

Five Quick Steps To Genealogy Success

Everyone wants to know what they can do to find their family.

Many times in my specialty projects, like the Lost Colony project, people tell me that they have an oral history of their family being from a particular area, but they don't have any proof, and they don't know how to move forward.

Here are some quick items to be sure you haven't overlooked, some of which can produce quick results.

1. Make a list of your surnames involved with a particular family and area. Write a short summary of what you know, and what you need to know, about this family. Be as specific as possible, including maiden names, birth and death dates, locations and anything else relevant. Make this no longer than three or four paragraphs. Be sure to state what you want, such as, looking for any Moore family from this area. If you're looking for records for a particular surname from a specific timeframe, say so. Go to www.rootsweb.com and post your summary under each individual surname on your list. When your family migrated to a different area, write a new summary for that area.
2. While on the Rootsweb site, select the county or counties involved with your family and post your summary under the appropriate county as well.
3. While at Rootsweb, search the surname and county sites for your surnames. One hint to make things easier is to search for only unusual words. For example, if you have a George Moore who married Elizabeth Sheridan, on the Moore Rootsweb board, search for Sheridan and on the Sheridan site, search for Moore. You can also narrow your searches by searching for specific county names on the surname lists. This may lead you to others who were searching the same family previously, but who are no longer subscribed to the list. It may also provide you with valuable information.
4. Each board and mailing list, which I'll discuss in a minute, also has a browse feature. Browsing by topic may produce some useful information as well.
5. Rootsweb also has mailing lists. The difference being that board postings stay there forever and are not typically mailed to those who subscribe. The except being if you ask for notifications from the board or if the board is tied to the mailing list by the same name. Mailing lists, however, forward messages to all those who subscribe, but information sent to the mailing list is never found on the board. You can search and browse the mailing list archives without subscribing, which are typically kept by month, but to post, you must first subscribe. The mailing lists can be invaluable. Subscribe to the mailing lists that include both your surnames and your place locations.

6. Take your family summary and visit www.genforum.com. Genforum only has surnames, so post your summary there as well. Be sure to search while you're you at the site. Genforum often seems to have more "research" as opposed to querys.

7. If you don't know about Steve Morse's One Step searches, it's time for you to learn about them. Visit his site and <http://stevemorse.org> and read the link called "About this website and how to use it". Prepare to fall in love.