

Genealogy Basics – My Methodology as of December 27, 2019

By Joe Petrie

How do I find People and Missing Vital Information using Free Web Sites

The Goal is find Vitals (Births, Marriages, Deaths etc.) to fill-in a Pedigree Chart

Please Note: About Methodology: When I find Vitals and other information, I copy and paste the vitals to my database. Often, for Censuses, I copy and paste the people that the person lived with. I update the database to include an audit trail to the source(s). I try hard to be consistent. I want the readers – current and future to be able to find the source records. Currently, I am identifying all oral sources that I can't validate. Also, I have not included Gen Web databases. In addition, I often start with FamilySearch (where I registered to see the images). Finally, I use Ancestry Library because it is free.

1. For people who lived in the USA, I start with **US Censuses** and US databases. I search **Ancestry Library (henceforth Ancestry)** for US Censuses at my local library. Nominal Censuses start in 1850. The 1940 Census is the latest. I do not search 1890 because most of the records were destroyed. I use **FamilySearch** to check it.
2. For USA immigrants, Censuses often identify whether the individual was Naturalized (Na) or an Alien (Al).
3. If the US Census identifies a Naturalized Citizen, I search **Ancestry's New Collections** to find the Naturalization Declaration Petition and Petition Forms. (I prefer the Petition Form.) Some forms have a wealth of information from birth (locale and date), to children's Given Names and birth date, and to arrival date, place etc.
4. For male Aliens in the USA, I search **Ancestry WWI** and **WWII Draft Registration Cards**. Aliens had to register until age 63.
5. For USA immigrants especially for those who are aliens and who have an arrival year in the US Census, I search for: **Passenger Manifests for various Ports in Ancestry; Transcripts in Castle Garden; Images in Ellis Island; and Transcripts in the Massachusetts Archives for Boston arrivals. Steven P Morse and FamilySearch.org** identifies other arrival databases.
6. For USA immigrants, if there could be multiple versions of the same Surname, I search using Steve Morse's templates. (Some of his software requires Ancestry to be open.)
7. For dead people who worked in the USA in the 1930s and later, I also search **Ancestry's Social Security Databases**.
8. If it looks like the person was born married or died in Massachusetts before 1920, I search the **FamilySearch.org** and **AmericanAncestors.org**. The later includes records from the Archdiocese of Boston. The registers contain parents' names often the mothers' maiden surnames and sometimes both the officiating person's name and address. (**Hint:** Marriage records facilitate working backwards.)
9. For the USA, I search **Ancestry's Find a Grave** and the **Billion Graves** web sites. Also, I search for local cemetery sites.
10. For Canadians, Newfoundlanders, British, Scots, and Irish, I search their Censuses in **Ancestry** and **Archives Canada**. For Canadians who lived in 1901 and/or 1911. I search the **Automated Census of Canada** for ease in copying and pasting. FamilySearch.org/Search/Collection/List/ are other favorites.
11. For Canadians from Atlantic Canada, I search for the current Links document for the Provinces in **Joe's Free Web Sites** on the **Friends of Irish Research** web Site (www.friendsofirishresearch.org). For Newfoundland, I search the **Archives** and the **Grand Banks** web sites. I search the **Novascotiagenealogy.com** web site for births, marriages and deaths! **FamilySearch** has a database for **Canada Marriages, 1661 – 1949**. It shows the source record. **FamilySearch** has a database for the **Nova Scotia, Antigonish Catholic Diocese, 1823 - 1905**. Only 46 parishes in the 7 Counties participated. There are numerous databases in Nova Scotia County web sites.
12. For US Irish Aliens, Canadian Irish immigrants, and Newfoundland Irish immigrants, I search records in the **Information Wanted** (31,000+ Boston Pilot Advertisements) on **Ancestry** and the Boston College Web Site.
13. For Roman Catholic Irish, I search **Irishgenealogy.ie** and **Ancestry's Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers**. **Ancestry** has over 25 million records. The records are available on the **National Library of Ireland** web site.
14. For Protestant Irish, I search **Irishgenealogy.ie**. Remember that most of the damaged records in the Revolt were Protestant records. I search **PRONI (Public Records of Northern Ireland)** and **Genuki (United Kingdom and Ireland Genealogy)**.
15. For Irish born after 1864, I search **Irishgenealogy.ie** for **Civil Registration** records (Birth, Marriage and Deaths).
16. For Irish males born before 1864, I search the Surname in Property records in **Griffiths Valuation and the Tithe Applotment** databases ([AskAboutIreland.ie/Search/Irish Genealogy/](http://AskAboutIreland.ie/Search/IrishGenealogy/)). I especially like the maps.
17. For some Irish people, I search the **Census of Ireland 1901 and 1911**.
18. For the British Isles, I search the **UK and Ireland Genealogy (Genuki)** web site. (Some Genuki records are not validated.)
19. If I have an idea of when the person died, in all of the above, I work backward from that date. If I have an idea when the person was born, in all of the above, I work forward and backward from that date.
20. If I can determine a Country, I search **Ancestry** and **FamilySearch** for the precise location. I search for the combination of Country, Locality and the person's surname. I have searched only for unique Given names, like Unity.