

CASE STUDIES IN DESCENDANCY RESEARCH

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INTRODUCTION:

The goal of doing descendants research is to find all the persons descendant of a particular ancestral couple. Normally, doing genealogical research entails going backward in time, this travels the opposite direction and searching forward to the present. Before you begin your research, you must identify a couple to which to begin. To find that family, you may need to do some traditional family history research and then move forward.

RESEARCH PROCESS:

The process of searching for the descendants of your ancestors is the same as the process for finding direct-line ancestors (See Below):

Step 1: Choose a Family to Start With

Step 2: Collect Previous Research

Step 3: Consult Additional Sources

Step 4: Compile/Share What You Have Learned

These Steps Explained in More Detail.

These steps can be repeated as often as needed-for each research project that you start with. It is a never ending cycle of research.

One advantage of doing this type of genealogical research is the number of names you can find. For example-if you conduct a search to your great grandparent's generation the number of direct-line ancestors you will find is 14 persons. However, if you begin your research looking for the descendants of that (4 generation) same couple, the number of people you could find can reach into hundreds of family members for you to contact and add to your family history.

CHOOSE A FAMILY TO START WITH: STEP 1:

Begin your research with what you already know. You will need a starting point to begin, and there is no better way to start than what is already common knowledge for you and your family. At that point-you break out and start your family research by choosing an ancestral couple to begin your research.

- A. Begin with individuals or families alive around 1850 (More Availability of Records).
- B. Record what you find on family group records.
- C. Begin with real curiosity.

When beginning a research project-you can choose any family couple you wish to learn more about. The more recent the couple-the more records that are generally available to find their family living today.

COLLECT PREVIOUS RESEARCH: STEP 2:

Genealogy research has fast become one the most popular hobbies being conducted by individuals today. Someone else could very well have already started gathering information about the very ancestral family you have selected. Some of these places that you could collect this information includes:

- *Finding family records
- *Finding published family histories
- *Finding Internet information compiled by others

When using internet sources compiled by others, please check the sources used for obtaining the information-and try to obtain primary documentation when looking at these records for your family.

CONSULT ADDITIONAL SOURCES: STEP 3.

Certain types of genealogical records and sources are particularly rich in descendant information-generally they include information about parents and children and vital information for each person listed. These records will help you identify all of your descendants (both living and deceased) for whom you are searching.

Some of these record types include the following types of documents;

A. *Vital Records*-Typically include Births, Marriages, Deaths, and Divorces. (Available from most States, and Countries. Consult individual locals for dates that they cover).

B. *Census Records*-Record Names, Ages, Relationships, and Occupations of our Ancestors. (Available from 1790-1940-with some exceptions).

C. *Court Records*-Generally, these records are available at the local level-and include Probate, Administration, Deeds, Divorces, Naturalizations, and many other related documents. (Available in the local court system-recording valuable data and available at the Federal Level)

D. *County Histories/Published Sources*-These record are often published and can contain errors as they are usually secondary sources of doing genealogical research (approach these records with a more discriminating look).

E. *Church Records*-These records are the real heart of your ancestors family. The records here follow very closely with Vital Records recorded in each state, but often are recorded many years earlier. (Consult your local area for availability).

F. *Obituaries/Newspaper Records*-These records offer a plethora of genealogical details on family connections. Some newspapers were “*Daily*” while others published “*Weekly*” (consult your local area-for available newspapers on microfilm or textural).

This list is by no means exhaustive. Most every type of record that records genealogical data can be used to obtain details for this research.

COMPILE WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED: STEP 4.

Once you have completed your research, share with others your findings. Consider putting your genealogical information into a computer database to give you that ability to share your information. Using a genealogical program to store your information is the best way to compile what you have learned.

Some of these programs include:

PAF (Personal Ancestral File)-Free of Charge
Family Tree Maker
Legacy
Brothers Keeper
Roots Magic

These are some of many programs available to aid in your genealogical research.

PERSONAL INTERVIEWS: Don't forget (although not an actual written record), to please interview family members for more information-concerning your research project. This will prove to be invaluable.

FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS/PICTURES:

When conducting any type of genealogical research always try to obtain copies of photographs whenever and wherever possible. One of the best non-document type of source of information-this will help you further your research. As you look at the type of clothing worn, general overall appearance, and type of photograph used to take the picture of your ancestors.

Some of these types of Photographs Include:

- A. **Daguerreotypes** (Very popular from 1839-1860)
- B. **Ambrotypes** (Produced between 1854-1881)
- C. **Tintypes** (Widely produced from 1856-into the 1920's)
- D. **Carte-De-Visite (CDV)** (Widely available from 1858-1910)
- E. **Cabinet Cards** (Very popular from 1866-to the 1920's)
- F. **Post Cards** (Available from 1893 to the present)

Where to find Photographs of Family Members;

- A. **Family Members**
- B. **Library of Congress** (great photographic collection-much of it online)
- C. **State Libraries & Historical Societies** (great for more state wide photographs)
- D. **Local Genealogical & Historical Societies** (great for your local area)
- E. **United States Military History Institute** (great for military images)
- F. **Historical Museums** (large private collection of photographs-Ex: Smithsonian Institute)
- G. **Public Libraries/Newspapers** (Great source for local photographs)

H. Local Company Archives (Example:
Pennsylvania Railroad Company-Philadelphia, PA)

I. Private Photographers & Collectors (consult
reference materials)

J. Local Colleges & Universities (great for
photographs of higher education)

INTERNET RESOURCES:

*Listed below are several excellent website-to add to
your genealogical research-consult them often.*

www.ancestry.com (Fee Based Website)

www.fold3.com (Fee Based Website)

www.worldvitalrecords.com (Fee Based Website)

www.archives.gov (National Archives)

www.loc.gov (Library of Congress)

www.deadfred.com (Photographic Sources)

www.cyndislist.com (General Genealogical Research)

www.ebay.com (Consult to do Family History
Research). Don't rule this one out.

Ancestry, Fold3, and World Vital Records-Are
made available with any Church of Jesus Christ of
Latter-Day Saints-library (Free of Charge).

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NOTES:

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