

# Bring Your Ancestor Back to the Future:

You've learned the WHY, it's time for the HOW!

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## Objectives:

1. Learn the difference between inquiry and research.
2. Recognize the importance of the census in starting genealogical research.
3. Understand how vital records open doors to further research.
4. Discover the use of headstones and how to access them online.

Inquiry	Research
Inquiry is the process of determining what is known about our ancestors.	Research is the process of identifying and compiling new data about our ancestors.
Examples of inquiry include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interviewing family members</li><li>• Collecting documents at home</li><li>• Finding an individual on FamilySearch</li></ul>	Examples of research include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Census research</li><li>• Studying records in foreign archives</li><li>• Extracting headstone data in cemeteries</li></ul>

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*Following inquiry, there are three main record types will jumpstart your research process: censuses, vital records, and grave markers.*

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**Censuses** are surveys or a counts of a population. Censuses are valuable sources in family history research because they frequently provide names, ages, and family structure. Other information such as occupation, immigration year, and place of birth may also be included. In the United States, the census is enumerated every ten years.

### Important U.S. Census Enumerations

1790: The first United States census.

1850: The first census to include the name of every person in a household.

1880: The first census to include relationships of each household member to the head.

1890: This census was destroyed by a fire.

1940: Most recent census available for public use.

Additional information, research hints, and the contents of each United States census enumeration are available on the FamilySearch Wiki. Digital images can be accessed on FamilySearch and Ancestry.com.

**Vital Records** are records kept by the government in accordance with vital events including birth, marriage, and death.

**Birth Certificates** commonly include the infant's name, parents' names, and the date and location of birth.

**Marriage Certificates** commonly include the date and location of marriage, names and ages of bride and groom, places of residence, names of witnesses, and sometimes the names of parents.

**Death Certificates** commonly include the name of the deceased, the date and place of death, age at death, residence, cause of death, spouse, parents, occupation, date and place of burial, and sometimes date and place of birth.

**Headstones** are a markers placed over a grave. These markers are often inscribed with genealogical data such as names, birth and death dates and places. Millions of grave markers have been photographed and transcribed for public use. These images and the accompanying transcriptions are easily accessed via [findagrave.com](http://findagrave.com) and [billiongraves.com](http://billiongraves.com). In addition to photographs and transcriptions, many individuals' pages on these websites include biographical information and obituary transcriptions. This information may confirm already known facts or provide outlets for new avenues of research.

## Recommended Readings

BYU Family History Lab Supplemental Readings

[Finding Your Ancestors in Census Records](#)

[Finding Your Ancestors in Civil and Church Records](#)

[Finding Your Ancestors in Immigration, Probate, Land, and Military Records](#)

[Gathering and Recording Information](#)

[Research in Extended Generations](#)