

# Ancestry Seeking



Beginner's eBook Guide to Genealogy Research

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# Ancestry Seeking

## A Beginners Guide to Genealogy Research

### What You Need to Start Your Ancestry Search

In this eBook I will share with you tips on what you will need to have for tools, what information you will be looking to collect and where you can find this information to assist you in your search for your family tree.

Before to start let's talk about what some terms mean, so you have a good understanding of about researching your family tree.

### What does Ancestry mean?

Ancestry is a lineage, line, a line of descent, or a blood line, blood. It is a pedigree, origin, parentage, stemma, or a stock(noun). Ancestry can be the descendants of one individual "his entire lineage". Ancestry is derivation, filiation(noun) or inherited properties shared with others of your bloodline.

### What is a Family Tree?

A family tree is a chart representing family relationships in a conventional tree structure. It is a graphical representation of your ancestors. A family tree is a description of the descendants of a particular person or of the ancestors of a particular person. It is usually in a chart that maps lineage, of a particular person, as far back as records allow. It is often, but not always provided in a graphical, branching form that somewhat resembles the trunk of a tree and its branches. Its function is to layout, more clearly than paragraphs of text can, the relationships of various relatives to each other and the person at the root of the tree. A family tree can begin with the most current generation and work its way backwards, or with the oldest known generation and work its way forward.

In many countries, particularly in the US, finding out what your family tree is represents pride in knowing where and who you came from. Family trees are useful for information purposes, for documenting inherited medical and genetic conditions, for helping resolve lawsuits over inheritances, and for preserving family stories and history, which can be helpful for younger generations to get to know their ancestors on a personal level.

The history of family trees probably goes back almost as far as the history of mankind. Family trees were probably originally used to prove one's relationship to certain persons for reasons of status, royalty or even just identification. Surnames such as Johnson were used to identify someone as John's son. The Greeks used family history to prove to be descent from a god or goddess. Hebrew males had to prove descent from Aaron in order to become a member of the Levitical priesthood. In some societies, your life was vastly different if you could prove you're were descent from royalty.

## What does Genealogy mean?

The word genealogy means an account of the descent of a person, family, or group from an ancestor. It is a regular descent of a person, family, or group of organisms from a progenitor or pedigree. It is the study of family ancestral lines that gives an account of the origin and historical development of someone or something.

Seeking and collecting your information about your ancestry can be exciting, fun and very rewarding. As you begin to piece things together you will see how they tell a story about your family. But collecting all this information can be a bit overwhelming. There is so many different types of data that can come from so many different sources. That is why it is so important to keep your information well organized.

We talk about some of the tools that will make collecting easier and more organized. You may already have some of these things on hand and depending on how elaborate you want to get and how far you plan on going with your search for your ancestry you may need to purchase memberships or subscriptions to websites, genealogy software. There may also be traveling expenses depending on where you live and if you want to go to a source, like traveling to an out of state relative, library, city clerk office, or cemetery etc.

This eBook is assuming that you have a computer or laptop and have access to the internet.

A dedicated notebook will be useful for times when you can't use your computer. In fact, you will probably fill up several notebooks. A 3 ring binder can come in handy for keeping printed articles or printed PDF forms.

You do not need to have genealogy software, but it can make your work a lot easier and more organized. There are many online genealogy websites that have online software that you can use and a place on their server to store your information. Most of these websites charge a fee or membership.

Depending on where you go to get your ancestry information, you may need to use a notebook or some genealogy forms to write your information down on, so that when you get home you can transfer this information to your genealogy program. I have [3 PDF genealogy forms](#) that you can use. These will help you keep the information organized. You can use the above PDF forms as a way to collect your information. You can print them out to fill them in. The printed forms will be helpful to use if you are on your computer using a genealogy website as research or if you are interviewing a relative or traveling to a research location. Once you are home and on the internet you can easily transfer the information into your genealogy software or keep the printed forms in a 3 ring binder.

Besides keeping your information on the web, your computer or on forms, you will need a place to keep physical documents, such as certificates, photos, dvds, cds or letters. This is where a pocket folder or storage box will come in handy. You may end up collecting birth or death

certificates or military records etc. So whatever you use will need to be large enough and durable.

The information that you store on your computer should be backed up after each time you add to it. If you are using a genealogy software program you should make a backup according to their instructions. You should make a copy of the files to a USB stick or upload them to a cloud server. This way if anything happens to your computer you will not lose your work.

Another tool that can be very helpful, but is not a necessity is a digital camera. This doesn't have to be anything special, your smartphone can work just fine. This will come in handy when you go to interview relatives and they have documents or photos that they aren't willing to let you take.

One of the most important things to remember is that you need to keep your information organized and in a safe location.

Here is a recap of tools that will help make your genealogy research more organized:

- Notebook
- 3 ring binder
- Storage container
- PDF Forms
- Computer
- Printer
- USB drive
- Genealogy Software (optional)
- Cloud storage (optional)
- Digital camera (optional)

## What Type of Information Do You Need to Collect?

Now that we have all the tools that will make this easier, let's look at what type of information you will be collecting. When you look at a family tree, you are looking at history that was written by your ancestors and by you and your descendants. Everyone no matter how short or long of a time they have spent on this earth creates a moment in time. They existed and that is all that is needed to make a mark on history. Some ancestors may have made great strides in life, that make their time on this planet a little more grand, like becoming president or inventing something etc. But even the average person makes an impact on the lives of others. Everyone is a role model. We all care for others who in turn care for someone else.

There are certain facts that are needed in order to prove the connections in your lineage. Those are dates of birth, marriage and who their parents and children are. There are other facts that make the connection more complete such as where they lived, what they did for a living, deaths, and burial sites, etc. We will get into to this a little more in-depth shortly.

So as you can see there is a lot of information that needs to be collected and kept in an organized fashion or you may get very confused and mix up dates and people's information which would be a disaster.

It is very important that you keep a good documentation on where you get your information from. This will help you to verify that the information is correct, especially if you have a question or conflict in your information. You can look back at that source to confirm its accuracy.

Here is an example of some of the information you will be collecting in your research for your family tree. You will be starting with your own information and then adding the ancestors and then the descendants that you know.

- Date of Birth your and where were you born (location)
- Were you baptized? If so, when, where and who are your godparents.
- Any other religious rites? When and where, performed by who?
- Names of both parents and where they were from (nationality), their dates of birth, death and marriage(s) divorce(s).
- Dates of your marriage(s) and locations (if married in Church, who was present)
- Name of your spouse(s) and their parents, date of birth and where they were from
- Names of your children, dates of birth and death, and where.

Other forms of information that can be added:

- Education, where you went to school, college
- Military information, what branch of the service, when, what was your rank, and where stationed?
- Occupations, who you worked for, when, where and what was your job title?
- Sports, types, when and for how long, where
- Achievements, or awards

- Locations you lived, own or rent?
- Accidents or life changing events (earthquakes, floods, etc)

There can be other pieces of information you know or come across that will give an even better picture of yourself or someone else in your family tree. As you can see there is a lot of information that you can collect.

You will need to decide which surname in your family tree that you will be researching. Most people start with their surname, meaning your father's surname. Then at some point they do their mother's maiden name. It is best to work on one family tree at a time.

Once you have completed your own personal information then do your father, then your mother, and then your siblings, collecting all the same information that you collected on yourself from the above list. You will be going back in your ancestry first to as far back as you can with the information that you know. There will be things that you don't know. This again is where a notebook comes in handy. If you come across a question or think of something you want to check out or ask someone, write it down. When you start getting hundreds of people in your family tree, it will be hard to remember that you are missing a piece of information on someone.

As I mentioned early and will cover in more depth, always list the source where you got your information from. If it was from your memory then put down, yourself as source. If it was from your mother or father, then write down oral or verbal source from them. If it was from a family bible, then write that down.

\*As a side note to help with your organizing, if you are using PDF forms, be sure to number the pages and write the surname at the top of the page. Number each generation and sub number and letter each descendant. An example of this:

1. Yourself
  2. Your first born child
  3. Your second born child
    - 3.i their birth born child
  4. Your third born child

## Where Do You Go to Find and Collect Your Ancestry Information?

Well you should have a pretty good start of on your ancestry tree with all the information that you know about yourself, your parents, and maybe even your grandparents.

Now you will need to look at other sources to continue this research. There are many other sources out there that can give you a wealth of information. Many of these are free, some you may need to travel for, and other you may need to subscribe to websites on the internet. I have broken these sources down into specific types of sources that you can use to find information about members of your family tree.

There are four areas of sources that we will be looking at:

Documents

Oral History

Public Records

Internet research

### Documents:

You may have access to a collection of family documents such as letters, certificates, deeds, wills, awards etc. Each of these can be a great source of information. Especially if they are from older ancestors, such as grandparents or great uncles. Photographs, family photo albums and even bibles can be a source. Even old receipts, or newspaper clippings.

### Oral History:

You started out your genealogy research with your own oral history in a matter of speaking. You interviewed yourself and draw upon the information that you could remember. You will need to sit down with others in your family, such as your parents, aunts, uncles or older siblings and ask them for information. You may not have the opportunity to sit down face to face with someone, because they live too far away, so you may need to correspond with them via the phone, the internet or postal mail. You may come across someone who is not willing to share personal information. Be sure they understand why you are asking for this information, be patient and thank them even if they don't want to share. Some relatives may have documentation that could be helpful to you. Don't ask to borrow, instead ask if they would mind if you took a photo with your phone or camera. If using a digital camera, be sure that it is legible to see or read. This way they will not worry that you will not return it, damage it or lose it.

### Public Records:

These are things like birth, death and marriage records, deeds, census and military records to name a few. Churches have baptismal, marriage and burial records. City/town clerk offices carry birth, death, marriage records and land deeds. Another form of public information is

newspapers publish obituaries, memorial services, birth announcements, engagement and wedding announcements. Some libraries have a genealogy section that contains city directories, and books that list family trees and other genealogical information. Some have newspapers and census records on microfilm. Many states have a vital information office where you can look up birth, death and marriage records by year. Check with your city/town clerk's office, local library and churches that you have in your area.

Genealogical associations or historical societies are a very helpful source. You will need to check to see if there is one in your state. These usually have many resources, such as books and microfilm records. Some have members that can help you with looking up information and some places even have researchers that can do research for you. They normally have an annual membership fee or a one-time visit fee.

Another place that can be very helpful for information is cemeteries. Some of them have a care taker that can be helpful in finding a grave. Some cemeteries have written records. Many times the cemetery is owned by a church, so they may be the record holder.

#### Internet Research:

Since the creation of the world wide web, the access to genealogical information has been growing by leaps and bounds. There are hundreds of genealogy websites. Many of these have huge databases of public records and family trees that have already been created. Many of these have a subscription or member fee. Many government and state offices have records available on line. There is usually a fee associated either a cost per document. The important thing to remember is when using resources on the internet that you may sure they are a reliable resource.

Once you feel that your family tree is complete, then you can publish it. You can make it into a book, publish it on the genealogy website that you have been working on or you can create your own website. Sharing your family tree with others is very rewarding.

I hope that this information has been helpful in understanding what you need to have for tools, what information that you should collect and where you can find the information you need to preserve your family tree. For more information, tutorials, and reviews go to [www.ancestryseeking.com](http://www.ancestryseeking.com).