

Tips and Suggestions For Starting Your Research

1. **Get The Basics:** Begin by interviewing your family members. Ask for dates of births, marriages and deaths of relatives. Find out what towns the events occurred in. Ask where relatives lived and what they did for work. You might even get lucky and discover old photos and keepsakes.
2. **Start Keeping Track:** As you begin to learn about your ancestors, you'll quickly realize you have to keep the information organized. Invest in a notebook or three-ring binder to organize your notes. Utilize family fact sheets, which you can often print from the internet free of charge. Book stores occasionally have books with blank pages formatted for genealogy. You could even invest in software or subscribe to genealogy websites to build interactive family trees.
3. **Notes:** As you take notes on your research findings, date them and cite the source. When you hit a roadblock, revisit your notes and/or sources. Sometimes you'll find something you missed and you can get back on track.
4. **Keep it Simple:** It's easy to get overwhelmed as your tree branches out. Try to focus on one line at a time. If you become frustrated, take a break and begin to research another branch.
5. **Flesh it Out:** After recording the basics such as vital records, begin to fill in the blanks. US Census records are good tools because they often provide marital status, state of birth, approximate age, occupation, language spoken, and level of education as well as names and ages of other members of the household. Town reports, town histories and deeds can also be informative.
6. **Become the Family Detective:** When looking at records, it can sometimes be difficult to determine if you have the correct ancestor, especially if they have a common surname. This is where the groundwork you laid by determining dates and places of vital records, as well as the names of other household members can become helpful. You can use the dates and places as a way of eliminating the incorrect records and locating the correct ancestors.
7. **Be Patient:** The old saying "patience is a virtue" is very true with genealogy. This is a time consuming hobby and can take years to complete. I recommend setting a series of goals and work patiently towards them; that way you feel accomplished instead of frustrated. Don't give up your search as new resources can crop-up unexpectedly at any time. If you are really frustrated and want answers, you could always consider hiring a professional genealogist.
8. **Write a Family History:** After you have filled in the branches of your family tree, consider putting your findings into a written family history. Family trees are great for the facts and data, but the written history allows the opportunity to pull it all together and create a more colorful sketch of your ancestors' lives.

Genealogy Resources

Town or City Clerk's Offices: Vital records are held with the town or city clerk where the record occurred. Visitors to our office may view vital record books* and other town records during our regular business hours. We are unable to make photocopies of the vital records, however certified copies of vital records can be issued for \$15.00.

**Not all vital records are open to the public; births from 1915 to the present & deaths and marriages from 1965 to the present are not available for viewing.*

Local Libraries: Contains town reports for their communities as well as history books and other publications of interest. Lebanon Library's website has a link to the Valley News Obituaries, which covers 1997 to the present. Patrons can access Ancestry.com using a special username and password provided by the Library (must visit in person.) *New Hampshire State Library, 20 Park St, Concord, 603-271-2144*

Lebanon Public Library, Lebanon, 603-448-2549

Kilton Public Library, West Lebanon, 603-298-8544

Historical Societies or Genealogy Research Centers: Often have town reports, history books, periodicals, photographs and artifacts from the area. The folks who staff these facilities are usually very knowledgeable and eager to help you in your research. They can sometimes provide locations for homesteads or gravesites and may even have relics or artifacts that can be linked to an ancestor.

Lebanon Historical Society - Contact City Historian Ed Ashe, 603-252-3728

American-Canadian Genealogical Society, 4 Elm Street, Manchester, 603-662-1154

New England Historic Genealogical Society, 99-101 Newbury St, Boston, 617-536-5740

Division of Vital Records: Each State has a department dedicated to the administration of vital records. Keep in mind every state is different and laws pertaining to access of records will vary. The State of New Hampshire has a Genealogy Research Room which contains vital records for the entire state going as far back as the 1620s. There are also volunteer genealogists available to assist you in your research.

*State of NH, Genealogy Research Room, 71 S. Fruit St, Concord, (603)271-4650, M-F
8:30am-3:30pm*

Registry of Deeds: (County Offices) Some Registry of Deeds websites allow for online searches while others do not. Deeds help to determine where and when your ancestors owned property. If you are lucky, you will discover that a home is still standing and you may be able to visit the site.

Grafton County Registry of Deeds, 3855 Dartmouth College Highway #4, Haverhill, 855-212-1234.

www.ancestry.com: Limited access to search records free of charge; much more offered with paid subscription. Site offers the ability to create an interactive family tree and to upload documents. The website offers the ability to connect with others searching the same ancestors. Website contains a large database of US and International Records, such as census records, wills, deeds, military records, immigration records, vital records indexes, public directories etc. Similar sites: www.myheritage.com; www.findmypast.com; www.familysearch.org (free)

www.findagrave.com: Website that provides locations of graves and sometimes pictures of headstones. Files can be browsed without membership, but membership is required to post. Membership is free.

www.archive.org: Wonderful site that has a large database of publications available online. You can find town history books, town reports, tax assessment books, family history publications and much more. The best part is, it is free to use and does not require creating an account. Town history books often include small genealogies for families that lived in the area as well as biographical sketches of more prominent citizens.

Similar sites: www.haithitrust.org; <http://books.google.com> (not all books are free)

www.usgenweb.org: Guides you to local resources, such as clerk's offices, historical societies, etc.

www.google.com: Never underestimate the power of Google! Many documents and snippets of valuable information can be found simply by "Googling" an ancestor's name.