



Things to consider when starting your Family History

What do I want to see as the finished product?

- I'd like as many names as possible
- I'd like to go back as I can go
- Research just one line of my family
- Research just one person in my family
- I want to see if I am related to a particular person, someone famous perhaps?
- I have some information but I want to prove that it's correct

What do I already know

- Facts (evidence such as birth certificates etc.)
- Family lore (Grandma knows that her own grandad was a policeman in 1900)
- Rumour

Is there anything I don't want to know or that may upset my family?

- Illegitimacy
- Change in name
- Criminal record
- Prison
- Politics

How much proof do I want?

It's quite difficult to obtain absolute proof when carrying out this type of research because the information is only as good as the documents that are available.

It's always best to try and back up facts from multiple sources but remember that even official documents can be wrong for various reasons:

- Some people have miss-spelled names and places either by mistake or on purpose. The person recording the information could have misheard a detail or they could have been given an incorrect name by someone trying to hide from the law perhaps.
- Errors do creep in when handwritten documents are being transcribed to put on the internet. Some original documents are very hard to transcribe and it can be quite a skill to record the correct information.
- Sometimes people have misinformed officials on purpose especially when the census has been taken because they resented the intrusion.
- Birth dates can be wrong especially the further you go back. It's not unusual for a person to be recorded as being say 22 years old in one census and 35 years old in the census ten years later – a three-year difference.

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