variety of “BOX” style charts. Blank worksheets and charts may be produced to record information for entry into the system. You may also print a variety of summary reports and detail lists of information from selected records. The extended system, available only to registered users of the software, adds the ability to process records in sorted sequence.

Requirements for running these programs are:

- an IBM PC, PCjr, PC XT, AT, PS/2 or compatible computer
- at least 1 diskette drive
- an 80 column monitor
- at least 512k of memory (RAM) – **NOTE:** This is up from 256k for previous versions of FHS
- DOS 2.0 or later

A printer is recommended for making full use of the system but is not required for creating, maintaining or displaying information in the system files.

The basic set of programs in the Family History System is provided for your use without any implied obligation for payment to the author for that use. Unmodified copies of the “distribution diskette(s)” (the diskette(s) on which you received the basic set of programs) may be freely shared with others. No fee may be charged for such copies beyond that required to cover the expense of media, postage and handling incurred in producing them unless written permission is given by the author.

Those who find the basic set of programs useful and would like to receive additional options may become “registered” users by sending \$35.00 to:

Phillip E. Brown  
834 Bahama Drive  
Tallahassee, Fla. 32311-7363

Registered users will receive the most recent update to the extended system and will be notified of future major updates, as they become available.

**NOTE:** *This manual documents all features of the Family History System, including those that are available only to registered users. Previously, there were separate manuals for the basic set of programs and the system extensions. I have tried to make it obvious which features are not available in the publicly distributed version of the software (those are ones which involve the creation and use of Index files that allow you to process records in sorted sequence). Making*

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*the documentation of these limited features available to all may help users decide whether the benefits provided to registered users are worthwhile to them.*

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While I have tried to make these programs as easy to use as possible without reducing the available options, the on-screen help is limited to brief menus of program functions. I hope you will come to this manual occasionally to try to clear up any questions you may have about the operation of the programs or simply to find out more about features of the software that may not be obvious in casual use. I realize that this is not the “tutorial” type of instruction booklet that many would like, but I have tried to include descriptions of every aspect of the operation of the software.

## I.A A Note for Users of Earlier Versions

Those of you who may be upgrading from an earlier version of the programs should be interested in knowing that, during the 12 years that the system has been distributed publicly, there have been no changes to the file format that affect your being able to use your existing “Family History System” data files with the programs in this update. After installing these programs, you should be able to continue working with your previous family files just as before. This update to the software *does* introduce changes to the family file format (e.g. new Event records) that are incompatible with earlier versions. If you use those features then your family files will become incompatible with earlier versions of the software.

There were errors in some earlier versions of the file update program that may have caused problems involving program maintained information that “connects” the various pieces of an individual’s record together. There is a utility program (the “pointer validation” option, Main Menu selection F3-E-F6-1) which can help you to locate and eliminate any such program generated file errors as well as errors that may have resulted from a prematurely interrupted file update session. I encourage you to review Section X.A of this manual describing that option.

There have been so many changes to the programs in this update that nearly all sections of the manual have been affected in some way. I hope that you will review all of it at some time so that you do not miss out on any enhancements that it may reveal to you.

## I.B A Note for Users of Other Genealogy Software

If you have information stored in files prepared by other genealogical software, you may be able to transfer much of that information into a FHS family file without having to “rekey” any of it. This set of programs includes a utility program that makes use of the GEDCOM format for transfer of genealogical information. If the software that was used to prepare your other files also supports that format, and many of today’s most popular programs do, you may be able to EXPORT information from those files (using that software’s GEDCOM utility) and IMPORT them into a FHS file (using the FHS utility). Please read Section IX.A for more information about the GEDCOM utility.

## I.C Significant Changes to Notice in this Update

This update to the Family History System software is the result of more than three years effort and contains more changes than any other single update since the programs were introduced back in March of 1985. While the primary purpose of these revisions was to allow the user to customize the software for other languages, there have been many enhancements that are of more general interest.

These changes include:

- the ability to switch family files by selecting from a list of labeled family file “setups” (these file setups also provide support for placing family files in directories apart from the FHS programs)
- the ability to switch printer configurations by selecting from a list of labeled printer “setups”
- support for larger .OTH datasets (64,000 records instead of 32000); this doubles the space available for comments
- a set of user modifiable “system tables” which provide control over such things as:
  - the single-key responses to system messages
  - the “soundex” grouping of special characters
  - the uppercase translation of special characters

- types of EVENTS that can be recorded in the new Event record type
- the data TAGs that are used in GEDCOM files

Placement of all program messages in a user modifiable Message Definition File permits:

- changing the default response to messages (the response that the program assumes when you simply press the space bar or enter key)
- modifying the text of messages to accommodate other languages
- printing a list of all messages

Placement of all formats for screen displays in a user modifiable Screen Definition File permits:

- modifying the text appearing in screen displays to accommodate other languages
- printing a list of all screen definitions, including a formatted screen display

Placement of all standard report descriptions in a user modifiable Report Definition File permits:

- customization of report features, including: default report options, relationship labels, gender codes, etc.
- modifying the text of all report headings, titles, field labels and footings to accommodate other languages or your own preferences
- allows use of Report Definition File for language other than the one used for the “user interface” (that is, the language used in the program messages and screen displays)
- printing a list of all report definitions

Enhancements to the File Update program:

- Relationship Calculator \*
- new Event Record (provides support for BAPTism and BURial events, among others)
- support for “Long Place Names” which may be up to 41 characters in length
- ability to manually resequence children when birth dates are not known
- ability to “page forward and backward” through lists (search results, children), multiple occurrences of record types (marriages, work records, education records, etc.) and comments
- “hilited” menu items indicate presence of information in a family file record
- additional search items (birth and death places)

New types of Reports and Charts:

- Ancestor and Descendant Summary reports \*
- a Relationship Summary Table \*
- 5 Generation style of Ancestor Chart
- Ancestor Chart in “Vertical Box” format (similar to the previous “Descendant Box chart”)
- Family File Record Summary report
- Listing of Search Results in the file update program
- Detail list of selected records in ID sequence \* (“free format” lists are new to this update)
- “Merged Group Reports” can be printed in Relationship sequence; Group reports can also include the text of comments under a child’s name record in the “Children” section of the report
- “Register” style of merged group report for producing booklets of information for Ancestors, Descendants or Relatives

(reports/charts marked with an \* were previously available as extended options for registered users)

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New GEDCOM program provides support for 5 styles of GEDCOM files, including some that permit transferring all types of information between FHS Family Files.

## I.D Program Support

While I have encountered (and corrected) a number of errors during my use of the system, there are no doubt errors remaining in some of the programs, hopefully none serious. If you should find any, I would appreciate very much your sending a description of the problem to me so that I may try to correct it. You may reach me:

by postal mail at: Phillip E. Brown, 834 Bahama Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32311-7363 USA

by email: [pbrown@fhs.tallahassee.net](mailto:pbrown@fhs.tallahassee.net)

I do not promise phone support for the programs because all work on them is done from my home and I cannot promise to be there at any specific times.

I have prepared a WWW site on the Internet to provide information about the Family History System. The site is entirely text based at this time with no graphics to download. As a result, the response is reasonably quick and you should be able to access the site with any web browser. At the site, you can find out about any reported problems and download the most recent copies of all programs that are in the public version of the software. You can also keep up with plans for future updates or enhancements. The URL for the site is: [HTTP://fhs.tallahassee.net](http://fhs.tallahassee.net)

If you received the public version of the software on diskettes from the author of the programs, you will find a copy of all of the HTML text documents and sample reports from the site on one of the them. Section II.A.4 of this manual describes how you may install the documents on your hard drive so that you can browse this information (as it existed at the time the diskette was prepared) without having to be ONLINE.

## I.E Copyright Information

All Family History System programs and documentation are copyrighted by their author. While the programs that make up the publicly distributed version of the software and the documentation for the programs may be freely used and distributed without any requirement of payment to the author for that use, no fee may be charged for such copies beyond that required to cover the expense of media, postage and handling incurred in producing them unless written permission is given by the author. The programs that support the system extensions are only provided to registered users of the software. Those programs may be used only by the registered user and members of their immediate family.

Versions of the language customization files (TDF, SDF, MDF and RDF files as described in Section VII) that have been modified to support other languages are the property of the person who performed the customization except that the introductory panel, INITS001, in the SDF file must retain the copyright statement of the program's author.

The family files created by the Family History System software are the property of the FHS user that created them.

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