



# RESEARCH YOUR FAMILY

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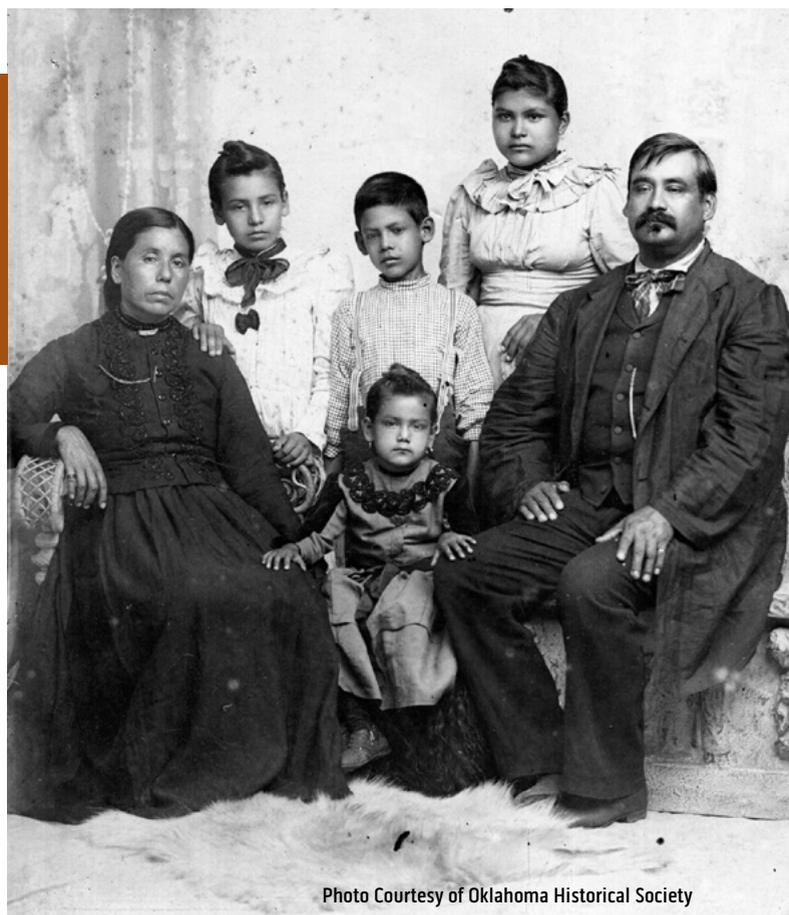


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Genealogy

## FIND YOUR ANCESTORS

To find your ancestors, it would be helpful to know their approximate years of birth and the names of their parents, spouse(s), children, etc. But before you get that far, start with what you know, which means starting with yourself and working backwards. Find out as much information as you can about your parents, grandparents, and more distant ancestors. Write the information down. Always include maiden names for females, if known. Females will be listed under that name until they were married. Include dates and places of births, marriages, and deaths and include the places your ancestors lived between their birth and death, if known.

Contact other family members and ask them to share what they know. They often have information or documentation you need. Another family member may also be working on your family tree and you can share information. You may already have most of what you need at home.

Sources of information can come from birth certificates, marriage licenses, death certificates, divorce decrees, newspaper clippings, family bibles, diaries, and letters. Check out the county courthouse for records on marriages, divorces, deeds, and wills (probate). Cemetery records are also sometimes useful. A great place to find cemetery information (birth and death dates on headstones) without having to actually go to the cemetery is by looking at a searchable website, such as [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com).

If you know the area your ancestors lived in, check with those libraries to see what county and state history books are on file that might contain information you need. County histories help fill in the gaps in information and many times answer questions as to why people relocate and where they went.

Many public libraries have an area dedicated to genealogy. Many university libraries also have genealogical and historical collections available to researchers as well. Genealogical and historical societies, both local and state, are good sources of information. Many have copies of county school records, family histories, censuses, old newspapers, cemetery records and funeral home records, etc.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon) Family History Library has “branch” locations called Family History Centers at many of their local facilities. The Family History Library contains a huge collection of genealogical documents that may be useful in research. The Family History Centers can order copies of most of the collection. The Family search website has many documents online ([www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)).

Also, many online genealogical sites such as Rootsweb ([www.rootsweb.com](http://www.rootsweb.com)) and Ancestry.com ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)) have searchable online databases that may help. Many people post their family trees on these sites, as well as other websites. You may find some of your ancestors included in someone else’s tree.

Another great way to find out information about your family is by researching the US Census records, which are accessible online. The US Census Bureau releases census records every ten years. The last census released was the 1940 census. You can search the census by name and find your relatives listed on these records. By locating them, you will find out the names of persons who lived in your family members’ households at the time the census was recorded. Their ages at the time of the recording will be listed as well, which will give you clues to dates of birth.

There are always people who can help you do the work if you do not want to do it yourself. Certified genealogists are available for a fee. Contact the Board of Certification of Genealogists (P.O. Box 14291, Washington, DC 20044 [www.bcgcertification.org](http://www.bcgcertification.org)) or the Association of Professional Genealogists (PO Box 40393, Denver, CO 80204 [www.apgen.org](http://www.apgen.org)) and request their listings of genealogists for hire. Local archives, libraries, and societies may also provide the names of individuals in the area who will search records for you.

Once you have your names and dates together for your ancestors as far back as you can go, put your information together in a document that makes sense. If you don’t have access to a family pedigree chart to list your information on (these are available online from any genealogical site and are usually free) simply write the information onto a page in a format that is easy to understand.



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