

Starting with yourself, the work to collect genealogical information for your ancestors can be reduced to six (6) sequential steps. The following steps represent a sequence that can be followed to discover the places where written genealogical records are stored, and can be repeated for each ancestor or relative.

Genealogical Evidence

Evidence for a person is usually found in historical documents stored in a repository located near the place where a person lived sometime during that person's life. Therefore, the steps to collect genealogical information are sequenced to enhance your success in finding the places where your ancestor lived during the course of their lives.

Step 1

Start with yourself to identify a pedigree (list of direct ancestors) and work backward in time by filling in as much information as you can, by memory, on a Pedigree Chart. You will immediately know who's missing in the first few generations of your family tree. For each ancestor on a pedigree, you'll need three things for each genealogical event (birth, marriage, death, etc.): 1) A full birth name; 2) an exact date for each genealogical event; and 3) the place of residence or location where an event took place. Location/residence is a key element in genealogy, since it indicates where vital records are today.

Step 2

Interview your immediate family members to compare your memories with those of your siblings, parents, cousins, grandparents, etc. Ask for

details about your ancestors as well as the brothers and sisters of your ancestors. Keep notes, and begin to prepare Family Group Sheets (FGS) for yourself, parents, grandparents, etc., showing all facts for each parent and sibling; Repeat this for each pair of ancestors and always include information for the brothers and sisters of your ancestors. The place of death for an individual is the first critical information that needs to be determined.

Step 3

Write for a death record for each deceased ancestor and any brothers and sisters of ancestors. Death certificates are usually the first source in which an official written account will reveal an exact place and date of death, and a good chance of additional genealogical details, such as the date and place of birth, name of father, maiden name of mother, name of spouse, social security number, name of cemetery, funeral director, and the name of the informant (often a relative of the deceased).

Step 4

Follow-up clues found on death records. With an exact place and date of death known for a person, other types of related death records will become available, such as a funeral record, cemetery record, newspaper obituary, or

social security death record. Clues from death records may also lead you to the place where birth records, marriage records, church records, military records, occupation records, or court records are located today.

Step 5

Search the Census Records in HeritageQuest Online. Since the first census taken in 1790, census records have become a major source for locating the place where an ancestor lived, which opens the door to many more discoveries. After 1840 they also list age and place of birth, occupation, personal wealth, education, spouse, children, hired hands, and even immigration information. To protect individual privacy, the government doesn't release census data for 72 years after they take it. The 1930 census is the latest census available.

Step 6

Search in County and State Records. If you've located an ancestor on a census, you know their county of residence. Now you're ready to search for the records at the state and county level to find written evidence of that person's life. Documents may include newspapers, county histories, special genealogy collections, tax lists, voter registrations, court records, probates, wills, estate papers, and much more.



Genealogy Research – Getting Started: HeritageQuest Online

Where to Find Help

Search our Support Center:

<http://www.proquest.com/support>

To access product help and training documentation:

<http://www.proquest.com/go/training>

<http://www.proquest.co.uk/go/training>

By phone

In North America: 800-889-3358

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