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What do you want to learn?

- Research is more than “searching”
- **What:** Make a plan to begin answering your questions
- **Where:** Online and other repositories
- **How:** General principles
 - Consult multiple sources
 - Gather as many records as possible about a family or individual that you can find
 - Track your work! (Research log)

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**What:
Research Planning**

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**Creating Your
Research Question**

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“I want to know more about my Great-grandfather”

- When we are starting family history we begin by having questions about the missing details in our family tree.
- First stage clarifying questions to ask yourself
 1. “Approximately when was he born?”
 2. “Do you know where he was born?”
 3. “What was his name?”

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Creating Good Research Questions

- Make the question specific, answerable, realistic, timely
- Include name, place and date in the question
- Focus on genealogical questions, e.g.:
 - Identity
 - Kinship
 - Events
- Focus on a person

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Sample Research Question

- Who are the parents of Elizabeth Harris who married Martin Powell in Vermont in 1778?

What you specifically hope to learn about the parents of Elizabeth

- Name(s)
- Places of residence
- Birth, marriage, and death dates and places

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**Elphalet Follett Sounds Unique,
But in 1850**



A map of the United States showing state boundaries and major cities. Three blue dots are placed on the map: one in New England (near Boston), one in the Midwest (near Chicago), and one in the South (near Atlanta). The map is titled 'Elphalet Follett Sounds Unique, But in 1850

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Ask yourself these Questions

- What are you hoping to accomplish? e.g.
 - Looking for an event (birth, marriage, death, immigration)
 - Looking for a name (parent, child, maiden)
 - Apply to a lineage society
- What records do I already have?
- What resources have I already used?

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Focusing the Genealogical Question

- Genealogical Data
 - Identity
 - Events
 - Relationships
- For example:
 - Who are the parents?
 - What is the date or place of birth?
 - What is the date or place of marriage?
 - What is the date or place of death?
 - What is the spouse's name, or maiden name?
 - Who are the siblings?

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Do not get overwhelmed

- Try to focus on a single person and a few events for that person
- Set a time limit for your help
- Try not to fall down a “rabbit hole” with multiple ancestors.

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Tip

Work from the known
to the unknown

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Rinse and Repeat

```
graph TD; S1[Step #1- Write down known facts] --> S2[Step #2- Identify what is missing]; S2 --> S3[Step #3- Locate and identify sources]; S3 --> S4[Step #4- Research!]; S4 --> S5[Step #5- Analyze]; S2 --> S1; S3 --> S2; S4 --> S3;
```

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What is a Research Plan?

- A research plan provides a roadmap for your genealogical research.
- It includes a statement or question that defines your research goal and outlines the steps to achieve your research goal.

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Steps for Research Planning

- **Determine Your Goal:** *What do you want to know?*
- **Document the Known Facts:** *What do you already know about the subject of your research and the specific research question?*
- **Educate Yourself About Records:** *What records are available for your time and place? What records are most likely to answer your question?*
- **Search Strategy:** Which repositories have the sources and in what order should I search?
- **Create the Plan:** *Use a template to guide your thinking.*

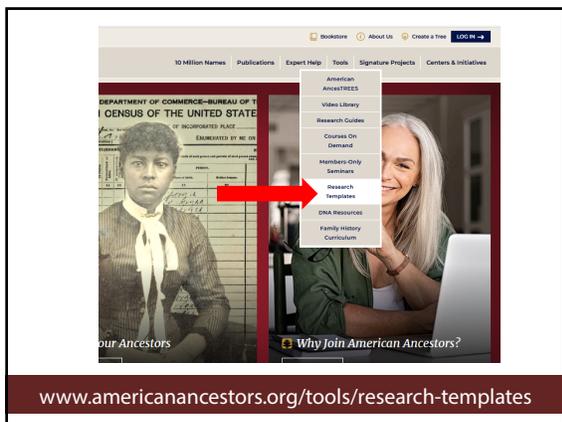
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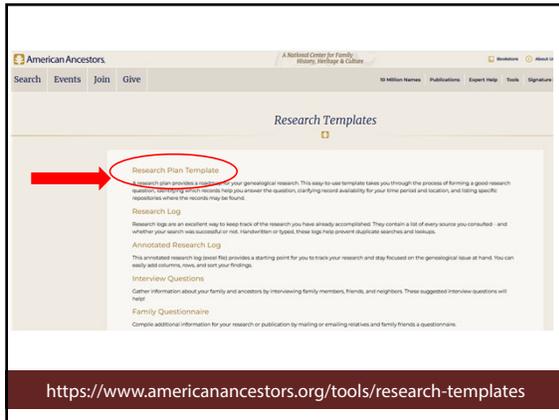
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Instructions for Research Plan Template

- **Research Subject:** Write down what you know about the subject. Information in this section helps establish the identity of your research subject—that is, what makes him or her unique.
- **Research Question:** The research question should include a name, place, and time-period to help anchor your research.
- **What is known about the question?:** Fill out what you know about the specific question being researched. Identifying the source of your knowledge helps sift fact from family lore.

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Research Plan Template

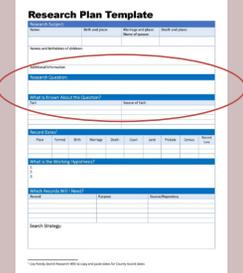
Research Subject:			
Name:	Birth and place:	Marriage and place: Name of spouse:	Death and place:
Names and birthdates of children:			
Additional Information			
Research Question:			
What is Known About the Question?			
Fact:	Source of Fact:		

Research Plan Template

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Research Plan Template

- Research subject
- Research question
- ✓ What is known about the question (and how it is known)
- Record dates – for reference
- Working hypotheses
- Which records will I need
- Search strategy



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Instructions for Research Plan Template

- **Record Dates:** For each of the principal locations of research, go to the FamilySearch.org Research Wiki <https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/> and find the article on the county, town, or state where you will be researching. Use the table in the Wiki article to populate this section of the form: name of place, when it was formed, and earliest record dates. Conclude with a note about any known record loss.
- **What is the working hypothesis?:** Record your best guess about what is happening, what the answer might be, or where you might find the answer to your question.
- **Which records will I need?:** Identify the principal records you will need to help answer your question.
- **Search Strategy:** Identify which sources you will search first and outline your search order.

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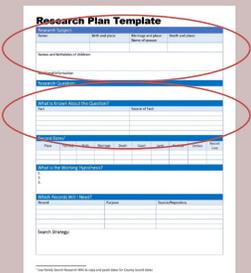
What Do You Already Know?

- About Subject
 - Identify the *Where* and the *When* for your subject
 - Helpful to list vital events – with *place*
 - Name of spouse(s)
 - Names and dob(s) for children
- About the Question
 - Not just what you know, but HOW you know it
 - Focus on what is relevant to the Research Question

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Research Plan Template

- ✓ Research subject
- Research question
- ✓ What is known about the question (and how it is known)
- Record dates – for reference
- Working hypotheses
- Which records will I need
- Search strategy



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What is Known About Subject?

Name:	Birth and place:	Marriage and place: Name of spouse:	Death and place:
Elizabeth Harris	Ca 1738, place unknown	1 Mar 1778, Manchester, Vermont Martin Powell	Unknown
Names and birthdates of children: Silas b. ca 1779 – Manchester, VT Electa b. ca 1781 – Manchester, VT Sarah b. ca 1782 – Manchester, VT			
Additional Information			

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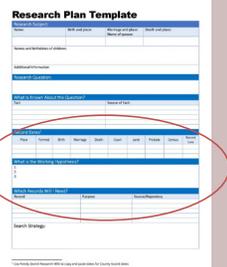
What is Known About the Question?

Research Question:	
Who are the parents of Elizabeth Harris?	
What is Known About the Question?	
Fact	Source of Fact:
Her husband, Martin Powell was born in Amenia, NY	Find a Grave
Martin's first wife was Rhoda Thompson who died in 1777 in Manchester, VT	Vermont Vital Records
Rhoda may have married Martin in Amenia, NY	Ancestry tree

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Research Plan Template

- Research subject
- Research question
- What is known about the question (and how it is known)
- ✓ Record dates – for reference
- ✓ Working hypotheses
- Which records will I need
- Search strategy



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Working Hypothesis

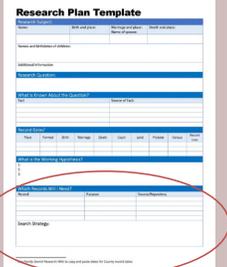
What is the Working Hypothesis?

1. Elizabeth Harris was a widow in Manchester, Vermont, when she married Martin Powell in 1778
2. Elizabeth Harris was a spinster when she married Martin Powell

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Research Plan Template

- Research subject
- Research question
- What is known about the question (and how it is known)
- Record dates – for reference
- Working hypotheses
- ✓ Which records will I need
- ✓ Search strategy



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Which Records (Basic)

Which Records Will I Need?		
Record	Purpose	Source/Repository
Marriage records of Manchester Vermont	First marriage of Elizabeth Harris	FamilySearch.org, AmericanAncestors.org or Ancestry.com
Vital records of Amenia, NY	First marriage or any mention of Harris family	FamilySearch.org, AmericanAncestors.org or Ancestry.com
Town history of Manchester, VT	Any mention of the Harris family	HathiTrust.org or local historical society

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Which Records (Advanced)

Which Records Will I Need?		
Record	Purpose	Source/Repository
Card index to vital statistics in the early land and town records books, Manchester Vermont	First marriage of Elizabeth Harris	https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/664510?availability=Family%20History%20Library
Vital records, 1749-1786 of Amenia, NY	First marriage or any mention of Harris family	https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/380341?availability=Family%20History%20Library
John S. Pettibone, "Early History of Manchester," Proceedings of the Vermont Historical Society 1930 Vol 1 (4), page 158	Any mention of the Harris family	https://vermonthistory.org/journal/misc/EarlyHistoryOfManchester.pdf

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Put it Together

- ✓ Research subject
- ✓ Research question
- ✓ What is known about the question (and how it is known)
- ✓ Record dates – for reference
- ✓ Working hypotheses
- ✓ Which records will I need
- ✓ Search strategy

Research Plan Template

Researcher: _____ Date: _____

Project Title: _____

Research Question: _____

Background Information: _____

Research Objectives: _____

Research Strategy: _____

Search Strategy: _____



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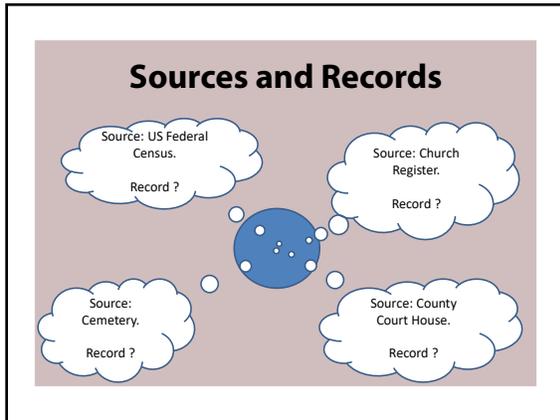
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Definitions: Sources and Records

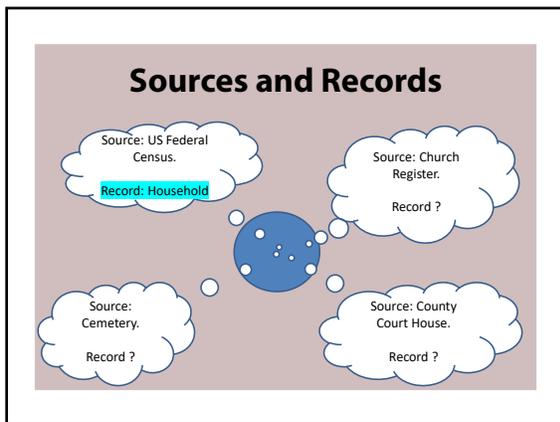
- A **source** is a coherent collection of **records** created by a single jurisdiction or a single author for a defined purpose.
- A **record** is that portion of a **source** which pertains to a single event.

Robert Charles Anderson, *Elements of Genealogical Analysis* (Boston: NEHGS, 2014) p. 1

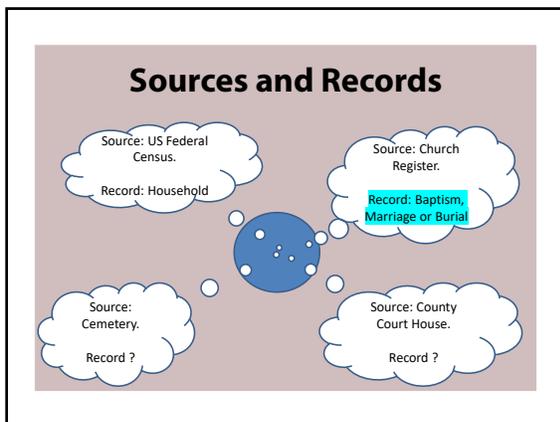
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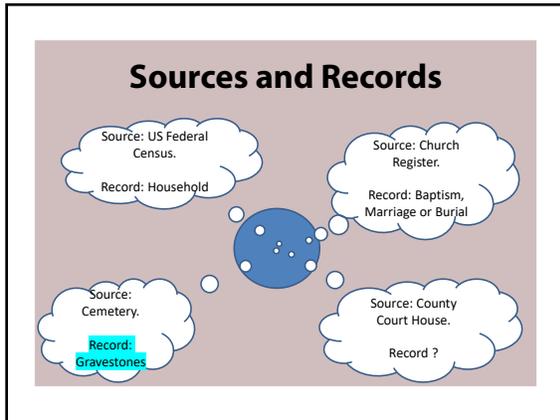
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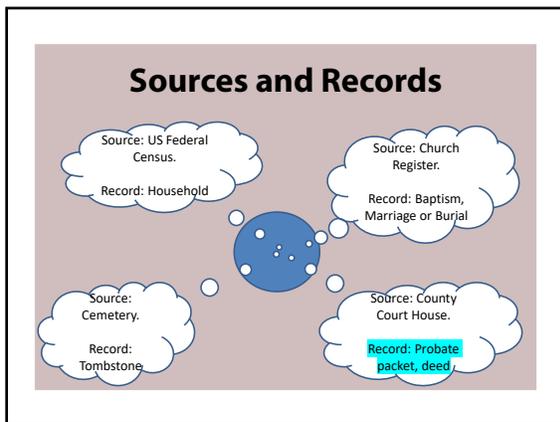
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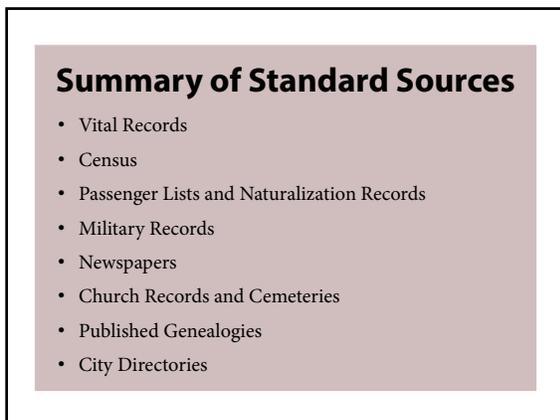
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Vital Records Caveats

- Birth, marriage, and death records
- Often provide the names of the individual's parents and/or spouse
- Depending on the state, records may be held on the state, county, and/or town/city level
- Privacy restrictions may limit access
- Certified vs. genealogical or informational copies

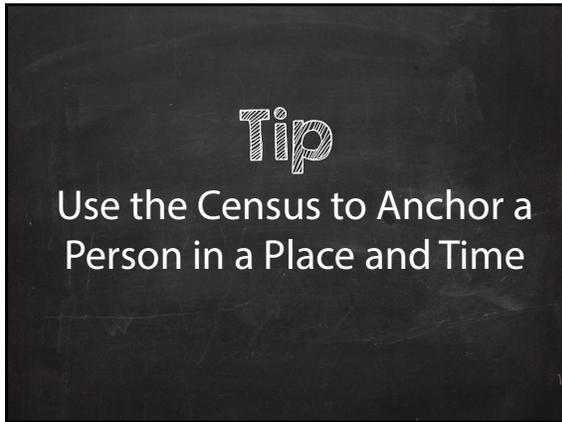
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QUESTIONS?

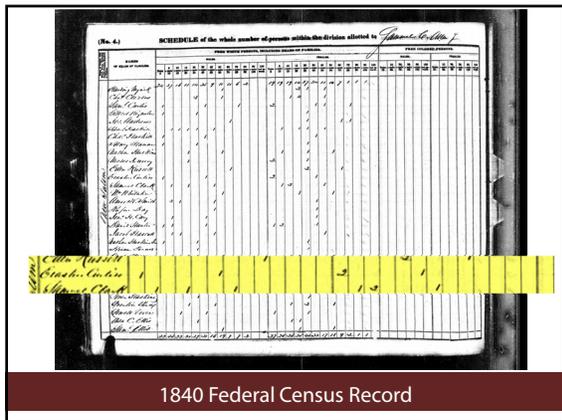
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Census Records

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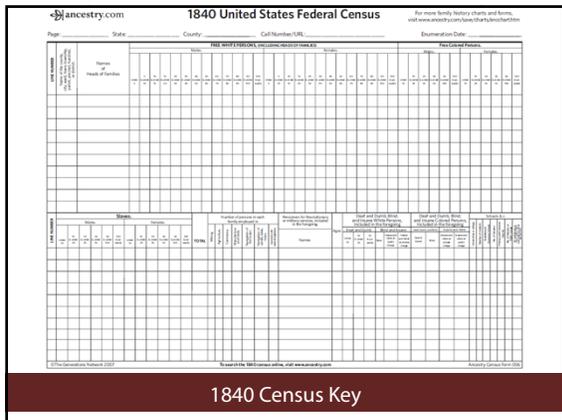


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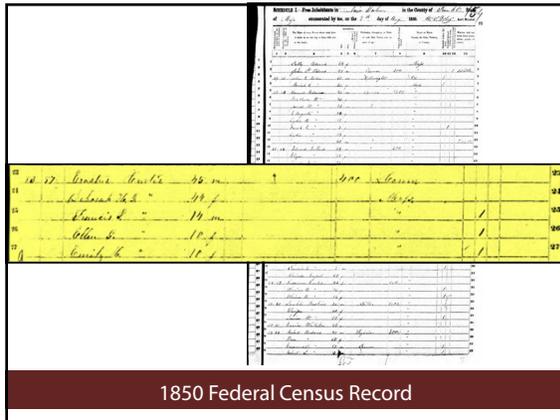
1840 Federal Census Record

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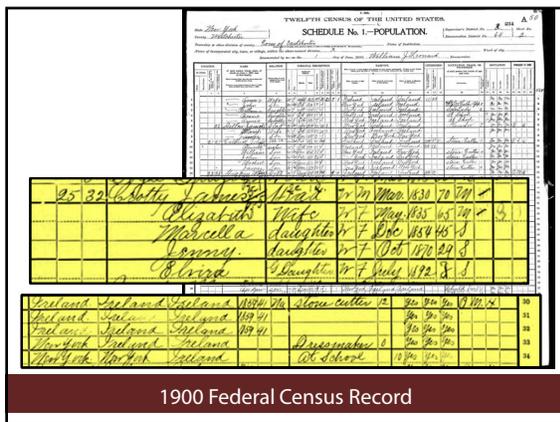


1840 Census Key

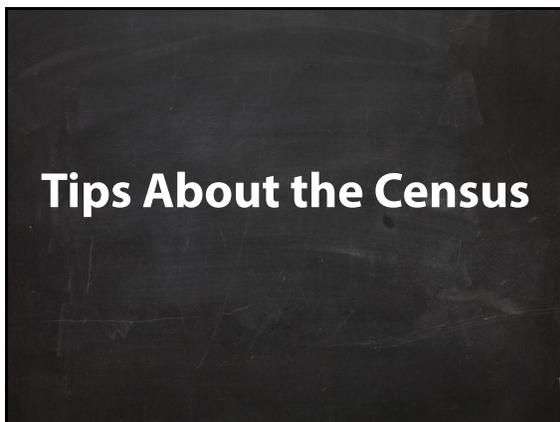
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Census Taker

- Didn't have to talk to anyone in the house
- Could talk to a neighbor if no one home
- What we view are copies of originals
- Families were not asked to spell their name

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Knowing the Family in the U.S. Census

- 1790–1840: lists only the name of the head of the household
- 1850–1870: lists everyone in household, but not how they are related
Generally, can assume people in same household are family
- 1880–1950: relationships listed

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Canadian Census

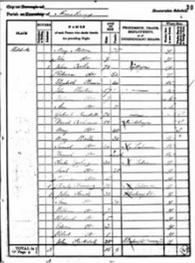
- Enumerated in 1825, 1831, 1842, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1906, 1911, 1916, and 1921
- Online resources:
 - Ancestry.com
 - Familysearch.org



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UK Census

- **England/Wales:** 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911
- **Scotland:** 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911
- Online resources:
 - *Ancestry.com*
 - *Familysearch.org*
 - *Scotlandspeople.gov.uk*



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Ireland Census

- Survived and available for 1901 and 1911
- A small number survive for 1821, 1831, 1841, and 1851

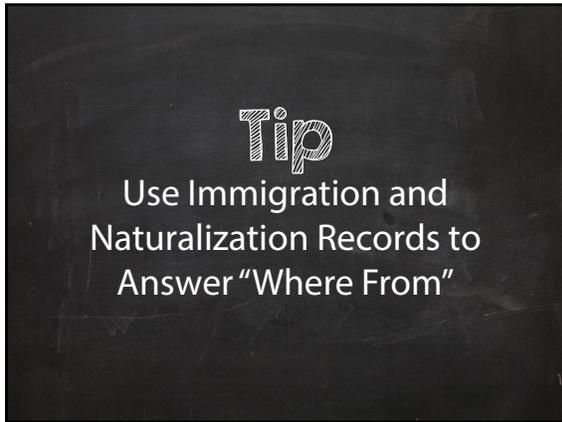


- <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/>

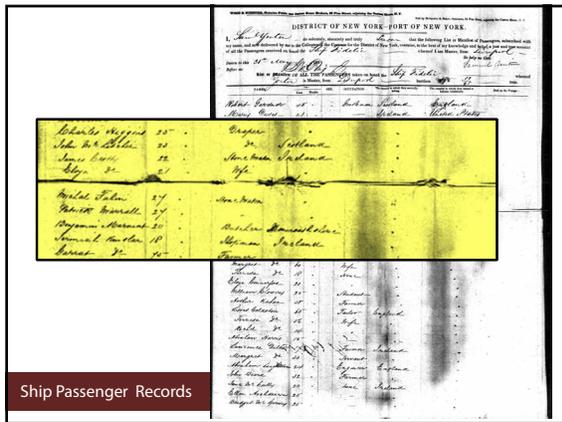
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Naturalization Records

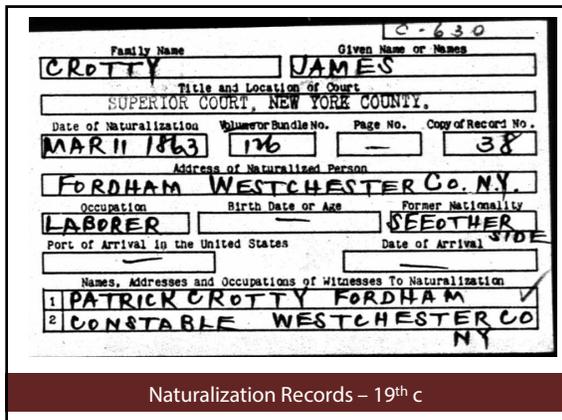
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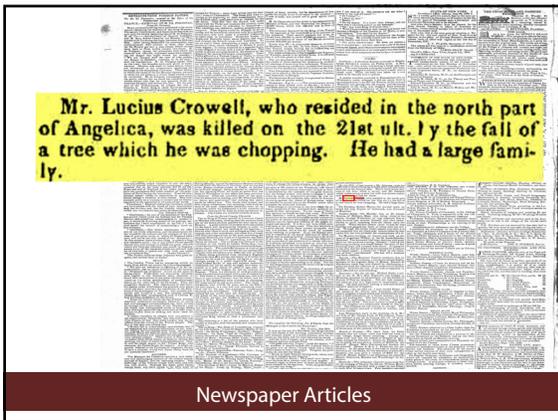


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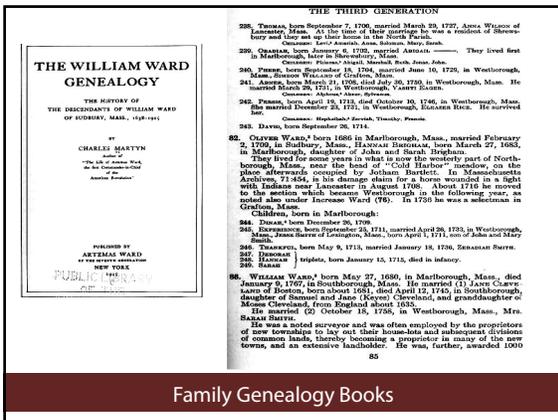
Military Records

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Newspaper Articles

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Family Genealogy Books

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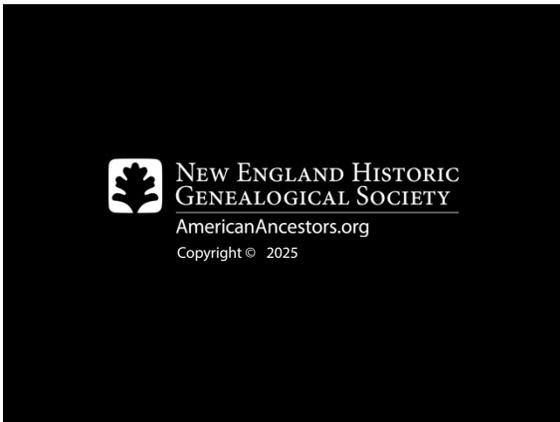
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