



ROUTES TO ROOTS NEWSLETTER

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**Mother's Day is
Just Around the
Corner!**

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What is Your Second Cousin, Once Removed?

If someone came up to you and introduced themselves as your first cousin, once removed, would you know what she meant? Most people understand the term "cousin" but terms like "second cousin", or "first cousin, once removed" are often confusing.

When working with your family history or relating your connection to an individual in your tree it is handy to know how to describe that exact relationship.

Hopefully, the definitions below will help:

Cousin (a.k.a "first cousin"): First cousins have the same grandparents and are the children of your aunts and uncles.

Second Cousin: Second cousins share the same great grandparents but not the same grandparents.

Third, Fourth, and Fifth Cousins: Third cousins have the same great-great-grandparents, fourth cousins have the same great-great-great-grandparents, and so on.

Removed: When the word "removed" is used to describe a relationship, it indicates that the two people are from different generations. You and your first cousins are in the same generation (two generations younger than your grandparents), so the word "removed" is *not* used to describe your relationship. The words "once removed" mean that there is a difference of one generation. For example, your father's first cousin is your first cousin, once removed. This is because your father's first cousin is one generation younger than your grandparents and you are two generations younger than your grandparents. This one-generation difference equals "once removed." Twice removed means that there is a two-generation difference. You are two generations younger than a first cousin of your grandmother, so you and your grandmother's first cousin are first cousins, twice removed.

It seems a bit confusing, but once you get it straight...there's really nothing to it!

Family Trees Online

Just how reliable are the family trees you find online? Well, it all depends on how conscientious the person is who posted it. Is the information well researched with source documentation or is the data just names that someone has grabbed from other peoples' work and then posted as part of their own family tree?

No matter where you find your genealogy, whether from a printed source or from the internet, you need to first look at the source documentation to determine how reliable the information is. The work needs to be well sourced using vital records and censuses for example and not just data sourced from someone else's family history, Perhaps there are no sources cited at all. You need to be very careful in using

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information from the latter two areas. The only way in which you should use these types of information is as stepping stones or clues to further your own research.

In addition, when you find a genealogy online you need to go over it very carefully looking for possible errors or omissions such as an entire generation missing, or a marriage that takes place at an impossible age or a birth after the mother has died. Proofread all of the genealogy with a keen eye. Even if the data you find has been sourced you should follow-up on a few of the sources to ensure that you come to the same conclusion as the other person. If you have different information you may have interpreted documents differently.

The final step in connecting your research to that of someone else is to contact your potential new relative and compare notes. Happy hunting!

**It's your family's past.
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