



Student Notes:

Step 8: Finding Ancestors through Various Records

City Directories:

- City directories are books that list people living in a particular city or town.
- Used to track people's movements and changes in residence
- Can provide information on occupation, address, marital status – spouses name, and other family members
- City directories are often available online or at local libraries or archives and historical societies

Land Records:

- Provide information on property ownership and transfers. Land records are documents that show the ownership and transfer of land.
- Can include wills, deeds, and mortgages
- Can include occupation, and even family relationships.
- Land records can be found at local courthouses or online through genealogy websites.

Court & Prison Records:

- Court and prison records can provide information about an ancestor's criminal history or involvement in court cases.
- They may include trial transcripts, sentencing records, and prison registers.

- Court and prison records can be found at local courthouses or online through genealogy websites.

Immigration & Naturalization Records:

- Immigration and naturalization records can provide information about an ancestor's country of origin, immigration date, and citizenship status.
- These records may include passenger lists, naturalization petitions, and alien registration forms.
- Immigration and naturalization records can be found online through genealogy websites or at the National Archives.

Tips:

- When searching for ancestors in these records, use a variety of search terms and spellings. Take note of any variations in names, spellings, and dates to avoid confusion.
- Take note of any potential name changes, as immigrants often anglicized their names upon arrival in the United States.
- Keep track of your sources and document your findings to ensure accuracy in your family tree research.
- Use multiple sources of information to cross-reference and confirm findings
- Don't be discouraged by incomplete or missing records, as there may be alternative sources of information to explore

Strategies & Tips

10 Useful Strategies

1. **Determine the location of your ancestor's residence:** Before you begin your search, it's important to identify where your ancestor lived. This will help you focus your search on the relevant city directories, land records, court and prison records, and immigration and naturalization records.
2. **Utilize online databases:** Many city directories, land records, court and prison records, and immigration and naturalization records are now available online. Utilize websites such as Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.org, and the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) website to search for your ancestors.
3. **Visit local archives:** In some cases, you may need to visit local archives in person to access records that are not available online. Check with local historical societies, libraries, and courthouses to find out what records are available and where they can be accessed.
4. **Use alternate name spellings:** Due to variations in spelling and transcription errors, your ancestor's name may be spelled differently in records. Try using alternate name spellings when conducting your search.
5. **Collaborate with other researchers:** Collaborating with other researchers can help you to discover new information about your ancestors. Join genealogical societies and online forums to connect with other researchers who may have information about your ancestors.
6. **Search multiple databases:** Don't rely on a single database for your research. Conduct searches on multiple databases to increase your chances of finding relevant records.
7. **Utilize indexes and abstracts:** Many records have been indexed or abstracted, making it easier to search for specific information. Check for indexes and abstracts

when searching for city directories, land records, court and prison records, and immigration and naturalization records.

8. **Search surrounding areas:** In some cases, your ancestor may have lived in a nearby town or county. Expand your search to surrounding areas to increase your chances of finding relevant records.
9. **Utilize social media:** Social media can be a powerful tool for connecting with other researchers and discovering new information about your ancestors. Join genealogy groups on Facebook and other platforms to connect with other researchers and share information.
10. **Stay organized:** Keep track of your research and organize your findings in a systematic way. This will help you to avoid duplicating your efforts and keep track of the information you have discovered about your ancestors.

3 Important Tips:

1. **Use City Directories:** City directories can help you locate your ancestors by providing information such as their address, occupation, and spouse's name. They were published annually in many cities and are often available online or in libraries.
2. **Check Land Records:** Land records can provide valuable information about your ancestor's property ownership, including dates of purchase and sale, legal descriptions, and names of neighbouring property owners. They can be found at the county level and may also be available online.
3. **Explore Immigration and Naturalization Records:** Immigration and naturalization records can provide valuable information about your ancestor's arrival in the United States, including their country of origin, ship name, and date of arrival. Naturalization records can also provide information about your ancestor's spouse and children. These records can be found at the National Archives or through online genealogy databases.

22 Steps in Researching Your Family Tree

'Discovering Your Past Blog Series'

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Quiz - Step 8: Finding Ancestors through Various Records

1. Which type of record can help you find information about where your ancestor lived?
 - a. City directories
 - b. Naturalization records
 - c. Court records
 - d. Prison records
2. What kind of information can you find in land records?
 - a. Names of the seller and buyer
 - b. Location and description of the land
 - c. Price of the land
 - d. All of the above
3. Which type of record can help you find out if your ancestor was naturalized?
 - a. Census records
 - b. Immigration records
 - c. Land records
 - d. Military records
4. What type of information can you find in court records?
 - a. Birth dates
 - b. Marriage certificates
 - c. Criminal charges
 - d. None of the above
5. What type of information can you find in prison records?
 - a. Names of prisoners
 - b. Length of sentence
 - c. Crime committed
 - d. All of the above
6. Which type of record can help you find information about your ancestor's arrival in the United States?
 - a. City directories
 - b. Naturalization records
 - c. Immigration records
 - d. Court records
7. What kind of information can you find in naturalization records?
 - a. Name of the petitioner
 - b. Birthplace and date
 - c. Occupation
 - d. All of the above
8. Which type of record can help you find information about your ancestor's occupation?
 - a. Census records
 - b. City directories
 - c. Immigration records
 - d. Military records
9. Which type of record can help you find information about your ancestor's property ownership?
 - a. Census records
 - b. City directories
 - c. Land records
 - d. Immigration records
10. Which type of record can help you find information about your ancestor's military service?
 - a. Census records
 - b. City directories
 - c. Land records
 - d. Military records

Quiz Answers for Step 8

Step 8: Finding Ancestors through Various Records

1. a
2. d
3. b
4. c
5. d
6. c
7. d
8. b
9. c
10. d