

Getting started with Genealogy

1. Personal contact: Talk to every relative you can. Videotape or tape record interviews.
2. Start scouring the Internet. Here are some sites I have found useful--
 - a. Grave sites—<https://www.findagrave.com/>. Can provide details about cemeteries and people buried in those cemeteries. Memorials generally include birth, death and burial information and may include pictures, biographies, family information and more. This site is huge, free, and is constantly expanding. Caution: best NOT to use precise birth or death dates because of the risk of errors.
 - b. Military graves—find information at <https://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/>
 - c. General searches--
 - i. [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com). This is a fee-based site, but is the world's largest collection of genealogy materials. You can use this for free at many public libraries.
 - ii. [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org). This site is free, and also has many genealogical materials available to the researchee.
 - d. en.wikipedia.org-- Another free site. It is great for background information on anything from detailed information on a geographical location (county/city/region) to an historical figure to a military campaign.
 - e. Online obituaries—if you can find one for your relative, this is often a goldmine of information. There are several fee-based sites, such as [myheritage.com](https://www.myheritage.com), [genealogybank.com](https://www.genealogybank.com), [legacy.com](https://www.legacy.com), etc. Most offer a free trial period. OR, you can go to the newspaper serving the area in which you suspect your relative died and try a name search.
 - f. Library sites—Library of Congress: this is the largest library in the world! The maps and photograph collections alone are immense, but they hold a huge collection of family histories, too). Find at [loc.gov](https://www.loc.gov). Also, try State Libraries, County Libraries, Historical or Genealogical Society libraries, etc. etc. The possibilities are endless.
3. Keeping records
 - a. get printable charts at [myheritage.com](https://www.myheritage.com) (during free trial period) or can download forms for free from [archives.com](https://www.archives.com) (scroll down to find links)
 - b. build family trees online using such sites as [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com), [familysearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org).
 - c. use software such as *FamilyTreeBuilder* (from [MyHeritage](https://www.myheritage.com)) or *RootsMagic* (find at [rootsmagic.com](https://www.rootsmagic.com)).
4. Publishing your findings—this can range from publishing a hardcover book to anything less involved, such as a photobook (Costco, Walgreens, Shutterfly, etc) to starting a monthly, bi-monthly or yearly family newsletter.
5. Family reunions—This is one of the most rewarding results of locating family. For tips, try a google search: “*how to host a family reunion.*”