

FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

#2 - FINDING YOUR SOURCES



1. Start with what you know
2. Generally, work backwards
3. Always record & cross reference your sources
4. Consider whether it is a primary or secondary source – ie. how reliable is it?

Vital Records

- ❖ Vital records help you build the links between individuals. Look for births, marriages and death certificates.
- ❖ You may need to consider parish records if researching a time before civil registration – that is look for baptisms, marriages and burials.
- ❖ Online indexes of vital records often have these rolled into one index.
- ❖ Useful guide to searching Australian BDMs: www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/australian-birth-marriage-and-death-records
- ❖ For free access to English & Welsh Vital Records try: www.freebmd.org.uk
- ❖ www.freereg.org.uk allows you to search parish records in England & Wales.

What information may be in a Vital Record?

Birth	Marriage	Death
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Name at birth ❖ Sex ❖ Date of birth ❖ Place of birth ❖ Father's name & occupation ❖ Mother's maiden name (& occupation after X date) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Bride and groom's name, age/DOB, place of birth, residences, occupations and conjugal status. ❖ Names and occupations of fathers. ❖ Place and date of marriage. ❖ Officiating person/religion. ❖ Witnesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Name, sex and age ❖ Place and date of death ❖ Cause of death, duration of any illness. ❖ Occupation ❖ Marital status ❖ Religion ❖ Other details of family ❖ Doctor

Census and Electoral Rolls

- ❖ There is limited online availability of census returns for Australia. Instead use Electoral rolls 1901-1980
- ❖ Genealogical research centres such as those in the State Library of Victoria can help you access census information for Australia. See this useful guide: <http://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/earlycensus/getstarted>
- ❖ Ancestry.com & Findmypast.com provide online access to Census and Electoral Roll information for United Kingdom, United States, Canada and Australia and New Zealand.
- ❖ See www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk for online access to Scottish Census records
- ❖ See www.census.nationalarchives.ie for Irish Census records.

Tips for searching

- ❖ Try these 3 great websites to find international genealogical resources:
 - ❖ Cyndi's List: www.cyndislist.com
 - ❖ Cora Web: www.coraweb.com.au
 - ❖ Family Search Wiki: https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page
- ❖ Using a searching 'wildcard' such as the asterisk (for all possible endings) can help you find misspelled names. eg. Cott* looks for Cottee, Cottie, Cotty...
- ❖ Before the 20th century there were common abbreviations for first names. Chas for Charles or Margt for Margaret are two examples. See this useful list: https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Appendix:Abbreviations_for_English_given_names
- ❖ Remember that your ancestor may have:
 - ❖ Used their middle name rather than first name
 - ❖ Commonly used a nickname
 - ❖ Anglicised their name. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglicisation_of_names
- ❖ Remember to look carefully for all the links and clues to other sources.

Free Emerald Hill Heritage Centre Resources

- ❖ Library Editions of Ancestry.com, Findmypast.com & British Newspaper Archive
- ❖ local history collection including rate books, post office directories, histories...
- ❖ increased opening hours: see http://library.portphillip.vic.gov.au/Whats_on/Library_news
- ❖ friendly and knowledgeable staff!