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Enhancing Charts

by [Jan McClintock](#)

Updated 3/3/00 by Leister Productions.

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SuperChart is the Reunion application that creates graphic charts based on data that you've entered into your family file. This article is about modifying your **tree charts** once you've created them (Timeline charts will be covered in a separate article). The creation of charts is fully covered in the Reunion electronic manual, where each feature is explained. I especially recommend reading [**Help -> Search for Help, "make chart"**] or [**Help -> Tutorial -> Step 11**], to become familiar with the basics of working with charts.

I wrote in an earlier article: "You can either take it or leave it... SuperChart can be as much or as little as you wish. 'You are in control...' You can create charts with the default settings and impress your family and friends, or you can really get creative and impress yourself." Reunion offers even more features and capabilities to create and customize your family trees.

The best way to learn how to use SuperChart is to jump in and try it. Create a test chart, and then make every change possible. Use every command, and every font, and every color, etc. Move boxes, drag while in all the different modes, change line thicknesses and directions, select the different chart orientations, edit text in the boxes, add captions and pictures, etc. Remember that you cannot possibly ruin a chart, since all you have to do is create another one from Reunion to replace it!

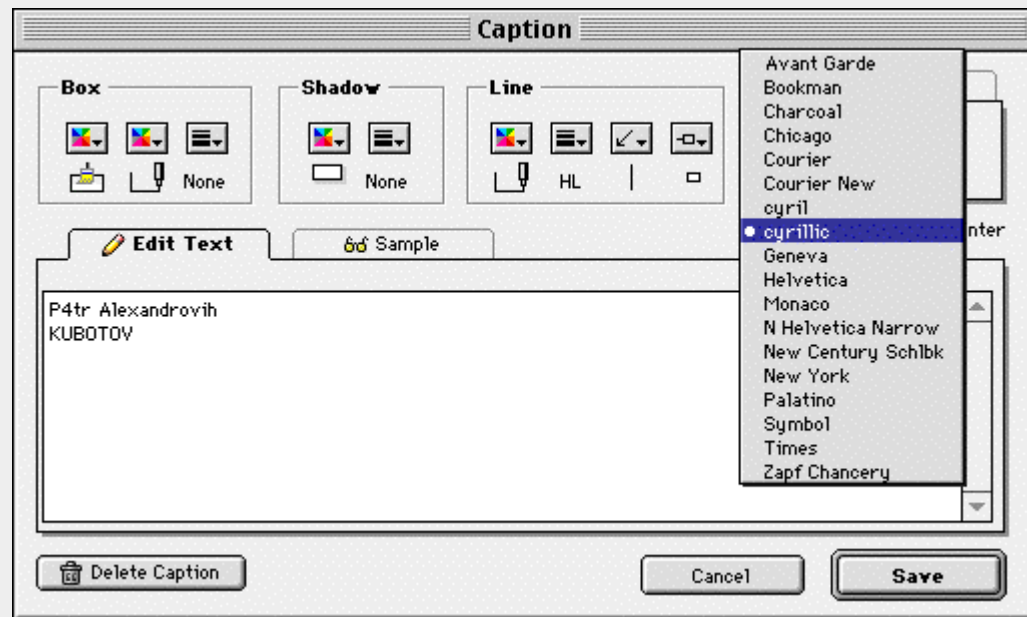
Fonts

One of the easiest changes to make is to your fonts. However, a warning may be in order here -- go easy on the eyes. The whole idea behind a chart is to make family relationships easy to understand (the "big picture"). If someone has to concentrate just to read the text, then they may miss the chart's significance. Using more than one font on a chart could easily be overkill.

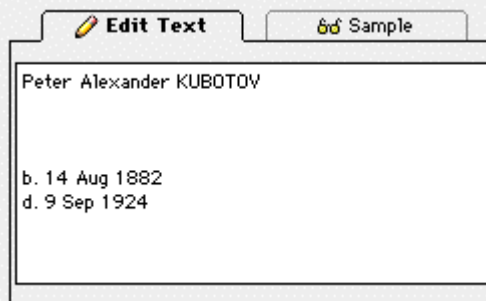
In SuperChart, the text in the boxes must all be the same font. [Choose **Trees -> Fonts** to make your choice and click the **Redraw** button to change] However, you can choose any font you wish for **Captions**, as well as paste text from any draw program onto your chart -- this is great for fancy chart titles as well as for foreign characters.

Example: I wanted to use the original Cyrillic (Russian) characters in my chart of the Kubotov family, but also leave the Latin characters (in English).

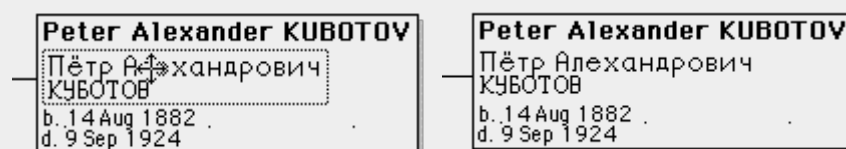
1. In SuperChart, I selected **Edit -> Add Caption**. From the list of fonts in the pop-up menu, I chose my Cyrillic font. Then I typed the text in the caption box (deleting the word "Caption" first!). I left the box with no border or shadow. I checked the look in the Sample window (where the actual font is shown), and clicked the **Save** button.



2. On the chart, I double-clicked Peter's original chart box (not the caption that I just added) to open the Box window. I used the Return key to add two empty lines of text, and clicked the **Save** button.



3. Now I had to align the box and the caption to look as if everything was typed in one box. (I had to change the size of one font to match the other, too.) I dragged the caption around until it was in the right spot.



Reminder -- the **caption** is a separate entity (like a graphic), so if you make changes to the chart which automatically reposition boxes, you will then have to move the caption again, also.

I could have done several other things with the Cyrillic characters. One choice was to add a caption with the Cyrillic name and an arrow pointing to the original chart box [**Help -> Search for Help, "edit caption"**]. Or

I could have made the color of the text in the caption different from the original chart box text to set it apart. Use your imagination!

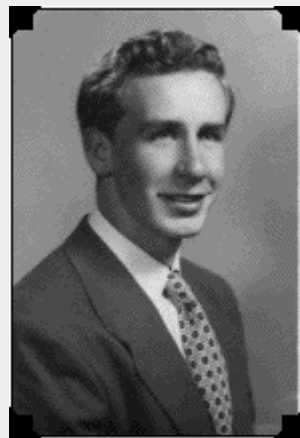
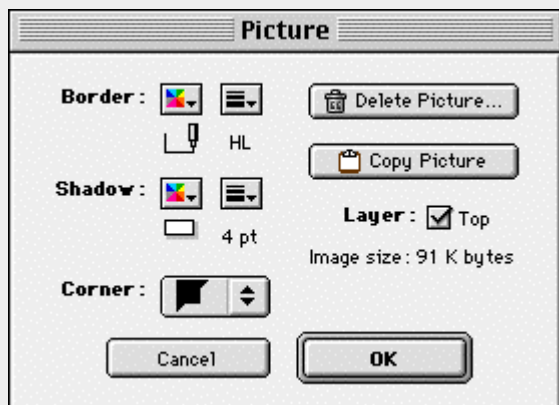
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Pictures

Reunion and SuperChart use the term "picture" to mean any graphic that you use with the program. In most cases, this would be photos of family members that you scanned and saved to your hard drive as individual files, which you can link to family cards via the **Multimedia** feature. However, you can also use clip art, scanned documents and maps, text, backgrounds -- almost any graphic that you can **copy** from a graphics program into the clipboard, and then **paste** into a chart. [[Help -> Search for Help, "paste picture"](#)]

Photos

It's easy enough to paste a picture onto a chart, but don't stop there! Use the available features to enhance your graphic. Add corners and shadows to really show it off. [[Help -> Search for Help, "picture corners"](#)]



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[Resource List](#)

Clip Art

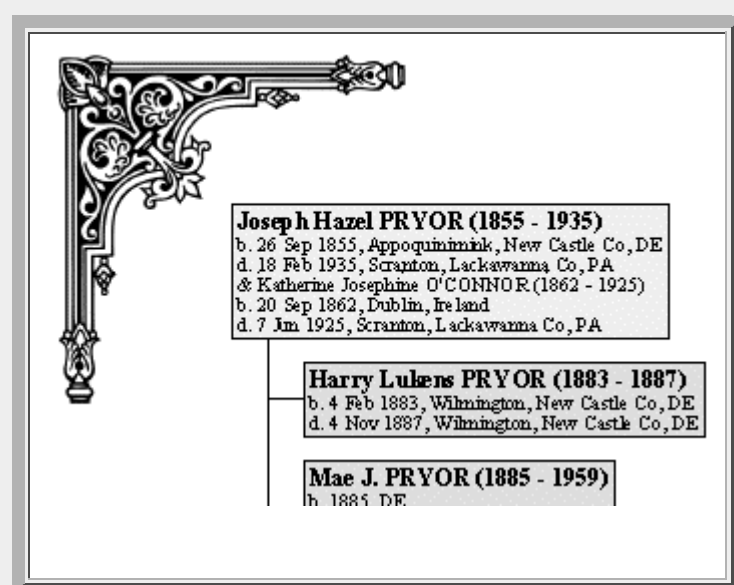
Using SuperChart and any draw program, you can really spice up your charts. Try pasting other graphic elements onto a chart.



Katherine Josephine PRYOR

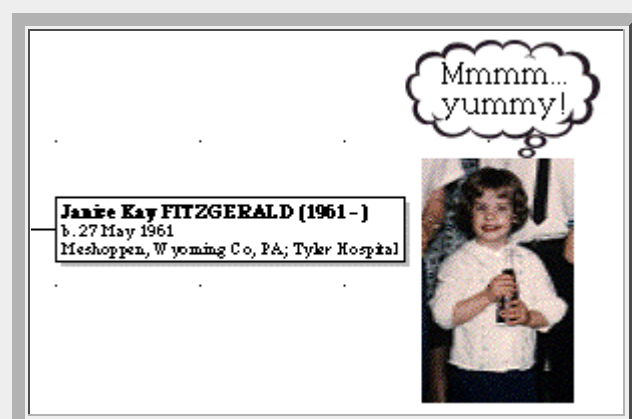
Click [here](#) for more examples of clip art for Reunion family tree charts!

The above photo was copied from Reunion to SuperChart. The clip art frame was pasted onto the chart, and the photo was dragged over and layered on top. The name at the bottom is a caption.



Corner elements and borders can make a plain chart more lively, as long as they don't overpower the chart boxes. The clip art corner design above is repeated in the lower right corner of the chart; however, if it had been any larger, it would have unbalanced the chart.

Here's an example of a chart with a picture, clip art, and a caption combined...



The photo (yes, it's me) was pasted onto the chart and positioned next to the appropriate chart box, the clip art balloon was pasted onto the chart and positioned over the photo, and the caption ("Mmmm...yummy!" with no border) was layered on top and positioned over the balloon.

See the [Resource List](#) for clip art sources

Maps

Another idea is to paste a map of the country or state onto a chart. Mark the different birthplaces or homesteads of the family members, showing their journey across the frontier or their emigration from Europe.



The above placenames were added in SuperChart using **Captions**, but I could have done the same thing with the map in a drawing program before pasting it into the chart.

You may have to experiment with your graphic to get the best effect. Within the chart, you might want to limit the amount of data in the boxes or trim their sizes, change the colors to match the map, or turn off shadows on boxes to get a less cluttered look. Once you paste the picture into the chart you can resize it, turn the border off, or layer it on top of the chart to show it off (enlarge it and layer it under the chart for a background effect). Move the picture and the chart boxes around to get the best placement (zooming out to see the entire chart will probably help).

Adding Text

Chart Boxes

Nicknames and other facts can be added to the text of a box itself by double-clicking the box and editing the text. This is fine for a few boxes, but impractical when working with more. If you find that you need to add certain text to many chart boxes, the best alternative is to create a new field for each person, enter the data there, then choose that field to be included (using the **Define Layouts** option) when creating charts.

Lucy L. MARTIN
 b. 1861, Sykesville, Carroll Co, Maryland
 d. 4 Feb 1930, Chinchilla, Lackawanna Co, PA
 (Lucy's birth year is disputed by both
 Richardson and Booth in Sources 44 and 119.)

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Captions

Use the **Caption** feature to add more information to your chart. A title for the chart is the most obvious addition, but photo captions, credit lines, family anecdotes, fact clarifications, and references can all increase the value and attractiveness of a chart. In fact, placing source citations on a chart is consistent with many organization's preformatted charts, which include a space for references.



Sources
 12. William's 1890 Scranton Directory, published by J.E. Williams, Scranton, PA; as seen at the Lackawanna County Historical Society, 1994.
 49. Burial database of The Cemetery Association of Dunmore, 400 Church St., Dunmore, Lackawanna Co, PA 18512; Block 21, Lot 162; printouts in possession of author, Jun 1997.
 72. 1870 Federal Census schedule, Cass County, MI; page 264 (33), Household #234, Family #255; Microfilm Roll #668, Call #1870, Microcopy #M593, San Antonio Public Library, TX, 31 Jul 1996.

Paper

Finally, the paper that you use for your finished charts can reflect the pride you feel for your research and for your family. Use colored stock to attract attention or a heavier paper to convey quality. Plain photocopy paper is 20 lb., and some predesigned papers are slightly more substantial at 24 to 32 lbs. If a chart will be handled a lot at a family reunion, for instance, card stock or Index paper (90 or 110 lb.) is especially sturdy if your printer has a straight paper path.

Be sure to check the paper type against your printer type. Moisture content can affect the way ink is absorbed in the different printing processes: wet ink for inkjets versus high heat for laser printers. Coated papers for laser and inkjet printers are available with very smooth surfaces for printing photographs.

Specialty paper with an appropriate background or border can really set off your chart, especially if you can print only in black and white or are using a photocopier. Predesigned papers are now widely available at office supply stores (Office Depot, OfficeMax, Staples, etc.), print and

copy shops (like Kinko's), discount department stores (WalMart, K-Mart, etc.), and gift and card stores (like Hallmark). Some of the borders and background designs are really nice for charts: blue sky with white clouds, faded trees, marble or sand, and ancient-looking scrolls.

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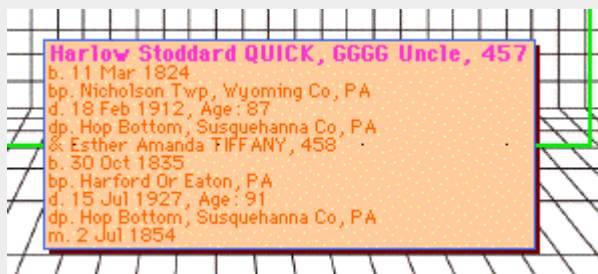
See the [Resource List](#) for paper sources

Bonus Points

Here are a few more things to think about. When you create charts for yourself, get as wild as you wish. However, if you're creating a descendant chart for 88-year-old Aunt Mary, remember this: charts, especially for non-genealogists, should

- **include only appropriate or applicable data**
ID Numbers, too many abbreviations, research information, and other data that means nothing to the receiver of the chart is superfluous, and may even discourage them from reading the chart.
- **be easy to read**
Text style and size and the colors of boxes, lines, and text should be matched to best advantage, and printed on paper that doesn't interfere with the clarity.

Here is an example of what **NOT** to send to Aunt Mary:



Resource List

Clip Art - Free or Shareware:

[The ClipArt Directory](#) is a list page with tons of links to clip art sites

One of my favorites: [JOD's Old Fashioned B&W Clip Art](#)

[Barry's Clip Art Server](#) --check out the "Images by Bobbie" for pretty borders/backgrounds for web pages, and "Frames" sections for additions to charts and reports

[Mining Co. Guide to Web Clip Art](#) - Genealogy section

[Vintage Images](#)

Commercial Clip Art Collections:

[Nova Development's](#) Art Explosion series (available in stores and catalogs)

[Havana Street](#) - neat retro images in EPS format, especially of the 1940's

[Task Force](#) - eclectic collection of color clip art for many uses

[MacGalaxy Store](#) online offers quite a few clip art software packages

[Tiger Direct](#) also offers commercial packages; many of the large mail-order companies sell collections in their catalogs and on web sites, like [MacConnection](#), [MacWarehouse](#), [MacZone](#), and [MacMall](#)

Look for the following: IMSI's MasterClips series, ClickART from T/Maker Company (now owned by Brøderbund), KEY Mega ClipArt from The Learning Company, and DeskGallery by ArtToday. I've also seen very inexpensive collections from SoftKey and Expert Software at office supply stores and discount department stores.

And don't forget clip art that is included in software packages like ClarisWorks/AppleWorks, Claris HomePage, Corel Gallery, MS Office 98, The Print Shop, PrintMaster Gold, CardShop Plus!, etc. You may already have quite a collection on your hard disk or CD's.

Online sources for specialty paper:

Many have print catalogs available.

[Quill Corporation](#), the venerable office supply company, offers "fun paper" at their web site

[Artcraft Computer Forms Corporation](#)

[Paper Mart's](#) Adventures Designs

[The Paper Web](#) includes archival-quality paper and decoratives

[Hawk Mountain Art Papers](#) has archival inkjet paper

[Paper Direct](#) sells many different predesigned paper: gradations, theme, and fun papers

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