

# 5 Tips to Jumpstart Your Research

Looking for that next exciting find but not sure where to turn for it?  
Here are five tips that will have your research firing on all cylinders.

## 1. TAKE YOUR RECORDS OUT TO PLAY!

Your ancestors' stories don't always jump out at you. Sometimes there are details in the records that get overlooked, and sometimes you need to read between the lines. Take a look at a census record for one of your ancestors and do a little brainstorming. Look at every field and think about the implications of each. What do they tell you about the family in that time and place? Are there some next steps in there that can take your research further?

LOCATION.			NAME of each person whose place of abode on April 15, 1910, was in this family. Enter surname first, then the given name and middle initial, if any. Include every person living on April 15, 1910. Omit children born since April 15, 1910.	RELATION. Relationship of this person to the head of the family.	PERSONAL DESCRIPTION.					
Street, avenue, road, etc.	House number (in cities of 10,000)	Number of dwelling house in order of habitation.			Number of family in order of the institution.	Sex.	Color or race.	Age at last birthday.	Whether single, married, widowed, or divorced.	Number of years of present marriage.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
East 19th Street	23	8	Wagner, John	Head	M	W	40	1	6	4
			Wagner, Mary	Wife	F	W	36	1	2	2
			Wagner, Henry	Son	M	W	5	5	2	3
			Wagner, Bronny	Daughter	F	W	4	5		
			Wagner, Bronny	Brother	M	W	27	5		
		5	Luzenski, Stanley	Boarder	M	W	22	5		

NATIVITY.			CITIZENSHIP.		Whether able to speak English; or, if not, give language spoken.	
Place of birth of this Person.	Place of birth of Father of this person.	Place of birth of Mother of this person.	Year of immigration to the United States.	Whether naturalized or alien.		
12	13	14	15	16	17	
6	Rus-Polish O	Rus-Polish O	Rus-Polish O	1894	AL	Polish
	Rus-Polish O	Rus-Polish O	Rus-Polish O	1899	11	Polish
12	Pennsylvania	Rus-Polish O	Rus-Polish O	2	3	
	Pennsylvania	Rus-Polish O	Rus-Polish O			
	Rus-Polish O	Rus-Polish O	Rus-Polish O	1910	AL	Polish

OCCUPATION.				EDUCATION.			RESIDENCE IN DIST.							
Trade or profession of, or particular kind of work done by this person, as spinner, salesman, laborer, etc.	General nature of industry, business, or establishment in which this person works, as cotton mill, dry goods store, farm, etc.	Whether an employer, employee, or working on own account.	If an employee: Whether out of work on April 15, 1910.	Number of weeks out of work during year 1909.	Whether able to read.	Whether able to write.	Attended school any time since September 1, 1909.	Owned, free or mortgaged.	Farm or house.	Number of farm animals.	Whether a member of the Union of Polish Catholics (or other).	Whether blind (mark eyes).	Whether deaf and dumb.	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
Laborer	Machine	W	No	12	Yes	Yes		R		15	5	4	3	
None					Yes	Yes								
None														
None														

### Here are some things we noted based on what's in this record:

- Mary was previously married. (See column 8. M2 means "married more than once.")
- John and Mary had been married six years (column 9), so they married around 1904. Since Henry was born in Pennsylvania in 1905 or so, Pennsylvania would be a good starting place to search for their marriage record.
- Both John and Mary list 1899 as their year of immigration. Use that year to check for passenger arrival records (column 15). John and Mary weren't married yet, so Mary would be traveling under her maiden name or her previous husband's surname.
- Mary had given birth to two children and both were still living (columns 10 and 11). Both are included in the household for this census.
- John's brother—name possibly Bronisz or Bronus (variants of Bronisław)—is living in the household. He's thirteen years younger than John and has recently arrived from Poland. Be on the lookout for other siblings who were born between them.
- Both John and Mary's family appear to have originated in the Russian partition of Poland (columns 12-14).
- None of the adults in the household speak English; they speak Polish (column 17). A third party may have had to help facilitate communication or provide details for the census. This could explain discrepancies that may show up when you compare details from this census to those in other records.
- Their surname is Wagner, but Wagner is typically a German surname. Since the census suggests Polish origins (columns 12-14), perhaps this isn't the original family name, or perhaps the family has deeper German roots.
- They are renting their home (column 26).
- Both John and his brother work as laborers in the machine industry, and both were unemployed for 12 weeks in 1909. Perhaps they were employed at the same place (columns 18, 19, and 22).
- Neither John nor his brother had been naturalized at this point (column 16). Check subsequent censuses through 1930 to see if they naturalized later. The 1920 census will even include the naturalization year.
- Birthplaces for both children are listed as Pennsylvania (column 12). A timeline using details in this and other records can help pin down when the Wagners moved from Pennsylvania to Cleveland. (Learn more about creating timelines in this [free research guide](#).) Consult other records to determine where in Pennsylvania the children were born and where to find birth and/or baptism records.

## 2. SIDE-STEPPING TO RESEARCH TO A SIBLING, A COUSIN, OR IN-LAWS CAN BE HELPFUL.

Even researching travel companions, neighbors and other associates of your ancestor can reap big rewards. Catherine Higgs/Huggins would have been tough to identify on this passenger list without knowing the names and ages of her siblings. Additional evidence comes in to play when we see other familiar surnames on the manifest with her. The Murta[gh] and Walsh surnames appear in the names of sponsors on Huggins baptismal records in Brooklyn and in Ireland.

3 Edward Walsh 20, Died 27 July  
4 John " 19 "

2 Biddy Murtagh 15 "

4 Robert Higgans 11 Laborer  
5 Judith " 9 Child  
6 Catherine " 7 "

Other sponsors on the [Brooklyn baptisms](#) are Muldarry and Dillon. When we take a look at [Griffith's Valuation of Ireland](#) the Huggins family appears in Rathconrath, Co. Westmeath. A search for the Muldarrys in Griffith's turns up quite a few in Co. Westmeath and several in Rathconrath. The Muldarrys had one other thing in common with the Huggins family—both families leased their property from Hugh Tuite.

View Record	Honora <b>Muldarry</b>	<b>Hugh M Tuite</b>	Castlegaddery, <b>Rathconrath</b> , Westmeath
View Record	James Muldarry	Thomas Swift	Rathowen, Rathaspick, Westmeath
View Record	John Muldarry	<b>Hugh Morgan Tuite</b>	Lakingstown, Kilmacnevan, Westmeath
View Record	John Muldarry	James Boggs	Mullingar, Mullingar, Westmeath
View Record	Matthew Muldarry	James <b>Dillon</b> Roche	Ballinalack, Leny, Westmeath
View Record	Patrick Muldarry	<b>Hugh M Tuite</b>	Castlegaddery, <b>Rathconrath</b> , Westmeath
View Record	Peter Muldarry	<b>Hugh Morgan Tuite</b>	Churchtown, Kilmacnevan, Westmeath
View Record	Peter Muldarry	<b>Hugh Morgan Tuite</b>	Emper, Kilmacnevan, Westmeath
View Record	Peter Muldarry	<b>Hugh M Tuite</b>	Castlegaddery, Rathconrath, Westmeath
View Record	Thomas Muldarry	<b>Hugh Morgan Tuite</b>	Churchtown, Kilmacnevan, Westmeath
View Record	Thomas Muldarry	Hugh Morgan Tuite	Emper, Kilmacnevan, Westmeath

Create a working tree to sort out relationships and attach records for associates that don't fit into your family tree. Besides being useful for organizing details, Ancestry.com will send you hints on individuals in your working tree so you can build on what you know about them.

All these little pieces of evidence point to associations that were most likely formed the old country. So next time you're stumped about your ancestor's origins, try investigating extended family, neighbors, and other people who interacted with your family.

### 3. CONNECT WITH FAMILY

When you share your family tree with relatives, you may find that even people who previously didn't show much interest become much more engaged. Your online tree can also reconnect you with branches of your family that may have drifted apart over the generations. These connections can be incredible sources for research insights, and you never know what stories and photographs have come through their line of descent. Find others who are researching someone in your tree by clicking on the **Member Connect** tab on that family member's profile page in your tree. To connect, just click on the orange Connect button.

**Olive M. Dennis**  
 Birth Feb 1897 in New York  
 Death Feb 1975 in Armonk, Westchester, New York, United States of America

Search records View her family tree View family members Print More options

Overview Facts and Sources Media Gallery Comments Hints **Member Connect**

Recent Activity Connections (4) Suggested Connections (1) What's this?

1 possible connection researching Olive M. Dennis.

Review what other Ancestry members have in their public trees about Olive M. Dennis. Add the ones that seem to match your ancestors. When you are connected, you will be notified when new content is added in their tree for Olive M. Dennis.

**Connect or Ignore**

Now you can follow your connections' progress through the **Member Connect Activity** log, which can be accessed through the Collaborate tab.

Collaborate Learning Center

- Recent Member Connect Activity
- Online Support Community
- Message Boards
- Ancestry World Archives Project
- Member Directory
- Public Profile

#### Connections in Your DNA

You carry links to other family members in your DNA, and DNA testing for family historians is helping uncover those connections. When you take an AncestryDNA test, we compare your sample to every other sample in our database. Then we use statistical probability to determine how likely it is that two people are related and how close that relationship might be. Determining exactly how you're related can sometimes be as simple as comparing your tree and your match's tree for a common ancestor (providing you both have online trees). Even if we don't find one common ancestor, Ancestry.com provides tools to help you compare the surnames and places in your family trees to look for commonalities.

Send Message 1 Messages

Illinois, USA - Member since 2004, last logged in today

**Predicted relationship: Second Cousin**  
 Possible range: 2nd - 3rd cousins (What does this mean?)

Add note

**Ethnicity**

British Isles	97%
Uncertain	3%

= Shared Ethnicity

Pedigree and Surnames Map and Locations

105 people View Full Tree

SHARED SURNAMES

Surnames that appear in both tree and tree

1ST GEN 2ND GEN 3RD GEN 4TH GEN 5TH GEN 6TH GEN 7TH GEN

## 4. KNOW WHAT'S AVAILABLE

While Hints in your online tree can give you a good start on your family history, there's much more to your family story waiting to be discovered. To find records that may hold more of your family's story, it's helpful to (a) know what collections are available and (b) search them directly. Ancestry.com has two tools to help you explore the collections that may include relevant information for you.

### Card Catalog.

The Card Catalog can be searched or browsed. Searching the title field will turn up results where the search term(s) is actually in the title. For example, if you were looking for the collection of [U.S. Federal Census Mortality Schedules, 1850-1885](#), on Ancestry.com, you could enter the term *mortality*. Entering search terms in the keyword field searches for those terms in both the title and the collection's description. So a search for keyword *Brooklyn* would return, among other collections, [New York City, Births, 1891-1902](#), because the collection description tells us it includes records from Brooklyn.

Filters on the left side of the catalog allow you to sort through content based on what you're looking for. Want to find out what vital records we have for Chicago? Filter by location (Illinois and Cook County) and record type (Birth, Marriage & Death).

**Ancestry Card Catalog**

Search Titles

Title

Keyword(s)

**Search**  
or Clear All

Filter Titles

Reset all filters and start over

**Birth, Marriage & Death** (Collection)

**USA** (Location)

**Illinois** (Location)

**Cook** (Location)

**FILTER BY COLLECTION**

Birth, Baptism & Christening 3

Marriage & Divorce 4

Death, Burial, Cemetery & Obituaries 9

**FILTER BY DATES**

1600s	1700s	1800s	1900s
1600s	1700s	1800s	1900s

Matches 1-14 of 14

Search entire "Birth"

Title

- Cook County, Illinois, Birth Certificates Index, 1871-1922
- Cook County, Illinois Marriage Index, 1930-1960
- Cook County, Illinois, Marriages Index, 1871-1920
- Cook County, Illinois Death Index, 1908-1988
- Cook County, Illinois, Deaths Index, 1878-1922
- Cook County, Illinois Birth Index, 1916-1935
- Cook County, Illinois Marriage Indexes, 1912-1942
- Chicago Tribune, Obituary Index, 1988-1997
- Illinois Quaker Records
- Chicago Sun-Times Obituaries, 1988-95
- Wunders Cemetery, Chicago, Illinois
- Directory of the city of Chicago, Illinois for 1843
- Chicago River-and-Harbor convention

### Place Pages.

Another option for viewing collections for a particular place is through our Place Pages. Click the [Search tab](#) and scroll to the bottom of the page to find a map that lets you view the top databases available for a particular state or country. Click the **View all...** link at the bottom of each category for a complete list.

**North Carolina**

Welcome to our North Carolina family history research page. Here you'll find record collections, history, and genealogy resources to help you trace your North Carolina ancestors.

Collections History Resources

**Data Collections**

<b>North Carolina Census &amp; Voter Lists</b>	
1810 United States Federal Census	830,631
U.S. Census Reconstructed Records, 1660-1820	171,563
North Carolina, Compiled Census and Census Substitutes Index, 1790-1890	141,002
North Carolina, State Census, 1784-1787 <b>FREE</b>	13,416
North Carolina Heads of families at the first census of the United States taken in the year 1790.	291
<b>View all</b> North Carolina Census & Voter Lists	
<b>North Carolina Birth, Marriage &amp; Death</b>	
North Carolina, Birth Indexes, 1800-2000	6,917,007
North Carolina, Death Collection, 1908-2004	4,212,021
North Carolina, Marriage Collection, 1741-2004	2,709,613
Web: North Carolina, Find A Grave Index, 1716-2012 <b>FREE</b>	2,423,568
North Carolina Divorce Index, 1958-2004	2,326,610

Search for historical records for ancestors in North Carolina.

**Search**

Select another state or region

USA  North Carolina

Narrow by county

Select a county to view its unique collections.

Alamance	11	Jones	1
Alleghany	1	Lenoir	2
Anson	2	Lincoln	3
Burke	2	Mecklenburg	29

**Note:** See the three tabs above the **Data Collections**? To learn about what records are available for a particular state, you can click on the **Resources tab** to learn about record keeping and repositories beyond Ancestry.com.

**Explore by Location**

USA UK & Ireland Europe Canada Australia & NZ

United States

WA MT ND

## 5. DIVE INTO TIMES AND PLACES

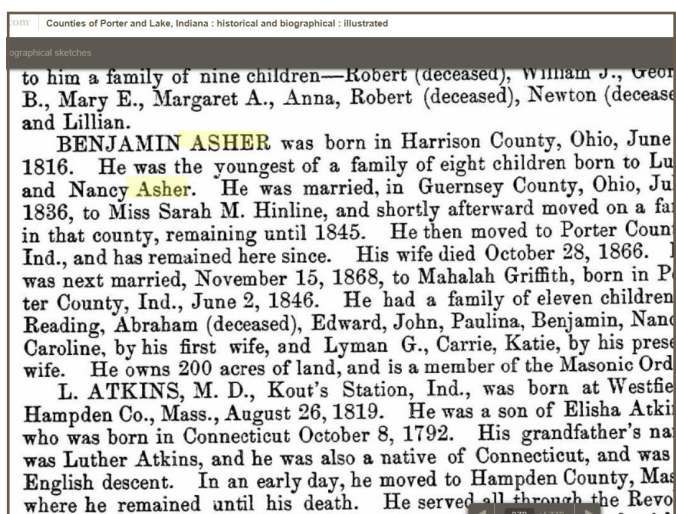
Your ancestor's story is more than just names and dates. History was unfolding around them—on the local and national level. Bringing in that history not only adds interest to your family story, it can also help you better understand your ancestors and provide clues to new aspects to research. There are many tools available on Ancestry.com that can help you better understand your ancestor's place in history.

### Local Histories.

Ancestry.com is home to a large collection of local and family histories. Because they are not indexed in the same way as many other record collections, it's best to search these directly. Use the **Place Pages** referred to in Tip #3 to browse **Stories, Memories & Histories** specific to the state where your ancestor lived. (Note: **Stories, Memories & Histories** will be the last category on that page, so you'll need to scroll all the way down to click on the link to **View all...** collections.)

Once you locate a title of interest, you can search for the surnames of ancestors who lived in the area. This is a good place to search wide and include collateral family members in your search. Your ancestor may not be included, but perhaps there is a sketch of a brother or cousin that gives the family origins in another state or in the old country.

If images and chapters are browsable, read through sections of interest. Pay special attention to settlement and migration sections, where you might find clues to a family's origins, even if they aren't mentioned by name.



### Historical Maps.

Knowing the "lay of the land" can also provide helpful insights, and the [U.S., Indexed County Land Ownership Maps, 1860-1918](#), on Ancestry.com can give you a feel for where your family lived in proximity to other relatives.

Historical maps can also provide important geographical details like rivers, roads, railroads, and other features that may have helped, or in some cases impeded, travel.

