

## If I Had to Do My Genealogy Over Again, What Would I Do in Today's World

### [Video Link](#)

I had the thought, if I had to do it all over again, would I do anything differently? How would I start my family tree with what I know today and in today's computer and internet age. Let's find out.

### #1 Ancestry

In my humble opinion (this is unsponsored), I think Ancestry has the best tools out there. Their records, search features, and the fact that they have the most DNA test kits (more than anyone else) puts Ancestry on the top of my list for where to start.



Ancestry has several options for a paid subscription, but they also have a [Free Guest Account](#) (limited access to records, but you can build a tree for free), or a [Free 14 Day Trial](#) - affiliate link (which gives you full access to the records).

Ancestry owns Find-A-Grave, Fold3, and Newspapers.com so they have integrated the record indexing from those websites into the search and hint features on Ancestry.

There are several episodes I have created about how to get the most out of your search on Ancestry. Here are just a few.

- [Ancestry Hints vs. Catalog](#)
- [Search Private Trees \(Tiny Tip Tuesday\)](#)
- [Search Using Wild Cards on Ancestry](#)
- [1950 Census, How to Search it Before it is Indexed.](#)



[GenealogyTV.org](http://GenealogyTV.org)



[YouTube.com/GenealogyTV](https://YouTube.com/GenealogyTV)

## #2 Write a Research Question

This is a simple, easy, and super important. This will take you 5 minutes at most. What you're looking for in a research question is to get specific. You can craft a research question using “who, what, where and, when.” “Who” it is you want to know about, “what” it is you want to know, “where” and “when” did it happen?

Examples: John Doe lived in Maryland in 1886, but *where* and *when* was he born?

Jane Doe was born in Indiana in 1805, who were her parents?



What is the number one question you want to know?

## #3 Sign up with FamilySearch.org

The screenshot displays the FamilySearch.org interface. At the top, there are navigation links: Overview, Tree, Person, Recents, Find, Following, My Contributions. The main area features a large, circular family tree diagram with names and dates. A prominent blue circle with the number '#3' is overlaid on the right side of the tree. In the bottom left corner, there is a small video inset showing a woman with short blonde hair, wearing a purple shirt, speaking into a microphone.

### About FamilySearch

FamilySearch is owned maintained by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is the mission of the church to create and preserve family history. You do not need to be a member to utilize the many tools at FamilySearch, in fact FamilySearch encourages everyone to contribute to the world family.

## FamilySearch Wiki

**FamilySearch Research Wiki**  
A Genealogy Resource Guide  
101,041 articles

Find the birth, death, marriage, census records, and other genealogy resources for your ancestor by selecting the region and country below.

Search by place or topic  Find Search Tips

One of my favorite tools is the [FamilySearch Wiki](#). If you have questions about where to find any record, this is the “go to” place to start.

You can use the search box at the top of the page, but I find it more effective to drill into the location, then by record type.

### Ontario, Canada Genealogy

Canada → Ontario

Guide to **Ontario ancestry, family history and genealogy**: birth records, marriage records, death records, census records, parish registers, and military records.

#### History [ edit ] [ edit source ]

Located in Central Canada, Ontario is **Canada's most populous province**, with 38.3 percent of the country's population, and is the second-largest province by total area. Prior to the arrival of the Europeans, the region was inhabited by **Algonquian (Ojibwe, Cree and Algonquin) in the northern/western portions, and Iroquois and Wyandot (Huron) people more in the south/east**. In 1615, French missionaries began to establish posts along the Great Lakes. French settlement was hampered by their hostilities with the Iroquois, who allied themselves with the British. The first European settlements were in 1782–1784 when 5,000 American loyalists entered what is now Ontario following the American Revolution. The Kingdom of Great Britain granted them 200 acres land and other items with which to rebuild their lives. The Constitutional Act of 1793 split Quebec into the **Canada: Upper Canada** southwest of the St. Lawrence-Ottawa River confluence, and **Lower Canada** east of it. The British North America Act took effect on July 1, 1867, establishing the Dominion of Canada, initially with four provinces: Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario. The **Province of Canada was divided into Ontario and Quebec** so that each linguistic group would have its own province.<sup>[1]</sup>

• See *Ontario History Wiki page for more details*.

#### Getting Started [ edit ] [ edit source ]

##### Getting Started with Ontario Research

- Guided Research
- How to Locate Your Ancestor in Canada
- Step-by-Step Ontario, Canada Research
- Getting Started#

##### Ontario Research Tools

Links to articles and websites that assist in Ontario research.

- Archives of Ontario#
- Library and Archives Canada#
- Research Guides and Tools#
- A Guide to Boundaries, Names and Regional Governments#
- Ontario Ancestors#
- Canada Online Genealogy Records

Ontario Online Genealogy Records

Ask the FamilySearch Community

#### Ontario Map [ edit ] [ edit source ]



**Adopt-a-wiki page**  
This page is owned by Ontario Genealogical Society# who welcome you to contribute.  
Adopt a page today

**Ontario Wiki Topics**

**Beginning Research**

- Guided Research
- Record Finder

**Record Types**

- Adoption and Guardianship
- Business Records and Commerce
- Cemeteries
- Census
- Church Records
- Civil Registration
- Court Records
- Directories
- Emigration and Immigration
- Genealogies
- Land and Property
- Loyalists
- Military Records
- Municipal Records
- Naturalization and Citizenship
- Newspapers
- Obituaries
- Online Records
- Periodicals
- Probate Records
- Public Records
- School Records
- Taxation
- Vital Records

**Ontario Background**

- Biography
- Gazetteers
- Historical Geography
- History
- Maps
- Name Variations
- For Further Reading

**Cultural Groups**

- Cultural Groups
- Black Canadians
- First Nations

**Local Research Resources**

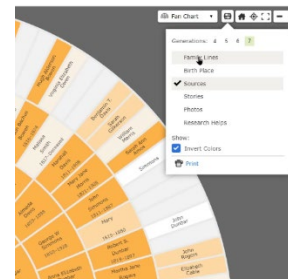
- Archives and Libraries
- Societies
- Family History Centers#

Canada [x]

- Canada
- Alberta
- British Columbia
- Manitoba
- New Brunswick
- Newfoundland & Labrador
- Northwest Territories
- Nova Scotia
- Nunavut
- Ontario
- Prince Edward Island
- Quebec
- Saskatchewan
- Yukon

## FamilySearch Tree View

Use the icon that looks like sliders in the upper right corner of the tree view to change the colors of the tree.



## #4 Take a DNA Test at Ancestry

If I were starting over today, I would get a DNA test done right away.

I would also ask some of the elder members of the family to take one.

If you ask others to take a DNA test, make sure they are comfortable with the idea before you purchase the DNA kit. Inform them that there may be surprises in the results (you never know what you'll find) and offer to pay for the test.



AncestryDNA (as of this writing) has approximately 22 million tests completed. That is more than any other company out there. This is an autosomal test (most popular) that looks at the entire family tree. With AncestryDNA you'll have more DNA cousins to match with too. Once you get the results back, you can search those cousin matches for clues and records in the other DNA matches family trees.

Once you have your test results back, you can download the test results and upload them at other DNA companies like Family Tree DNA, MyHeritage DNA, and more.

This is just the start, there is a lot to explore with AncestryDNA®. At the Genealogy TV YouTube channel, there are tons of videos about using DNA for family research. I could talk about this all day long. 😊

If you want to learn more about AncestryDNA, [GO HERE](#) (affiliate link).

## #5 Card Catalog at Ancestry

This is a huge tip. Learn how to use the Card Catalog at Ancestry. By searching the card catalog, you're getting all the records unfiltered. You then can control what filters you want to narrow your results.

To use the Card Catalog, start with your research question in mind.

### How to use the Card Catalog

- Go to the Search tab at the top (*not* from the ancestor's profile view) and drop down to Card Catalog.
- Then using the left side filters, drill to the location and era that is logical for your research question.

Filter by  
Location  
& Era

**Card Catalog**  
Searchable listing of all record collections

Results 1-25 of 569

Sort By **Record Count**

Search entire "Birth, Marriage & Death" Category

Title	Category	Records	Activity
U.S., Newspapers.com Obituary Index, 1800s-current	Birth, Marriage & Death	964,204,708	UPDATED
U.S., Newspapers.com Marriage Index, 1800s-current	Birth, Marriage & Death	268,031,437	UPDATED
U.S., Obituary Collection, 1930-Current	Birth, Marriage & Death	200,519,892	UPDATED
U.S., Find a Grave Index, 1600s-Current	Birth, Marriage & Death	168,321,963	UPDATED
U.S., Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936-2007	Birth, Marriage & Death	133,418,502	
U.S., Cemetery and Funeral Home Collection, 1847-Current	Birth, Marriage & Death	105,175,698	UPDATED
U.S., Social Security Death Index, 1935-2014	Birth, Marriage & Death	94,331,817	
Web: Obituary Daily Times Index, 1995-2016	Birth, Marriage & Death	16,133,737	
U.S., Department of Veterans Affairs BIRLS Death File, 1850-2010	Birth, Marriage & Death	14,465,010	
Minnesota, U.S., Birth Index, 1935-2000	Birth, Marriage & Death	12,418,898	
U.S., Veterans' Gravesites, ca.1775-2019	Birth, Marriage & Death	9,365,080	
U.S., Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Church Records, 1781-1969	Birth, Marriage & Death	9,112,914	
Web: Minnesota, U.S., Marriages from the Minnesota Official Marriage System, 1850-2019	Birth, Marriage & Death	5,689,490	
Minnesota, U.S., Death Index, 1908-2017	Birth, Marriage &	4,897,028	

- Then look at the record sets you have available. If there are too many to search, then filter to the type of record you are looking for (on the left side).
- You can also sort (upper right) by record count so that the larger record sets rise to the top.
- Then looking at the list open each one that looks promising (right-click and open each one in a new tab to preserve your original list) and search each tab/record set searching for your ancestor. Close each tab as you go, when you have exhausted your search in each record set.

## #6 Contact the County Library

Make the effort to contact the county library in the area in which you are research. A quick google search for the county library often will result in an email address and a phone number. While you're communicating with the library, ask who the local historian or expert is in the area and how you might be able to contact them with questions.

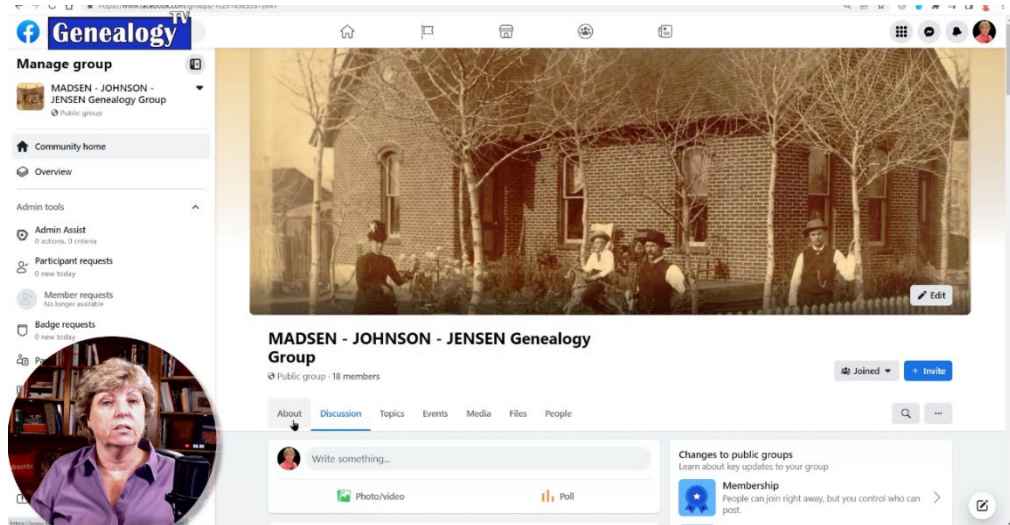
## #7 Write Mini Stories

I highly recommend that as you do your research, write a paragraph or two about the items you are finding and post them on social media or email them to your family.

Facebook groups are a great place to post items of interest to your family. Invite family members to the group which often creates interest in the family and helps start discussions and memories of the family.

Please, please, please.... **write the stories on your computer first and file them in your ancestor's folder** to preserve the stories before posting online.

One never knows how long Facebook or other social media sites will preserve your family history stories.



You never know, these little stories might be part of a future family history book.

## #8 Digital Collections at the State Archives

Most state archives are now creating online digital collections specifically for genealogy research. In fact, most of the items added to the online digital collections that are focused on items of interest to genealogists and historians.

There is an episode on Genealogy TV specific to [U.S. State Archives Digital Collections](#) and a [handout](#) (with every state archive digital collection link, email address and contact information).

Reach out to the state archives, but be specific about what you are looking for when calling or emailing. Use that research question you crafted.



Genealogy TV

Every U.S. State Archive Digital Collections Online

Here is a list of every **State Archive in the U.S.** and their **Digital Archives Online** (if they have one). One should always get familiar with the state archives in the state they are researching. Most have newspapers digitized, with more coming online every day.

State	Home Page	Digital Collections Online	Email	Phone
Alabama	<a href="#">State Archives</a>	<a href="#">Digital Collections Online</a>	<a href="mailto:reference.archives@archives.alabama.gov">reference.archives@archives.alabama.gov</a>	(334) 242-4435
Alaska	<a href="#">State Archives</a>	<a href="#">Digital Collections Online</a>	<a href="mailto:archives@alaska.gov">archives@alaska.gov</a>	(907) 465-2270
Arizona	<a href="#">State Archives</a>	<a href="#">Digital Collections Online</a>	<a href="#">Contact Form</a>	
Arkansas	<a href="#">State Archives</a>	<a href="#">Digital Collections Online</a>	<a href="mailto:state.archives@arkansas.gov">state.archives@arkansas.gov</a>	(501) 682-6900
California	<a href="#">State Archives</a>	<a href="#">Digital Collections Online</a>	<a href="mailto:ArchivesWeb@sos.ca.gov">ArchivesWeb@sos.ca.gov</a>	(916) 653-7363
Colorado	<a href="#">State Archives</a>	<a href="#">Digital Collections Online</a>		(303) 866-2358
Connecticut	<a href="#">State Archives</a>	<a href="#">Digital Collections Online</a>	<a href="https://ctstatelibrary.org/contact-us/email-us/">https://ctstatelibrary.org/contact-us/email-us/</a>	(860) 757-6500

## #9 Research Notes

Keep research notes in chronological order. Write them for your direct line ancestors or people that you are trying to resolve genealogical problems. Keep one set of research notes per ancestor or ancestral couple.

I promise, keeping research notes will make you pay attention to the details you never noticed before.

**#9**

**Research Notes**

- Chronological Order
- Direct Line Ancestors
- Any Problem Ancestor

## #10 Take Classes!

While our ancestors are not going anywhere, learning how to find them is constantly evolving.

There are lots of FREE opportunities to learn more on YouTube.

Genealogy TV has the YouTube channel as well as many other genealogy related YouTube channels. Just search "genealogy" on YouTube, you'll find them.



## Academies and Institutes

There are lots of academies and institutes where you can continue your education. Here are just a few.

- Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy
- Genealogy Research Institute of Pittsburgh
- [Your DNA Guide Workshops](#) (affiliate)
- National Genealogical Society
- [Genealogy TV Academy](#)

No matter what you decide, keep taking classes and keep learning. Besides... it's all so much fun!

## Bonus Tip! Join Genealogical Societies

Support the genealogical societies in the areas you are researching.

They know what is at the local level and may have advice for researching in those areas. Also, check social media platforms for genealogical societies and groups!

