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Considering Other Record Sets and Resources



**Presented by
Davina Wilcock**

**Contact details
Email:**

agr.historyuk@gmail.com

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Why!

Why are Other Record Sets and Resources important?

When first starting a tree, it is easy to use just one resource. This may be that you have signed up to a particular website or that you have gone to a local archive. This is fine as an initial start. However, no one place has all the records and to make sure your tree is accurate, more than one type of resource will be required.

Why do we need to consider them?

The simple answer is if you want your tree to come alive, to be as full and meaningful as it can be. To understand what your ancestors went through and what led over the centuries to your existence today. Then you have to consider all the resources and different record sets that are out there. Otherwise, you land up with a tree with just names, dates, and places. Empty and void of any real meaning. Finding those stories, the histories, and the tales they create, will make your family tree more enjoyable for you and your whole family.

Types of Resources

- **Family**
- **On line**
- **Physical**

Over the years the way we do our research has changed from physical to online due to the internet. With the creation of AI, the changes in how we research are continuing to change and evolve.

Both online and physical do co-exist together, with many items held in archives available to view from the comfort of your home. However, vast amounts of documents and original images do not exist online.

Family

Collecting family stories are a great starting point. Using a voice recorder as well as taking notes is advisable, so you can return to the stories repeatedly, if needed.

Be aware, stories and tales are handed down and may have changed and evolved over the years.

Ask if you can take copies using your phones or a camera, of any documents or photos family members have. With these it is also important to take notes about what the document is and who the people in the photos are.

On-line

Major Websites - [FamilySearch .org](https://www.familysearch.org) is the oldest and is still free to join. There are now several other major websites, subscription is required. Though some document sets are the same across all the major sites, they each also have record sets only available to their site. It is these records sets, further to the general sets, that are worth viewing.

Much of the early transcribed documents on these sites, do not have original copies attached to them for viewing. Therefore, they are transcriptions only which means errors do exist. They also only have basic information transcribed. Extra details are often missed that can be crucial to deciding if you have the correct person.

When using these sites, it is best to use wildcards to broaden the amount of possible people a search would find. Keep a wide frame on age dates and broad location for area's.

Always check out all hints and tips these sites give you for connections before adding them, they are only suggestions.

Browser Search

Smaller sites contain information that can help to confirm your ancestors and bring extra information to your research.

Types of sites include -

Societies, Forums, Federations and History Groups.

Area Specific - Research done by local history and heritage groups is normally best. Check surrounding areas as well.

Occupation - Remember trades have variations within them. Try looking for these within a wordsearch. Sites contain history of trade, plus search engines and indexes. often have a physical archive as well.

Name specific studies - Are a single surname study, that may just cover a specific area like a county or a region. Others cover all located names and name variations in a country and even on a global basis. They include family trees and details found on those with the surname.

OneNameStudy.org has a large listing, remember to always double check all findings done by others as errors can exist.

Country Specific – These relate to research groups covering one country or group of countries. For example, Fibis.org for all records covering research in India and CaribbeanFamilyHistoryGroup.org covering all the islands of the Caribbean to name just two, there are many more. They often have both online records, index's and talk forums. Some also have physical archives and meet up days, where they hold talks, and you can do research and ask questions.

Lists of types of sites

A list of some but not all sites, can be found at FamilyHistoryFederation.org.

Plus, magazines on genealogy often contain details of sites. These can be brought via subscriptions or at newsagents.

*Research is creating New
Knowledge*

By Neil Armstrong

Official Records

Birth and death records can be found in index form on most sites, containing basic information. Early births do not include mother's maiden name, only those after indexes started to include them, have these. Also, death record indexes on these sites do not include age. This is the one area where the largest number of mistakes happen on trees.

One underused site is that of the General Register Office, also known as the GRO.

Where you can also buy certificates.

www.gro.gov.uk

This site is free to search the index records. These indexes have been updated to include further details. All birth records include mother's maiden name. If born outside of marriage a dash mark appears where maiden name would. If parents where both born with the same surname, then it will appear twice in the record. Deaths also include age so you can be sure you have chosen the right person. If a child is under the age of one a '0' appears.

Physical

Your ancestors will span many areas and possibly even countries. Multiple archives will therefore be required.

Travelling to all archives covered by your family will be impossible.

Hints and tips

- Check out online resources
- See what research help they offer, prices may be charged.
- Find local history groups

*“The **ONLY** thing
that you
ABSOLUTLEY
have to know
is the **LOCATION**
of the **LIBRARY**”*

*By **Albert Einstein***

Libraries and Archives

Libraries - Local libraries are great starting points.

They contain information on local heritage and history, as well as holding documents on local councils and newspapers for the area.

Access to online resources is also available including free access to some subscription sites.

Archives - Vary in size and type depending on what area they cover i.e. county, regional and national. All archives have websites which are worth viewing before visiting. Most now have some documents that are in digital format available to view online. Lists of other contents held can be searched to assist with visit as this saves on time once there.

For your first visit you will need to register for a readers card. Requirements of proof of identity can be found on the websites.

Ordering documents from the vaults can sometimes take a few days and will need to be ordered in advance.

Other types of Archives

Military

- Regimental Archives
- Military Museums

Regimental - Consist of regimental archives, museums with archives and records held at county archives.

Throughout history regiments have been consolidated or merged.

First check using a web browser, the history of the regiment and come forward in date, to tell you who has the records today.

Museums - dedicated to specific periods or types of military history also have archives specific to the exhibits they are showing. These do also contain details of those that participated in these fields.

Both regimental archives/museums and military museums, have websites with further information.

Booking is essential for research as desks are limited.

Museums

Don't just contain artifacts!
Many have archives and research facilities on those that invented or worked within the trades that they cover.

Evan large museums such as the V&A and the Natural History Museum have archive collections that show examples of work and also details of people who worked within the field of interest the museum covers.

The archives for the museum you are interested in will have an online site. Search by museum name and the word archive. Like other archives the websites contain visitor information, plus requirements for research. Also details of their collections.

Occupational

Trades exist in archives held by various sources. Many of the documents held do include names of people that worked within the trade.

Trade specific museums - have artifacts that can be viewed which give information for your research, but also have searchable archives. Check websites for details of what information is held and what the requirements are for research within the archive.

Trade specific websites - have searchable information, some include original digitalised documents. They have vast amounts un-digitalised, which can normally be viewed in person with prior arrangement. They can also facilitate look ups for research, these may incur a fee.

Company records – Large companies from all fields of business often have their own records sets, some even have their own archives and museums. Contacting directly is best to find out what information is available and what the requirements are for any research you wish to undertake. Remember companies often merge or have been taken over. It is best to do a browser research first to ascertain where the records may be.

Ancestors Travelled

Records exist on departures and arrivals, for some places and periods of time. This can be quite hit and miss but worth a look.

Remember when looking, that people often falsified age, especially if they were leaving to find work, found so use an age range. Passports came in across the world in different periods, however some papers, which pre-date passports, can also be . Check with National Archives in both the country of departure as well as the county of arrival, to see what dates and types of information may exist and where they can be found.

If you know where they were living, see if the archive has a online catalogue or try emailing the archive for that region or country, to see what assistance they may be able to give you in your research. Fees may apply to research carried out on your behalf.

Contacting by email is best and you may need to use an internet translate option.

Books

These are often overlooked as a source of information. However, they can be very enlightening, and many great finds have come from a book.

Some books have been digitalised so doing a google search of your ancestors name should find if their name exists. This though, may show up many results, it is better to enter a term like location, event or occupation you know that they were involved in, this will narrow the search.

Reference books and non-fiction books on particular events or periods of time may also reference your ancestor.

Another way to use books is for learning information on the area your ancestor lived in. Old books containing photos of an area may not give you information on an individual, but do help to portray the lives and standards your ancestors were living in.

Newspapers

Look for local, regional, and national. Be aware newspapers also ran stories from other parts of the country. If you do not find what you are looking for in your area check neighbouring area's and counties.

Not all are digitalised, so check in the local area as to who holds the copies. Local town and village are likely to be held by libraries where larger area newspapers will be held in City Libraries or Archives.

Check dates on when newspapers in your area started and publications that are available. There will be some publications that no longer exist today, that will be worth searching.

If digitalised, then they are easy to search by name. Remember to use wildcards as well when searching.

For those that are not digitalised, look around dates that you know are important. Search notices for announcements and also look at business notices.

Churches

Not just gravestones! Some churches are better than others, but they can be a wealth of information.

- Transcribed graves
- Grave maps
- Often local history details kept
- Parish records
- poor relief in the area
- Plaques on walls
- Lists of Vicars and clergy

Check if they have an online site before you visit as they may have people or groups you can contact and meet with when you visit.

"Always

*Keep an open mind and
think outside the box"*

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