



## What records should you use?

1. **Census records** are usually a good place to start. You can start with the 1850 federal census and usually trace the male descendants quite easily. The female lines are a bit more difficult, and you will have to check **marriage records** to obtain their married surnames.
2. The **Social Security Death Index**, for those who died 1962 or later, is very useful to determine date of death.
3. Once a date of death is known, search **newspapers** for **obituaries**. The obituaries will usually name survivors of the deceased.
4. Once the survivor's names are known, depending on time period, you can search the Social Security Death Index for their death date to find an obituary.

## Collect Previous Research

- The following are great places to start your search for **family histories**:
  - Family History Library Catalog (Go to [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) > Search > Family History Library Catalog > SurnameSearch.)
  - WorldCat database (Go to <http://www.oclc.org/worldcat/default.htm>)
  - The Library of Congress online catalog (Go to <http://catalog.loc.gov>)
  - HeritageQuest Online (Go to: <http://heritagequestonline.com>)
- Check the following for **family trees posted by others**:
  - [FamilySearch.org](http://FamilySearch.org) > Genealogies
  - [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com) > Search > Public Member Trees
- You may find many references to your ancestor in a **search engine**:
  - [Google.com](http://Google.com)
  - [Yahoo.com](http://Yahoo.com)
  - [Mocavo.com](http://Mocavo.com)

## Consult Additional Sources

- Certain records are particularly rich in descendant information. The following 6 record types generally include information about parents and children and vital information for each person listed.
- **Census** ([FamilySearch.org](http://FamilySearch.org) and [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com) > Search > Census)
  - **Will & Probate** ([FamilySearch.org](http://FamilySearch.org) > catalog; [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com) > Search > Card Catalog)
  - **County Histories** ([FamilySearch.org](http://FamilySearch.org) > catalog; [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com) > Search > Card Catalog; [Google.com](http://Google.com))
  - **Church Records** ([FamilySearch.org](http://FamilySearch.org) > catalog)
  - **Obituaries** ([GenealogyBank](http://GenealogyBank.com), [news.Google.com](http://news.Google.com), [FindAGrave.com](http://FindAGrave.com), Social Security Death Index at [FamilySearch.org](http://FamilySearch.org) or [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com))
  - **Vital Records** (birth, marriage, death) ([FamilySearch.org](http://FamilySearch.org), [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com), [Google.com](http://Google.com))
- If you can't find the information in the above records, go to <https://www.familysearch.org/learn/wiki/> and enter the locality and type of record you need in the search box. The wiki will help you find what is available and where.

## Compile and Record What You Have Learned

As you identify the members of your ancestral families, you should record the information you find in an electronic database. You may want to choose a program such as RootsMagic, Legacy or Ancestral Quest from which you can then transfer the information to FamilySearch Family Tree.

## How do you keep track of where you've been and what to do next?

I use Evernote, but you could use any word processing type program. Since I am a very visual person, I use color coding to track my progress. I select a different color for each of the following

situations, then mark the names accordingly as I add them to my descendency list, updating as I find new information.

1. Working on (need birth/death dates)
2. Have birth/death, add to Family Tree
3. In Family Tree, more information to add
4. In Family Tree, needs more research
5. Finished

**Example:**

Hugh Johnson/Mary Ann

1. Calvin/Permelia
  1. Josiah Calvin/Elizabeth Correll
    1. Harvey (dy)
    2. Estella/Frank Morin
      1. Vernal (is he his or hers)
      2. Mary/Perley Smith
        1. Mary/Robert Kirchner
        2. Perley (2 wives - figure out which children go to which)
        3. Ada/Harold Phipps
        4. William (dy)
    3. Helen/Roy Gilbert
    4. Ada Lucille/Loren Howerton
      1. Larry
    5. Herbert/Anna Morby
    6. Marguerite/Robert Egan
      1. Phyllis/?Conatser
      2. Sandra/?Huffman
    7. Frank/Helen Meehan
      1. Sharon
      2. Nancy
  2. Bertha/William Huff
  3. Jesse

**What are the basic 1-2-3 steps for Descendency Research:**

1. Review what is already known - FT and your own records - and set up your tracking system.
2. Select a family to start with.
  1. Review any available compiled records for clues (i.e. Ancestry.com Public Member Trees).
  2. Track the family through the Census records to identify family relationships (1850-1940 [-1890]).
  3. For each family member:
    1. Search for primary records to fill in birth, marriage and death dates/places. (FamilySearch, Ancestry.com and FindAGrave are good places to start)
    2. Enter information and sources in your own database or on a worksheet
    3. Save the sources to your Family Tree source box to attach later (Use RecordSeek's Tree Connect for sources not on FamilySearch)
  4. When the information for the family is complete. repeat the following for each deceased family member:
    1. Find/Add their birth/death information in Family Tree.
    2. Attach all applicable sources (refer to your database/worksheet sources)
    3. Tag each source to the events they reference.
    4. Reserve the ordinances (optional)
5. Update your tracking system