

40th Anniversary 1972-2012

**West Valley Genealogical Society**

Discover Your Ancestry



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Youngtown, AZ 85363-1225  
623-933-4945 - <http://www.azwvgs.org>  
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## How To Begin Family History (Genealogy) Research

**Start With Yourself:** Start with the known and work toward the unknown. Find out all the vital information you can about your parents and grandparents and record it, temporarily in pencil, on a Pedigree Chart Form.

**Names, Dates, Places, Relationships:** You will be concerned with pulling these four key items from the many and varied documents of recorded history that are the tools of the family searcher. People can be identified in records by their names, dates of events (birth, marriage, death), places of residence and relationships to others either stated or implied.

**Home Sources:** Begin your search at home. Much information can be found in family bibles, newspaper clippings; military, birth, death certificates, marriage licenses, diaries, letters, scrapbooks, photographs, baby books, cards, etc.

**Relatives As Sources:** Call, write or visit those in your family who may have information, particularly older relatives. They may have collected information that they will share.

**Birth, Marriage, Death Records:** Most of the U.S. began to keep records of births and deaths between 1890 and 1915. Marriages can sometimes be found recorded at the county level. Investigate the records of the church to which your ancestor belonged for information.

**Deeds And Wills:** These are usually in the county courthouse, however, the early records may be available at the state archives or state historical society records of property acquisition and disposition can be good sources of genealogical data.

**Federal Records:** The National Archives has military service and related records, passenger arrival records and others. The federal census taken every ten years since 1790 is a good source and is available at the National Archives regional branches. The Family History Library in Salt Lake City. These films may be rented, or viewed, at local LDS Family History Centers. They are also available on-line at paid-subscription web sites (i.e. Ancestry and Heritage Quest, etc.).

**Libraries, Societies, Archives:** Libraries, historical and genealogical societies and archival depositories are excellent sources for data. Visit the state, regional and local institutions in your area.

**Hiring A Researcher:** If you wish to hire a researcher, the following will provide you with a list of researchers:

**Association of Professional Genealogist**, P.O. Box 40393, Denver, CO 80204-0393

web site: <http://www.apgen.org>.

**Arizona Council of Professional Genealogists**

web site: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~azcpg>.

**Board for Certification of Genealogists**, 1307 New Hampshire Ave. NW, Washington, DC, 20036

web site: <http://www.bcgcertification.org>.

The Internet is a wonderful tool and should be used but, as with other sources of information, you will still need to seek out the original documentation for proof.

## **A short list of internet sites to help with family history research**

**Arizona State Library** - <http://www.lib.az.us/> Online catalog of genealogy collection of the Arizona State Library in Phoenix

**First Search/World Cat** - <http://www.worldcat.org/>

**Cyndi's List** - <http://www.cyndislist.com> Alphabetical listing of more than 180 genealogical categories.

**U.S. Gen Web Project** - <http://www.usgenweb.org> There is a web site for almost every county in the United States.

**World Gen Web Projects** - <http://www.worldgenweb.org/> Divided into fifteen world regions arranged by country.

**Family Search** - <http://www.familysearch.org> Mormon Church web site with data from their International Genealogical Index (IGI) and the Ancestral File. The LDS Library catalog is also on this site.

**Roots Web** - <http://www.rootsweb.com>

**Roots Web World Connect Family Trees** - <http://www.worldconnect.rootsweb.com/>

**Roots-L** - <http://lists.rootsweb.com/> Mailing lists.

**Bureau of Land Management** - <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/> General Land Office (GLO) site to federal land records between 1820 and 1908. Does not include the original thirteen colonies, Kentucky, Tennessee, Texas, Hawaii, West Virginia, Maine, Vermont.

**National Archives and Records Administration** - <http://www.archives.gov/> Site contains information about federal census, military records, etc.

**Ancestry** - <http://www.ancestry.com> Commercial subscription database with free access at public libraries and Family History Centers.

**Heritage Quest:** Commercial subscription database available from home through your local public library (must have current library card).