



ADAMS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

GETTYSBURG, PA

GETTING STARTED: FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH

Researching an ancestor can be difficult, but ACHS holds a treasure trove of information that can make your search for information easier! To begin, you will want to determine the basic details of your ancestor's life, including their birth date, birthplace, parents' names, marriage date, spouse name, death date, death place, and burial place. We encourage you to consult the following resources:

1. Birth and Parents' Names: birth records are very sparse prior to 1900, and most Pennsylvania birth records must be ordered from the PA Department of Health. However, many birth dates can be found on other records such as death certificates, headstone transcriptions, and church records. ACHS has a significant collection of church records filled with birth and baptismal notices.
2. Marriage: ACHS holds some 20th century marriage records, but this collection is incomplete. The best source for marriages is church records and newspaper references. Have a volunteer help you locate information in the ACHS genealogy card file.
3. Death/Burial: Consult newspaper references in our card files, church records, cemetery inscription cards, Pennsylvania State Death Certificates (1906-1966) via ancestry.com, and the ACHS estate file collection.

To establish additional information about an ancestor, we recommend the following sources:

1. Search our **PastPerfect** collections database for any relevant documents or photographs.
2. Check our **collections index** to see if there is a pertinent family collection, or if any of your ancestors donated historic materials to ACHS.
3. Ask to see a **family/surname file** for the family name you are researching.
4. Check out **US Federal Census records** via ancestry.com, and local **septennial census records** in the ACHS research room.
5. Look through the ACHS **estate files** to view original wills and inventories.
6. Check in our Research Room for a **published or unpublished genealogy** for the family surname you are researching.
7. Check our **naturalization records index** if your ancestor was an immigrant.
8. Search local newspapers via **newspapers.com** (available on all ACHS computers) for references to your ancestor, including news items, obituaries, land transfers, and any other anecdotes.
9. If your ancestor was a veteran, consult our **pension records collection** and other military records available via **Fold3.com** (available on ACHS computers).

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