

## **How to Locate a 19<sup>th</sup> Century Family in England & Wales**

**Objectives:** To find a family using 4 steps by combining the 3 basic record groups: Civil Registration, Census Returns and Church Records. The 4 steps are the combination of the 3 record groups + what to do if you can't find your ancestor.

**Time Periods:** Civil Registration - Sept 1837 to Present  
Census - 1841 -1911  
Church Records – 1538 to Present

**Evaluation:** The most important thing to remember is to read the information stated in the records carefully.

You should interpret what the information says and compare it to what you already know.

You need to ask “is the information consistent with what I already know?” or “does it conflict with the information I have?”

You should also detail any new information provided in the record and finally draw conclusions.

**Step 1: Find your ancestor's birth record in civil registration birth or church baptism/christening records.**

You need to know the name of your ancestor and then you can search the civil registration indexes available from the findmypast ([www.findmypast.com](http://www.findmypast.com)) or freebmd (<http://freebmd.rootsweb.com>). Some church records are available from familysearch ([www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)).

Once you have located a likely entry you will need to locate, read and evaluate the original record. To do this you will have to order and pay for the record.

**Civil Registration:** Certificates can be ordered from the General Register Office, PO Box 2, Smedley Hydro, Trafalgar Road, Birkdale, Southport, Merseyside, PR8 2JD United Kingdom or you can order online at <https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/Login.asp>. You will need to give the registration number and year which is obtained from the index.

**Church Records:** the primary religion in England is the Church of England and Wales has a strong tradition of non-conformity such as Baptist, Methodist, Congregational and Presbyterian **Churches**.

To obtain information from church records you must first know the parish or locality where your ancestor was born, married or died.

Records can be found at county record offices and the national archives. Addresses can be found at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/advanced-search.aspx?tab=1>

## **Step 2: Find your ancestor's family in census records**

Search the first census following the person's birth in the place where the person was born. The census was first carried out in 1841 and then every 10 years. The census returns from 1841-1901 are available from findmypast.com ([www.findmypast.com](http://www.findmypast.com)) and ancestry.com ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)). The 1911 is available via 1911.co.uk ([www.1911.co.uk](http://www.1911.co.uk)).

To obtain the date and location of the birth check the birth certificate.

From the census return you should be able to find the child's parent and be able to move your family tree back a generation.

You should also be able to find the names and ages of any brothers or sisters.

### **Step 3: Find the marriage record for your ancestor's parents in Church or Civil Registration records**

You should search in the parish or locality where the first child was born.

Begin your search before and after the birth and also search the parishes where the parents were born and the address the parent's were living at before the time of the first birth. Try indexes first.

### **Step 4: What do I do if I don't find my ancestor in the records**

You should search for spelling and or name variants also search surrounding parishes or districts in both church and civil registration records. You **could** also try searching for other members of the family if known.

There could be a number of reasons why you can't find your ancestors. These include not knowing the correct name, place or time period. The family may have moved out of the district or your ancestor may have lived in a large city, such as London, which has a number of parishes.

Other possible reasons include the fact that your ancestor may not have been baptised or they may have emigrated.

