

Expanding Your Family History Journey

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Where to Start?

- With yourself
- Work with one generation at a time
- Pay attention to the stories
 - Family history is more than just names, dates, and places
 - Family history is about your story, your family, and your history
- With the people
 - Speak to as many people as you can
 - Search for collateral people as well – those not in your direct line
 - Search for Friends, Acquaintances, and Neighbors (FANs)
- Review previous searches
 - Look at your information and records with fresh eyes
 - Document your conclusions concerning a record especially if there is conflicting information

Keeping Track

- Family Group Record
 - Used for a single family group - one couple and children
 - Document the birth, marriage, and death for a husband, wife, and their children
- Ancestor Chart
 - Used for multiple generations
 - Documents direct ancestors
- Acquaintance Sheets
 - Document the FANs of each of your ancestors in order to see a pattern
- Timelines
 - Document key dates in your ancestor's life as well as important community dates that could impact your ancestor

Waiting to be discovered

- Someone born before 1940
 - Search the 1940 U.S. Census on Ancestry.com
 - Move back through each generation, search every census year
 - Census was taken every ten years beginning in 1790
 - 1790-1840 Census only lists the Head of the Household

- 1850-1940 Census lists every free person residing in the house
 - 1890 Census was almost entirely destroyed
 - After looking at the Census
 - Note the town, county, and state for every census year
 - Research records for those specific localities in print, microform and online (Ancestry.com or FamilySearch.org)
 - Follow the trail of potential records provided in the census answers and expand from there
- Someone who is deceased
 - Search for obituaries in newspaper databases such as Newspapers.com, NewspaperArchive, or America's GenealogyBank
 - Search Social Security Death Index at Ancestry.com or FamilySearch.org
 - Search cemetery transcription books or sites such FindAGrave or BillionGraves
 - Follow the trail of people or potential resources
- Someone who is living, search for
 - Newspaper articles
 - City directories
 - Marriage records
 - Public records
 - And much more!
- Expand your search to include context
 - For the locality
 - Research local county and town histories
 - Read local newspapers for the time period your ancestor was in residence
 - Map your ancestor's residences to learn more about the neighborhood and determine common congregating locations such as churches, schools, and other organizations
 - If the person was in the military
 - Look for an identifier of the unit (Ancestry.com or fold3.com)
 - Seek out published unit histories or biographies from others in the unit
 - Search online for memorial sites or unit reunion sites as well as other historical information
 - If the individual was involved in one of the following then research the organization to learn if there are records in existence or search local papers for the organization to learn about activities and meetings
 - An occupation that had unions or associations
 - Religious activities for a specific church
 - Service organization
 - Fraternal group
 - Ethnic society