

Information sheet no. 2:

Family history resources

Your local public library is the best place to start your research. Here you will be able to access local history databases, borrow books to assist you compiling your family history and find contacts for local family history groups.

Look for books in the library's lending collection held at classification no. '929' (Dewey Decimal System) which is where all genealogical material is held. Publications on how to research, compile and even publish your family history will be held here.

When you are compiling your family history it is easy to be waylaid by long-held family rumours, false leads, unproven assumptions and hearsay. To make sure you don't get caught follow the Genealogical Proof Standard (www.genealogyexplained.com/basics/genealogical-proof-standard/). This guideline has been developed to help family historians establish, with reasonable certainty, the reliability, or proof, of any genealogical conclusion.

A simple Google search using the word 'free genealogy sites' will bring up lots of sites with a great deal of information to help you get started with your research. Here are some other resources to assist you with discovering your family history:

Ancestry.com. This family history database is a valuable start point in any genealogical research. Ancestry.com has many layers, so spend time exploring all the levels of the database. You can often access Ancestry.com for no cost at your local public library, or, if you feel it is more convenient, take out a yearly subscription allowing you to access the site at your convenience and at home. Free access through your local library does mean that you will need to be in the Library, at a public access computer, to use it.

Find My Past. This is another popular family history database often available for free in public libraries. Access through your local library does mean that you will need to be in the Library, at a public access computer, to use it. If you feel it is more convenient, take out a yearly subscription allowing you to access the site at your convenience and at home.

State Library of NSW: www.sl.nsw.gov.au

The State Library of NSW has a dedicated family history area with extensive family history records and resources as well as Librarians available to help you. The Library's website has numerous research guides for genealogists whether you are a novice or an experienced researcher.

Museums of History New South Wales: <https://mhnsw.au/>

Sydney Living Museums and NSW State Archives and Records have amalgamated to become Museums of History New South Wales. They have dedicated family history research guides available on their website. These will help you explore if your ancestors have appeared in any NSW government records.

Australian Society of Genealogists: www.sag.org.au

The Australian Society of Genealogists have extensive family history resources, some free, some just for members. As it is a membership-based organisation you will certainly get more information and assistance as a member.

Trove: www.nla.gov.au

This true treasure 'trove' of the resources of the public library sector from the National Library of Australia. It is also a valuable tool for doing family history research. If you haven't used Trove watch Trove Stories – Jessie Webb. which gives an example of how to research an individual's life using the resources in Trove:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26Ne2bGoDY0>

Births, deaths and marriages: www.bdm.nsw.gov.au

Birth, death and marriage records in Australia are held by each state government agency. In NSW this is the NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, agencies in different states can be found via a Google search.

An overview of the history of documenting births, deaths and marriages, including how you can find early records and why you can't find others, can be found in this Museums of History New South Wales guide:

<https://mhnsw.au/archive/subjects/births-deaths-and-marriages/>

Ryerson Index: <https://www.ryersonindex.org>

The Ryerson Index is a free online index to death and funeral notices appearing in Australian newspapers from 1803 until the present. Sometimes it also includes probate notices and obituaries.

Genealogy gems: www.lisalouisecooke.com

Lisa Louise Cooke's website provides lots of free resources, you can subscribe for even more. The website has online training courses and she has an active social media presence.

Family Tree magazine: www.familytreemagazine.com

This publication has a good website with lots of free resources.

Family History Group, Cessnock Historical Society. This family history group keeps files on local families. They meet on Mondays and Tuesdays in Cessnock Library. Contact: c/- Cessnock City Library, PO Box 152, Cessnock NSW 2325. Email: cfhgmon@gmail.com

Maitland and Beyond Family History Inc. <https://mdgs.org.au>

This group is in the Local Government Area (LGA) adjoining Cessnock, however they collect information on families outside their LGA and may have information which can you. Email: mdgs01@tpg.com.au Phone: (02) 4905 1878.