

HENRICO COUNTY HINTS

Growing Your Family Tree



In all of us is a hunger, marrow-deep, to know our heritage ~to know who we are and where we have come from.

~Alex Haley, author of Roots



COUNTY OF HENRICO
TOURIST INFORMATION CENTER
AT DABBS HOUSE

3812 Nine Mile Road
Henrico, VA 23223
Phone: 804-652-3406

www.henricorecandparks.com

Hint:

Start with yourself and the generation closest to you. Work your way back in time.

1. Your search begins at home.

First, interview your family members such as your parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Write down what they know about relatives' full names and nicknames, dates, places, and events.

- A. Begin building a family tree.
- B. Ask about birth date and place, marriage date and location, death date and burial location.

Look for historical documents such as bibles, birth, marriage, and death certificates, obituaries, etc.
- C. Additional information might be helpful by looking at family photos and asking relatives for stories they remember.
- D. Check with Henrico County Public Library, other local libraries, and genealogical societies.

With your Henrico County Public Library card number, you have free access to Heritage Quest database. It provides access to U.S. census records, books, periodicals, Revolutionary War service records, and Freedman's Bank depositor records.



2. Types of Records:

Now, you need to check to see if other people have researched and published information about your ancestors in databases, family trees (online and book format), vertical files at local library, etc.

A. The most common type of records used by people researching genealogy are:

i. Census records

The U.S. began its first census (a population count of the people) in 1790. From 1790 to 1840, these were very basic with only the names of the head of household and then a tally of males and females, slaves and free for several age ranges. Over the years, the census records have become more detailed, the 1850 census was the first census to list the names of all household residents. Most of the 1890 census was destroyed by a fire. The details of census records are only available after 72 years. Currently, the 1930 census is the most recent one available to the public. The 1940 census will be released in 2012. Besides recording general population statistics or schedules, some censuses included slave, mortality, agriculture and manufacturing schedules as well as a special 1890 census of Civil War Union veterans.

ii. Vital records (birth, marriage, death)

The amount of information varies by state. Virginia recorded all births and deaths from 1853-1896 and from 1912 through present. Prior to that, vital records were kept at the discretion of individuals, churches, local governments. Library of Virginia has microfilm copies of official birth and death registers through 1939 and marriage registers from 1853-1935. Virginia records are also kept at the Office of Vital Records and Health Statistics at the Willow Lawn Shopping Center off Broad Street in Richmond.

iii. Wills – even if your ancestor didn't have many worldly possessions, he/she may have had some land to pass on.

Check with the county in which your ancestor lived. Library of Virginia has on microfilm county will records from the mid-1600s to early 1900s.

iv. Military records

Library of Virginia has microfilm copies of muster rolls, service records, and pension records. Library of Virginia's records include colonial wars through WW 1.

v. Immigration/naturalization records

Colonial government prior to 1776 did not often enforce naturalization law. Settlers from England did not need to be naturalized.

1790 – 1st federal naturalization law was passed. Individuals could apply in any court – local, state, or federal. Two-step process and took minimum of 5 years: 1st file a declaration of intent, 2nd file petition for naturalization.

Check County Court minute or order books where your ancestor lived.

Prior to 1890, each state regulated immigration.

From 1892 – 1954, Ellis Island had 12 million immigrants come through its center but it was not the only port of entry. Ellis Island's archives contain records for more than 22 million passengers and ships' crew from 1892-1924.

<http://www.ellisland.org/> (Online search)

Other places have passenger records:

<http://www.cyndislist.com/ships/>

Local libraries and Library of Virginia have books on immigration by time period and country of origin.



3. How to find these records:

A computer can make your search easier, but remember to verify all information!

A. Search internet databases

i. www.ancestry.com (free to search but unless you're a member you can't see the records, Library of Virginia has free access to the site)

ii. www.familysearch.org (free)

iii. Heritage Quest (free access with your Henrico County Public Library card)

iv. Use microfilm reels (photographed images of the original document) at the Library of Virginia, the National Archives, or some local public libraries.

v. Use published books and/or vertical files submitted by individuals who have already researched your family. (**Note:** This information is not always correct and the libraries do not verify the information.)

vi. A computer can make your research easier but remember to verify all information!

B. Additional Resources

i. *Classes and how to guides*

a. Henrico County Public Library, other local libraries, and genealogical societies often offer classes on how to begin your family tree.

b. Family History Centers are branches of the main Family History Library (in Salt Lake City, UT). Virginia has 36 branch locations. The Richmond location is at 5600 Monument Avenue. (804) 288-8134

c. There are several online tutorials available. Most are free but some charge a fee.

<http://www.genealogy.comuniversity.html>

<http://genealogy.about.com/library/lessons/blintro.htm>

<http://ce.byu.edu/is/site/courses/free.cfm>

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~rwguide/>

<http://familytreemaker.genealogy.com/university.html>

http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/cs/educational_courses (**fee**)

ii. *Additional (free) helpful websites:*

<http://www.archives.gov/index.html>
(National Archives has millions of records – many on microfilm that you can order)

<http://usgenweb.org/>
(volunteer based website, information available varies by each county and state)

<http://www.interment.net/>
(cemetery records online search)

<http://www.findagrave.com/>
(cemetery records posted by volunteers)

<http://www.ancientfaces.com/>
(share family history photos)

<http://www.tribalpages.com/>
(family trees, create your own)

<http://www.accessgenealogy.com/native/>
(Native American)

http://www.genealogy.com/index_r.html
(message boards to connect with others researching your family tree)

<http://www.afrigeneas.com>
(African-American resources, message boards, chats)

<http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/societies.asp>
(list of Virginia historical societies)

http://www.sgarner349.com/hereditary_societies.htm
(list of hereditary societies)

<http://www.vahistorical.org/>
(Virginia Historical Society)

<http://www.vgs.org/>
(Virginia Genealogical Society)

<http://www.henricohistoricalociety.org/>
(Henrico Historical Society)

<http://www.dar.org/>
(Daughters of the American Revolution)

<http://www.familytreedna.com/>
(maternal, paternal, percentage of ancestral makeup DNA testing)



4. Don't forget to:

A. Write down your information - where you found it, when, page number, person's name, etc.

B. Use a notebook, folders, and/or binder to help you stay organized

C. Make a to do list for each person

D. **BE PATIENT!!!** The internet has sped up the search, but it still requires time!