

# *Genealogy Research Tips and Tricks*

*Larry W. Thomas*

[www.AtlantaGenealogy.com](http://www.AtlantaGenealogy.com)

## **Where do I start?**

- Are you looking for that immigrant?
- Are you looking for your maternal great, great grands?
- Are you trying to prove a folklore like related to President?
- How did the family end up in California?
- Do I have any American Patriots?
- Were my ancestors sent to Australia as punishment?
- What happened to the family money?

## **Set a Goal**

- What do you know? Can you prove it?
- What do you think you know? Go find proof
- Start with you and work back to that goal
- Do a Pedigree Chart?
- Do Family Group Sheets?

## **Do not take family folklore as fact unless you can prove it!**

Look at various types of records to find proof

- Vital Records
  - Birth Certificates and Birth Registers
  - Infant Baptism Records if that ancestral family was part of such a church
  - Marriage Licenses, Applications, Certificates
  - Death Certificates, Notices, Obituaries, Mortuary Records, Funeral Home Records
- Court Records
  - Estate Records
  - Land and Deed Records
  - Tax Records
  - Criminal and Civil Court Cases
  - Unique Licenses such as liquor or inn-keeper

# Genealogy Research Tips and Tricks

Larry W. Thomas

[www.AtlantaGenealogy.com](http://www.AtlantaGenealogy.com)

- Organizational Records
  - Church\Synagogue, etc.
  - Civil Organizations such as Rotary, Elk, etc.
  - Fraternal Organizations such as Freemasons, Woodman,
- Academic Records
  - Poor School Tax lists
  - School Yearbooks
  - Athletic and academic groups

## **Do Not Trust Abstracts, Extracts, or Transcriptions Explicitly – GO FIND ORIGINAL**

Source	Information	Evidence
<input type="radio"/> Original This source is in its first recorded form	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Primary This information was provided by someone with firsthand knowledge of the person or event	<input type="radio"/> Direct This source answers the research question by itself
<input type="radio"/> Derivative This source is extracted, transcribed or otherwise derived from the original	<input type="radio"/> Secondary This information was provided by someone with secondhand knowledge of the person or event	<input type="radio"/> Indirect This source is relevant, but needs additional information
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Don't know	<input type="radio"/> Don't know	<input type="radio"/> Negative This source is missing information that it should include
		<input checked="" type="radio"/> Don't know

## **Best place to locate records?**

[www.FamilySearch.org](http://www.FamilySearch.org) Many people use *FamilySearch.org*. But how many people really know all that is available and how to maneuver through microfilm faster? *FamilySearch.org* contains a lot of local (city, townships), county, as well as state records, and even some national records. Figure this for around the world and there are millions of records available for the researcher and more added everyday.

1. Locating and accessing State, County, and local records
  - a. Search
  - b. Catalog
  - c. Enter State, County
  - d. Click Search button
  - e. Select Record Type

# *Genealogy Research Tips and Tricks*

*Larry W. Thomas*

[www.AtlantaGenealogy.com](http://www.AtlantaGenealogy.com)

- f. Look at who the author is. Government entity or other?
- g. If not at county level, try both state and local. Remember, some places are independent cities such as Hampton, Virginia and NOT Hampton, Elizabeth City County, Virginia
2. Quickly locating items on microfilm rolls when multiple items are on the same roll
  - a. Before clicking on the camera, look to see if multiple items on the roll
  - b. Multiple items on roll
    - i. Count the number of items and know where yours comes in
    - ii. Select grid pattern view and zoom all the way out
    - iii. Scroll, look for, and count the beginning of new items
    - iv. Double click the beginning of the item that matches your count and see if it is the one you are looking for
  - c. Single item on roll
    - i. Page through a few to see if each screen is one page or two and what the start number looks like
    - ii. Calculate approximate page number and enter it in the page counter on top left
    - iii. Adjust accordingly
  - d. Remember to check a few pages before and after your item until you get to the end of what you want
3. Quirky internet errors when downloading and other icons
  - a. Occasionally you receive an error when downloading, try waiting several minutes or use a screen capton software
  - b. Camera – You can open from home
  - c. Camera with Key – You must be at a FHL or affiliate library
4. What about digitized books?
  - a. Maybe yes and maybe no
  - b. Click on the icon and it opens the book, like yearbooks, family surname books, etc.
5. Other records attached to trees
  - a. Be sure to check out both the One World Tree and Genealogies– Type the name and information of your person of interest. Once in the tree, it will show the number of sources
  - b. Where there are sources view them to confirm they are accurate

# Genealogy Research Tips and Tricks

Larry W. Thomas

[www.AtlantaGenealogy.com](http://www.AtlantaGenealogy.com)

## **Document Your Findings**

Be sure to write down your findings and cite your sources with sufficient information that someone, other than yourself, could find the same item.

## **Online Researching**

- [www.Ancestry.com](http://www.Ancestry.com) – Pay Site (sometimes available at public libraries)
- [www.Fold3.com](http://www.Fold3.com) – Pay Site, owned by Ancestry.com (sometimes available at public libraries)
- [www.Newspapers.com](http://www.Newspapers.com) – Pay Site, owned by Ancestry.com
- [www.Findagrave.com](http://www.Findagrave.com) – Free Site, owned by Ancestry.com
- [www.Genealogy.com](http://www.Genealogy.com) – Pay Site
- [www.MyFamily.com](http://www.MyFamily.com) – Pay Site
- [www.FamilySearch.org](http://www.FamilySearch.org) - Free Site – Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
- [www.USGenWeb.com](http://www.USGenWeb.com) - Free Site run by volunteers from each county
- [www.Rootsweb.com](http://www.Rootsweb.com) – Mostly Free, owned by Ancestry.com
- <https://billiongraves.com> – Partly Free Site

## **References**

“Family History Skills” – [www.ngsgenealogy.org](http://www.ngsgenealogy.org).

“Family Tree Magazine” – Several Issues.

“Tracing Your Ancestors: Beginner’s Guide” <http://internet-genealogy.com>.

National Archives and Records Service. *Beginning Your Genealogical Research at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. General Services Administration, 1983.

*The BCG Genealogical Standards Manual – Millennium Edition*. Orem, UT, Turner Publishing Company, Board of Certification of Genealogists, 2000.

Eales, Anne Bruner, and Robert M. Kvasnicka, editors. *Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives of the United States, Third Edition*. Washington D.C., National Archives and Records Administration, 2000.

Jones, Thomas. *Mastering Genealogical Proof*. Arlington, VA, National Genealogical Society, Arlington, VA, 2013.

Mills, Elizabeth Shown. *Evidence Explained: Citing history sources from artifacts to cyberspace*. Baltimore, Maryland: Genealogical Publishing Company, 2017.

Mills, Elizabeth Shown, Editor. *Professional Genealogy: a Manual for Researchers-Writers-Editors-Lecturers and Librarians*. Baltimore, MD, Genealogical Publishing Company, 2001.

Mills, Elizabeth Shown, Editor. *Professional Genealogy: Preparation, Practice & Standards*. Baltimore, MD, Genealogical Publishing Company, 2018.

Morgan, George. *How to do Everything Genealogy, Third Edition*. USA, The McGraw Hill Education (Professional), 2012.

Morgan, G. & Smith, D. *Advanced Genealogy– Research Techniques*. NY: McGraw-Hill Education, 2014.

Rose, Christine. *Courthouse Indexes Illustrated*. San Jose, CA, CR Publications, 2006.

Sperry, Kip. *Reading Early American Handwriting*. Baltimore, MD, Genealogical Publishing Company, 1998 (Sixth Printing 2008).