



STARTING YOUR FAMILY TREE !!

Ancestors South Africa
Genealogical Research Services



The beginning of your family tree is not the famous gold prospector or burlesque dancer or warrior chief from the distant past who you hope that you can prove you're related to. If you start with them, there are so many variables and unknowns that you'll probably never get to the lead character in this story: **YOU.**



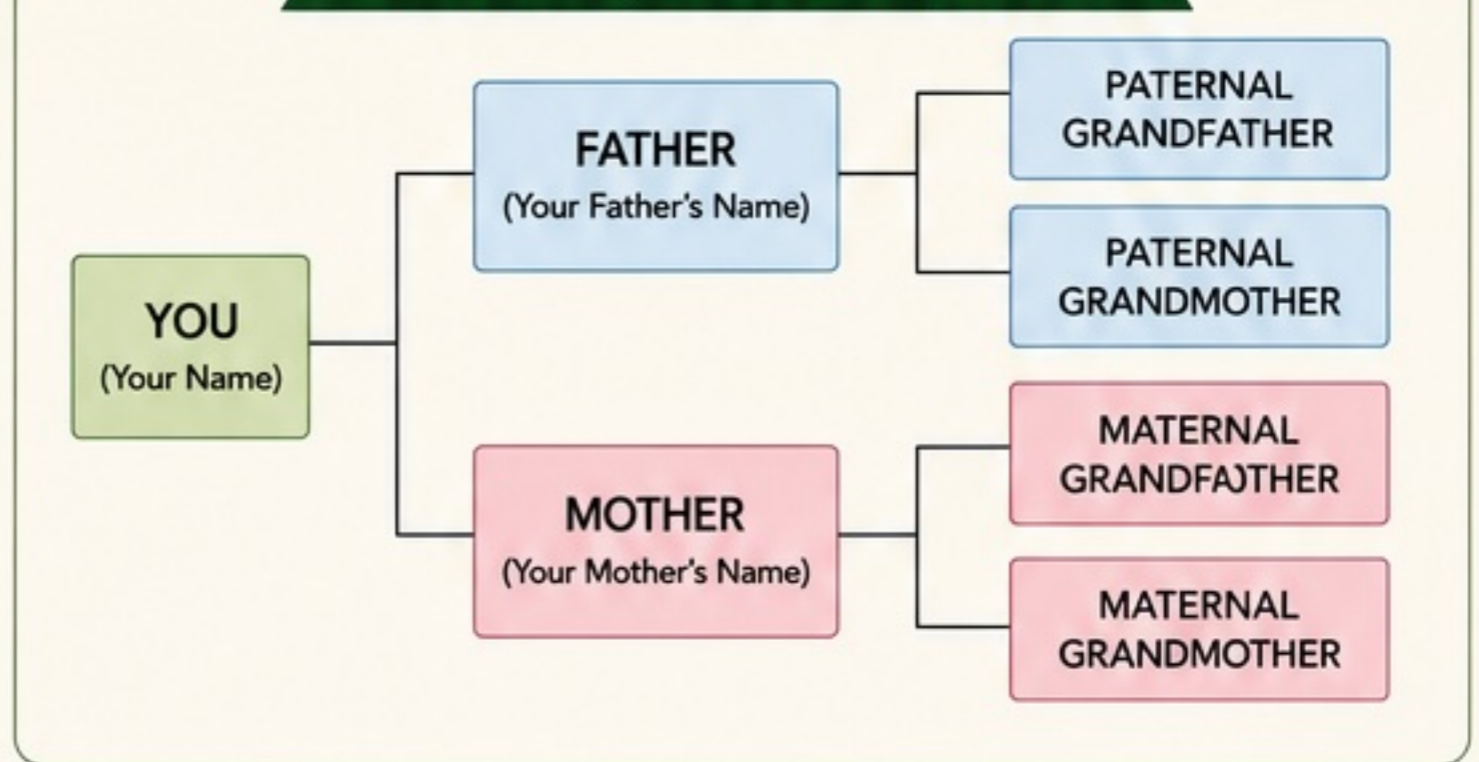
1 THE BEGINNING IS YOU.

First, sit down and write down what you know on a piece of paper.

Draw a simple family tree:

- On the left of a piece of paper, put your name.
- Then draw a line that splits in two: put your father's name at the top and your mother's at the bottom.
- Then do the same for each of them, recording your grandparents.

PEDIGREE (ANCESTRAL) CHART

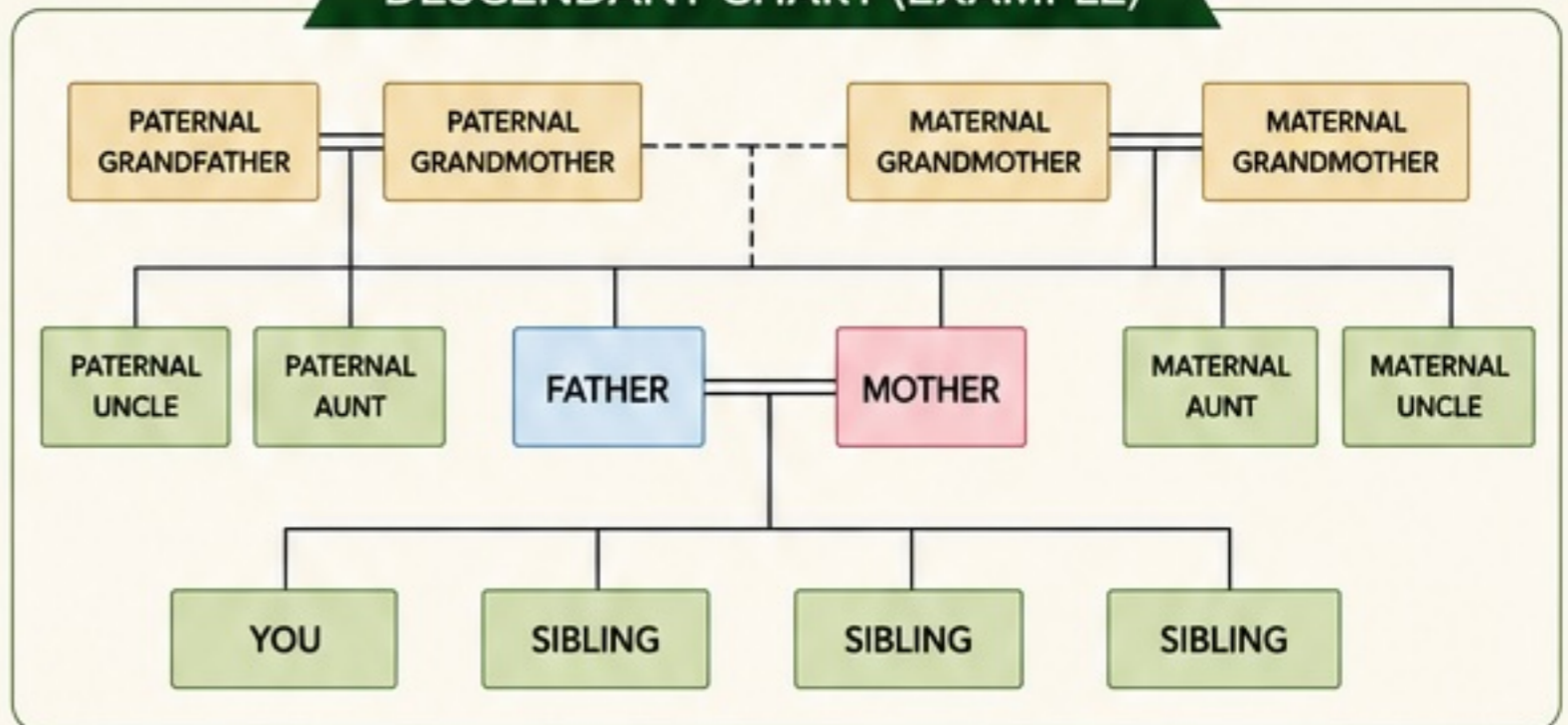


2 TRY A DESCENDANT CHART.

This shows all the children of particular couples.

- Put yourself and your siblings at the bottom of the page.
- Draw a line from yourselves to your parents (who will be connected by a double line to show they're married) and list their siblings next to each of them.
- Draw another line to each of your parents' parents and see whether you can list all your great aunts and uncles with them.

DESCENDANT CHART (EXAMPLE)



3 ADD THE IMPORTANT DETAILS.

- As well as the relationships between parents, children and siblings, you'll want to include any dates of birth and death and marriage dates that you know, or ask someone in your family for them (in the next section, we'll give you advice on interviewing relatives). These will come in useful as you start to fit more pieces of the puzzle together using archival material.



OKAY, GETTING THE PICTURE?

Start with what you know. Write it down. Draw your charts. Ask questions. Collect the details. You're building your story—one generation at a time.

*Every family has a story.
What's yours?*



GET IN TOUCH
We'd love to help you uncover your family's story.

Email us:
heather@ancestors.co.za

Visit our website:
www.ancestors.co.za



THE BEGINNING OF YOUR FAMILY TREE

The beginning of your family tree is not the famous gold prospector or burlesque dancer or warrior chief from the distant past who you hope that you can prove you're related to.

If you start with them, there are so many variables and unknowns that you'll probably never get to the lead character in this story: you.

SO, THE BEGINNING IS YOU.

First, sit down and write down what you know on a piece of paper. Draw a simple family tree: on the left of a piece of paper, put your name. Then draw a line that splits in two: put your father's name at the top and your mother's at the bottom. Then do the same for each of them, recording your grandparents. This is a pedigree, or ancestral, chart.

Another kind of chart is a descendant chart – this shows all the children of particular couples. Put yourself and your siblings at the bottom of the page. Draw a line from yourselves to your parents (who will be connected by a double line to show they're married) and list their siblings next to each of them. Draw another line to each of your parents' parents and see whether you can list all your great aunts and uncles with them.

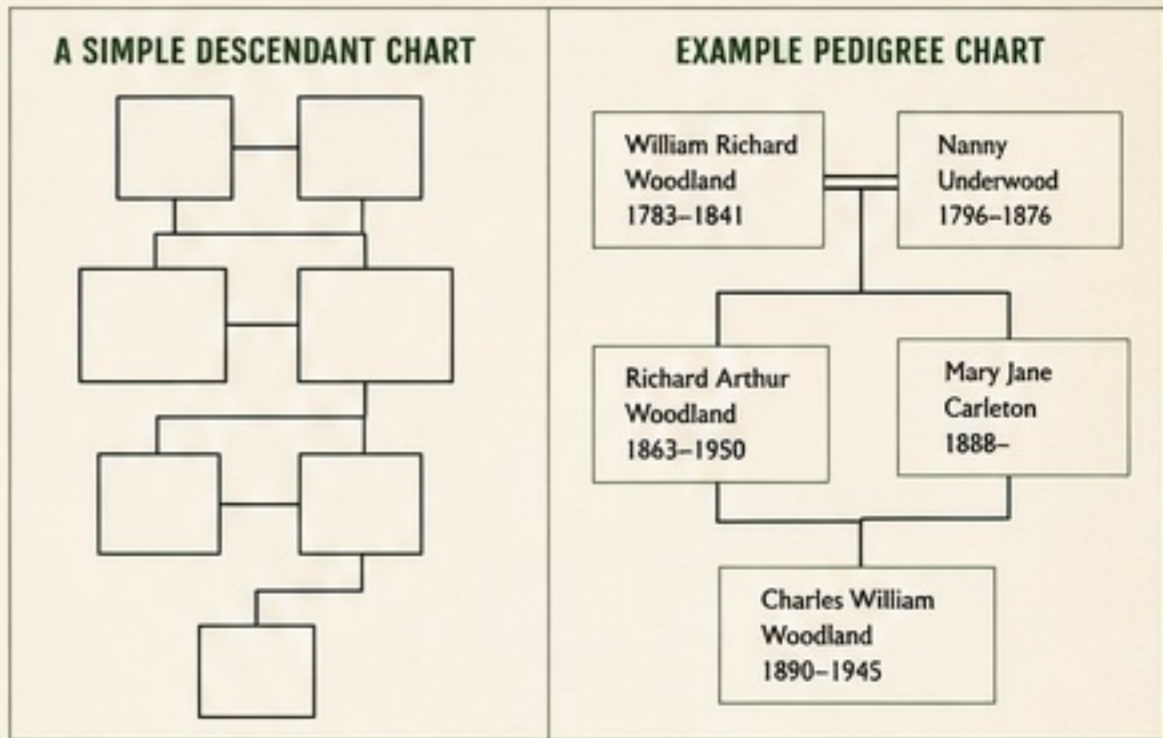
As well as the relationships between parents, children and siblings, you'll want to include any dates of birth and death and marriage dates that you know, or ask someone in your family for them (in the next section, we'll give you advice on interviewing relatives). These will come in useful as you start to fit more pieces of the puzzle together using archival material.

OKAY, GETTING THE PICTURE? NEED MORE SPACE TO RECORD DETAILS?

Then it's time to use better tools. Ancestors.co.za offers two spreadsheets on the website that are very useful.

- **ANCESTRY CHART:** Your first chart (the one with you on it) will be numbered 1. The chart follows one person back four generations. You can follow specific individuals further back on separate sheets: just keep your numbering clear!
- **FAMILY GROUP SHEET:** This is a snapshot of one family: mother, father and children and includes space for information on the parents' profession, other marriages and more. This is a useful sheet to take along when interviewing living relatives.

It's likely you'll have a few false starts and misunderstandings, so it's probably easiest to organise your family tree on paper first. When you're feeling confident, try some free family tree software like Family Tree Builder, Legacy or Gramps. These programmes are very powerful and will be invaluable in helping you manage your family tree and its processes once it becomes more complex. They compile your data in a specific file format (GEDCOM, an acronym for GENEalogical Data COMMunication), so that it is possible to share your information with other genealogists around the world.



Tip

Make sure you make a back-up, either printed to paper or to another computer or server. You don't want to lose all your work to a fried hard drive or computer virus. Keep paper files safely locked away from heat, moisture and thieves (no, really!).

DID YOU KNOW?

The longest family tree in the world today is that of the Chinese philosopher and educator Confucius (551-479 BC). The tree has been maintained for over 2500 years. It spans more than 80 generations, and includes more than 2 million members (1.3 million of which are living today).

Source: Wikipedia



Ancestors.co.za offers a great service to help build your family tree. Once we have completed your research you can use the tree given to you to add to other public trees so South African genies can pool their research.

Remember, a family tree is simply a chart, like a skeleton, which shows how members of a family are related. As you develop your genie skills, you're going to want to build a family history, the fruit and flowers of the family tree. Documents such as diaries, letters, photographs, property deeds, ship's records and newspaper obituaries are all useful in painting the picture of how your ancestors lived.





LOOK AT SOURCES AROUND YOU IN YOUR ATTIC, DUSTY CHEST OF DRAWERS, BISCUIT TIN IN THE CUPBOARD AND OLD FURNITURE TOO

Scratch through your cupboards and you'll find letters, report cards, certificates, family bibles, photos, school reports... all sorts of potentially useful stuff (you knew it would come in handy some day!) Ask your siblings and parents to do the same and you'll see the puzzle pieces of your immediate family's history come together: a starting point for taking your genealogy excavations further.



YOUR RELATIVES

The most valuable things you have as a budding genealogist are your living relatives. Even if you have already decided you only want to follow the maternal line or you're only interested in an obscure cousin on your father's side, interview everyone who you can now. Genealogy can be a lifelong pastime and when you decide to pick up a different thread in a decade or two, you'll be thrilled that you did this groundwork now. Relatives also often have interesting info on the other side of the family, so your work won't be wasted!



FIRST, YOU'LL NEED TOOLS

MOBILE PHONE: You can write notes, but it's always good to have the story in people's own words and you'll have a record that you can consult later. A mobile phone is far superior – there's nothing worse than running out of tape, especially if you only realise after some time! Dictaphones can also be set up to record telephone conversations, which is useful when you can't get to distant relatives.

- Relatives often don't want to let documents and photographs out of their sight, so you may need to take photographs of them.
- Your relative may find it obtrusive and intrusive, but once they relax you'll be capturing some invaluable footage.
- Most cellphones have voice recorders and cameras – this is good for recording impromptu discoveries.



SCANNER: If you're feeling really flush or you're planning on publishing your family history and need high quality copies of photographs and documents, you could get a portable scanner. These days you can get nifty ones that plug straight into your USB port of your laptop.





- MY PLAN
1. List of relatives
 2. Interviews
 3. Visit family
 4. Research records
 5. Visit graveyards
 6. Keep records



THEN, YOU'LL NEED A PLAN

Think about who you need to speak to first: this may depend on age or on a particular person's key place in your family tree. You may need to travel to another part of the country: plan to see all your relatives in one trip. You may want to ask them if there is a graveyard you should visit while you're there too.

The more you speak to people, the more you'll need to know. Keep a record of letters, phone-calls and e-mails so that you can keep track of who you've spoken to and what information you needed from them, as well as have everyone's contact details in one place.



LIST RELATIVES



MAKE CONTACT



KEEP RECORDS



VISIT & EXPLORE



VISIT GRAVEYARDS



ADVICE ON INTERVIEWING RELATIVES

Interviews are fascinating and quite challenging. You've got to be a real family detective, rooting out facts without upsetting the person, finding different ways of jogging their memory and thinking of clever ways to make "guesstimates" of dates and places. Remember, as useful as interviews are, you can't take everything that is said at face value. Sometimes people don't remember things clearly, sometimes they cover things up and sometimes what they believe is the truth is a lie someone else has told them.

If you're recording the interview on a mobile phone simply say "I would like to record this rather than write notes because it's easier to concentrate on what you're saying," and then put it down on the table between you, with the microphone facing your interviewee. He or she will soon forget it's even there.



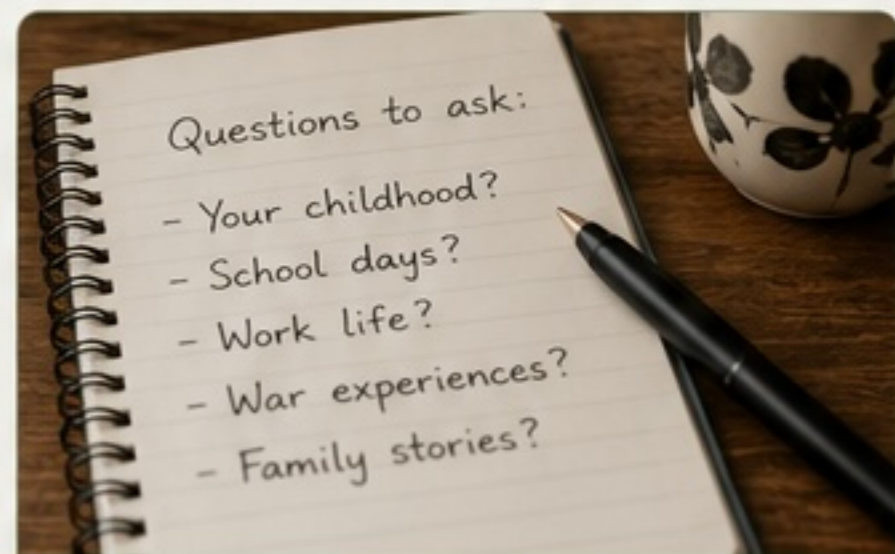
NAMES

Get all names, including middle names and nicknames, from your relatives. Ask them to spell the names and whether the names were ever spelled any other way.



DATES

Try and get exact dates of births, marriages, deaths and other events. If your relative can't remember the date, ask them to remember how old they were, whether it was summer or winter, or whether another relative whose birth date you know had been born yet.



ASK QUESTIONS CAREFULLY

"Tell me about your father's military career?" is big, vague and impersonal and might overwhelm your relative. Try something that will jog specific memories, like: "Do you remember your father telling you any stories about the war?"



"Every conversation is a clue.
Every detail is a piece of your story."



BE SENSITIVE:

Your family member may have painful memories that they don't want to speak about. Don't push them.



HERE ARE SOME PERSONAL QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK TO GLEAN FASCINATING FAMILY HISTORY DETAILS FROM YOUR RELATIVES:



- Who were you named after?
- Where did you grow up? What was the place like then? What has changed?
- What did your father/mother do for a living? Did it interest you?
- What were your siblings like? What did you enjoy doing with them?
- What family traditions did you celebrate?
- Where did you go to school?
- Where did you go on family holidays? What did you enjoy about it?
- Who was the oldest person you can remember in your family as a child? What do you remember about them?
- How did you meet your husband/wife?
- When you got married, where did you live and what was it like?
- What did you do for a living? What was it like? How has it changed?
- Have you travelled? Where did you go? What special memories do you have?
- What effect did (the Second World War, the pass laws, apartheid etc) have on you?
- How long have you lived where you live now? What has changed in that time?



WRITE DOWN THE QUESTIONS ON CARDS. This will also help you get back on track if your family member goes off on a tangent. Remember that older people can get tired quickly, so if you have lots of questions to ask, schedule more than one chat.



SAVE THE RECORDING of your interview in a safe place. If you have the time and patience, you can transcribe the interview, or there's good voice recognition software that can do it for you.



KEEP EVERYTHING ORGANIZED. Store your recordings, notes and photos with clear file names and dates. Back them up!



PHOTOGRAPHS

If you can convince your relatives to let you take the photograph away to make a scan, you're in luck! Otherwise you'll need to take a photo of the photo.

Make a note of the photo's file number or stick a number to the original photograph before taking your own. In your notepad, against this number, copy down any inscription that is on the back of the photo as well as the name and location of the photographer.

If there's no inscription, ask your relative if he or she can identify the people and place in the photo.

You can take your copy of the photo to other family members and see if they can fill in any gaps. Don't forget to make a note of who you got the information from and on which date.

NUMBER IT



Add a number to the original photo.

TAKE A PHOTO



Take a clear photo of the photo.

CHECK THE BACK



Copy down any inscriptions.

SHARE & VERIFY



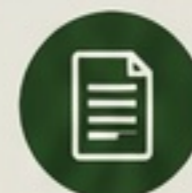
Show it to other relatives to confirm details.



Listen with empathy. Every story is a gift.



Record with care. Preserve for generations.



Every detail you capture today is a piece of your family's tomorrow.





NOW, PICK A BRANCH

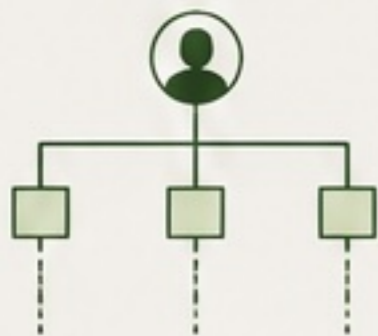
As tempting as it may be to dive in and follow every juicy lead, you'll find that you will soon become overwhelmed. Your research will be far more satisfying if you focus. You could follow back your maternal or paternal line to a progenitor (direct ancestor), such as your first ancestor to arrive in South Africa. Or you could choose to find all the descendants of a particular couple (say your great-great-grandparents) and their descendants, discovering a wide network of living cousins.

You'll also have to consider your financial and time resources: proving that you're related to Henry the Eighth may require that you travel to England or hire a professional genealogist. You'll be going back 20 generations and an investigation this complex would take years, if not decades.

CHOOSE YOUR PATH

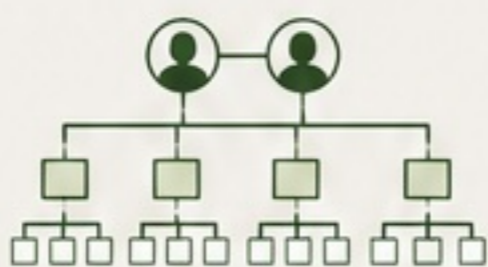
FOLLOW A LINE

Trace your maternal or paternal line back to a progenitor.



FOLLOW A COUPLE

Find all the descendants of a particular couple and discover your wide family network.



THINK ABOUT RESOURCES

Consider your time, budget and whether you need to travel or seek professional help.



FOCUS. PLAN. DISCOVER.

Decide the scope of your project before getting absorbed into the fascinating task of tracing your family history.

REASONS TO PICK A BRANCH



you have a lot of leads for that line, making it a natural place to start



you are trying to find a long-lost family member (perhaps on behalf of an elderly relative)



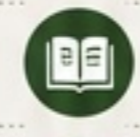
you are trying to secure an ancestral visa



you want to trace a hereditary disease



you've seen an old photo of an ancestor who looks like you, and you're inspired to trace your genetic heritage



you would like to prove a family legend true



you'd like to know who all your living relatives are



you're trying to find a memento that was "lost" to a distant relative



you believe you're related a particularly famous historical figure



you know that there is a piece of land that you could claim for under South Africa's land restitution policy.





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ANCESTORS RESEARCH BEGINNERS GUIDE


7 CHECK WHETHER THE RESEARCH HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE

You'd be surprised how many people share your interest in genealogy. Twelve generations of a family (taking you back to the early 1700s) produces 8190 descendants, so it's quite possible that one of them has already done some of the research work for you. Before you go any further, see if you can find and draw on these resources.

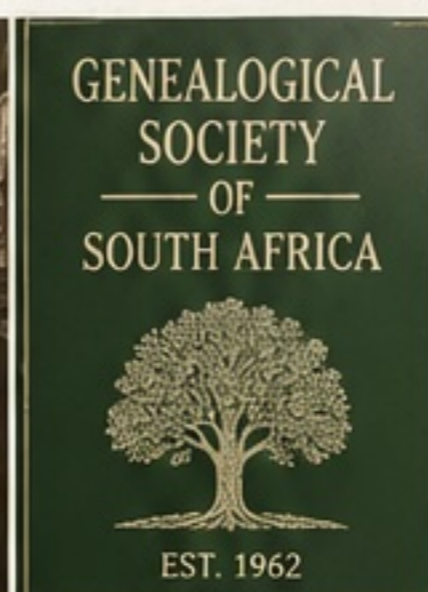
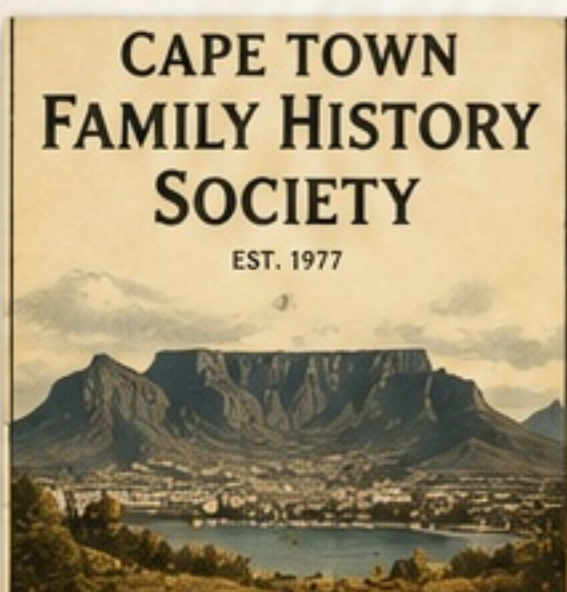
JOIN A SOCIETY OR A DISCUSSION BOARD

Joining a society or a local Facebook group that allows you to benefit from and contribute to a community researching families – gems will come your way and you'll also be able to help others find those precious missing pieces.

-  There are a number of national and regional societies. The old Genealogical Institute now at CPUT in Wellington has the largest collection of researched families in the country (<https://genza.org.za/index.php/en/>)
-  The Genealogical Society of South Africa, a national body, has 11 chapters throughout South Africa.
-  An active local regional society is The Cape Town Family History Society (www.family-history.co.za).
-  There are also societies that focus on particular areas of family history.
-  There's bound to be a society near you, but the internet means you don't have to be constrained by geography: there are dozens of discussion boards on various topics all over the web, so see what discussions you can find on your topic of interest.

Shout out : Tip 

If you're tracing your relatives back to England, you might want to consult the website of the Guild of One-Name Studies (www.one-name.org) to see whether your family name is registered.



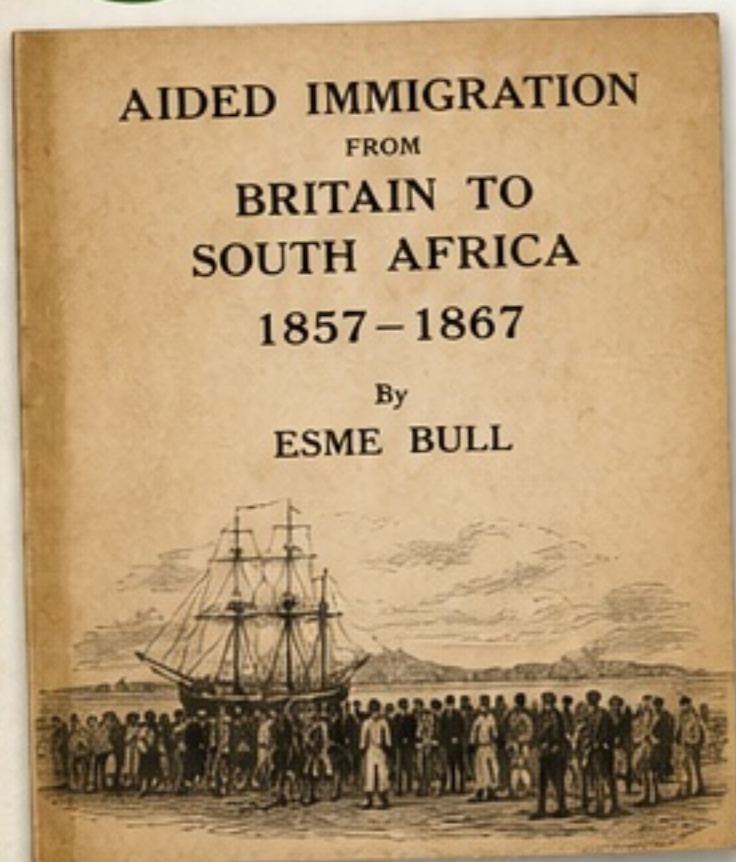


ANCESTORS RESEARCH BEGINNERS GUIDE

7 BELIEVE IT OR NOT,
there are people who have compiled entire books on immigration schemes, sportsmen of the 1800s and similarly obscure topics.



Many of these you'll find in libraries, some you might discover in second hand book stores. There is also a wide selection of books available on Ancestors Research South Africa www.ancestors.co.za



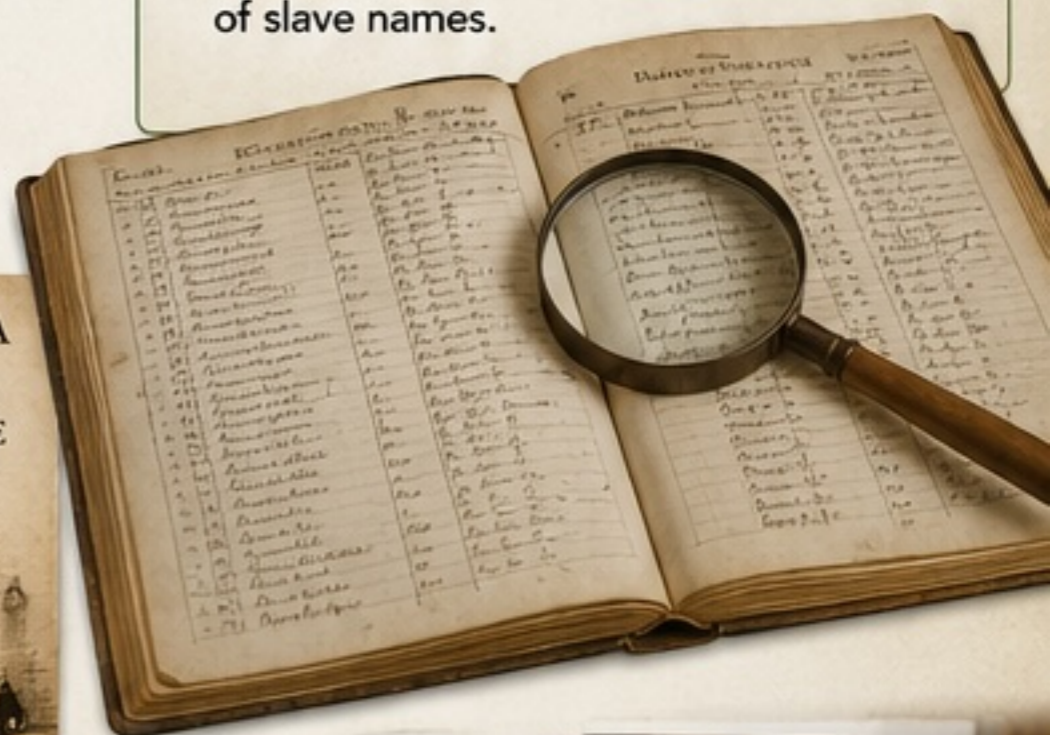
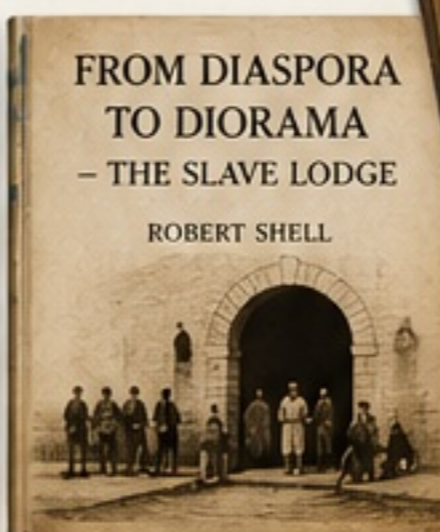
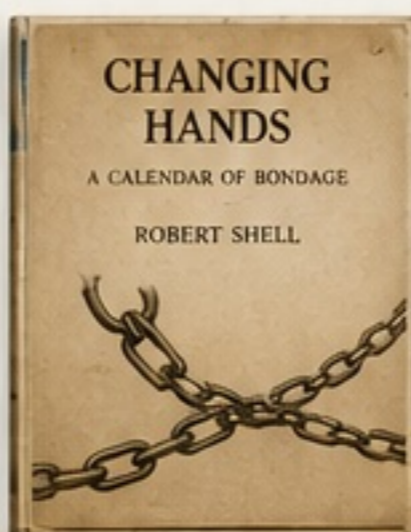
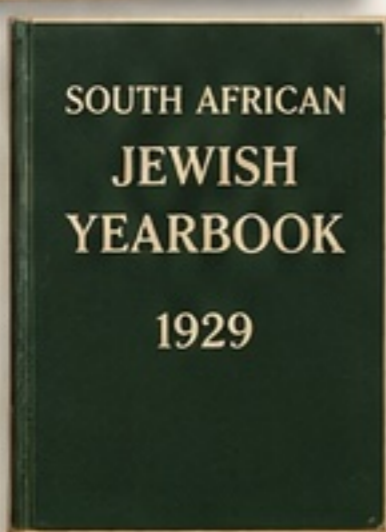
For example, if you suspect one of your ancestors arrived from Britain after the 1820 influx (which has been extensively researched), you could search through Esme Bull's unique and valuable book *Aided Immigration from Britain to South Africa 1857-1867*.

It contains lists of immigrants as well as descriptions of the conditions on the ships and the social historical context of their arrival.



OTHER FREE ONLINE BOOKS ON WWW.ANCESTORS.CO.ZA COLLECTION INCLUDE:

- Women of South Africa 1913
- South African Jewish Yearbook 1929
- Prof Robert Shell's *Changing Hands: A calendar of bondage*, an e-book publication which covers censuses at the Cape Slave Lodge, slave purchases and owners and slave bank accounts.
- Also useful is Prof Shell's *From Diaspora to Diorama - The Slave Lodge*, which includes cargo lists of thousands of slave names.



All these books are an invaluable resource for people from a wide range of backgrounds. Starting with these carefully researched and searchable online books will save you hours in the archives as well as publications like *Dictionary of South African Biography Vol 1-5*, *Groot Afrikaanse Familienaamboek*, *British Families in South Africa* and *German Personalia at the Cape 1652-1806*.



If you've got a particularly common (and, sometimes, a particularly uncommon) surname, you may find projects focused on them. For example, many family names have their own websites, with stories of family branches and interesting ancestors, bits of family trees that you can contribute to and even regular organised international "reunions".



Keep in mind that unless you've got a clear picture of your immediate ancestors (their full correct names, dates and places of birth etc) searching through these resources can be like the proverbial needle in a haystack - you might not even be a part of the branch they're researching.





Ancestors South Africa
Genealogical Research Services

ANCESTORS RESEARCH

South Africa

BEGINNERS GUIDE 9



Start following the paper trail

Once you've gleaned as much information as you can from your relatives, you're going to get down to the real dusty, dirty work of getting together the paperwork. Believe it or not, this is the exciting part. You will confirm suspicions, uncover secrets, explode family myths and discover new sub-plots. As you find, record and connect each document, your family history becomes firmer, more real and you will be able to vividly visualise your ancestors stretching back for centuries. It's the most addictive puzzle you'll ever start!



HANG ON JUST A MINUTE: READ THIS FIRST



- **It's easy to get carried away** by an exciting discovery during your research and find yourself following a trail without even thinking to take notes along the way. You'll always regret shoddy record-keeping, particularly when you find yourself wanting to verify a particular fact in a few weeks', or years', time.



- **Record the source accurately and in detail**, including any identifying codes (archival series codes, book ISBNs etc). Don't forget to include the date and place you accessed it.



- **Be methodical** and file your notes and papers diligently. Use specialised software if it will help, but simple, well-marked hanging folders will also do the trick. Pick a system and apply it consistently.

- Your studies may be picked up and expanded on by a descendant down the line – what better legacy to leave your genealogically inclined great-great-grandchild than fantastically organised and preserved records?



An important point to keep in mind as you embark on your research is that surnames are often spelled differently across generations and between different records. A priest copying down your great-grandfather's name might have been confused by his accent, for example, and then spelled his name phonetically. It's likely there were other people with similar names in the area at the same time, confusing things further. That is why it is as important to get as much information as possible from your living relatives – middle names, dates, occupations, military service – this will be very valuable once you start working with documents from the archives, deeds office and cemeteries and want to cross-check whether you have the correct person. When searching databases going further back, try various spellings of your surname (eg. **Clasen, Klaase, Klasan**) for the best chance of successfully pinning down that elusive ancestor.



TIP



If you're tracing your relatives back to England, you might want to consult the website of the Guild of One-Name Studies (www.one-name.org) to see whether your family name is registered.

Research Log
Date: 12 May 2024
Place: National Archives
Series: NAR 912
Reference: LG 145/1882
Record: Marriage Register
Notes: Marriage of
Johannes Claasen
to Maria Pretorius.
Parents names recorded.



DEED OF TRANSFER
No. 3412/1938
Cape Town Deeds Office





Ancestors South Africa
Genealogical Research Services

ANCESTORS RESEARCH

South Africa

BEGINNERS GUIDE **10**

TYPES OF DOCUMENTS

The easiest documents to find are the official documents plotting out the big events of your ancestors' lives: their birth, marriage, property purchases and death. You will want to gather as many of these documents pertaining to an individual as possible: you should have three sources for every piece of information before you can consider it verified. You want to be sure your information isn't flawed and that you're following the right family tree.

Compulsory official registration of births, marriages and deaths commenced as follows:

Provinces	Births	Marriages	Deaths
Cape	1895	1700	1895
Natal	1868	1845	1888
Transvaal	1901	1870	1901
Orange Free State	1903	1848	1903



C1566584
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEATH/STEREFTE

460118 0017 08 0

WADDELL

ANNA MAGRITHA ELIZABETH

1946-01-18

FEMALE

MARRIED

2008-07-27

BLOEMPONTEIN

NATURAL CAUSES

No. 17060.
13 DEC 1927.
Capetown.

DEATH NOTICE.

PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS CONTAINED IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF ESTATES ACT, 1913.

Name of the deceased JOHN HILL.

Birthplace and Nationality of the deceased Glasgow, Scotland. Scotsman.

Father THOMAS HILL
10 Eakdale St., Glasgow.

Mother ROSE HILL,
179 Bellahouston Drive, Mosspark, GLASGOW.

Occupation in life or profession of the deceased Shipping Clerk

Place of residence Port Elizabeth, Cape Province.

Whether married, widower or widow Widower.



TIP



When keeping your records, write surnames in **CAPITAL LETTERS** to prevent them becoming confused with first names.



If you are looking for an ancestor born before civil registration came into effect, you'll need to consult church records.

DEATH NOTICES

The first piece of the puzzle comes at the end. First, you'll need to look for your ancestor's death notice. The death notice forms the basis of a deceased person's estate papers and contains valuable information including date and place of birth; date and place of death; parents names; name of spouse(s) and children, and sometimes includes dates of birth of children and married names of daughters, place of residence and whether the deceased left property.

Death notices can be found in the National Archives or in the Master of the Supreme Court records for more recent deaths.

The death notice is different to the death certificate, which is issued by a doctor or coroner. This verifies the date of birth from a birth certificate and date of death on the death notice, what they died of and whether they were married or not.

No. 17060.
13 DEC 1927.
Capetown.

DEATH NOTICE.

PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS CONTAINED IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF ESTATES ACT, 1913.

Name of the deceased JOHN HILL.

Birthplace and Nationality of the deceased Glasgow, Scotland. Scotsman.

Father THOMAS HILL
10 Eakdale St., Glasgow.

Mother ROSE HILL,
179 Bellahouston Drive,
Mosspark, Glasgow.

Age of the deceased Forty-six years Eleven GLASGOW.

Occupation in life Shipping Clerk

Ordinary place of residence Port Elizabeth, Cape Province.

Whether married, widower or widow Widower.

Name of the deceased's pre-deceased spouse (if any) HELEN HILL (born HOUSTON)
3rd November, 1909.

Date of death 6th September, 1927.

At Port Elizabeth, Cape Province.

Names of children of the deceased, and whether majors or minors, and MARY DICKSON LEASK, Shawlands, Glasgow.
THOMAS GEORGE HILL, 53 Cotswold Drive, Saxonwold, Johannesburg.
DAVID HILL, 10 Eakdale St., Croeskill, Glasgow, Scotland.
ELIZABETH FREEDIS, do:
ISABELLA VIPOND JACKSON, 179 Bellahouston Drive, Mosspark, Glasgow.
JESSIE MACARTHUR HILL, do:

Has the deceased left any movable property? Yes.

Has the deceased left any immovable property? Yes.

Has the estate been placed of at more than £300 in value? Yes.

Has the deceased left a will? Yes.

Dated at Port Elizabeth, this 11th day of October 1927.

Signed John Hill (Executor)

DEATH CERTIFICATE



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS
DEATH CERTIFICATE



Identity Number of Deceased 460118 0017 08 0

Surname WADDELL

First Names ANNA MAGRITHA ELIZABETH

Date of Birth 1946-01-18

Sex FEMALE

Marital Status MARRIED

Date of Death 2008-07-27

Time of Death 07:45

Place of Death BLOEMPONTEIN

Province FREE STATE

Cause of Death NATURAL CAUSES

Certified by Dr. J. Pienaar
M.B. Ch.B.

Date Issued 2008-07-30

c1566584

DIRECTOR-GENERAL: HOME AFFAIRS

► This death notice is a classic example of what a death notice should look like if completed correctly. Everything is beautifully filled out including the name of the deceased's pre-deceased spouse plus the bonus clues of physical addresses for the children and their married names.

► This modern death certificate is an abridged computerised version. It does not tell us who she was married to, her occupation or much else besides her data of death, ID, causes and place of death.



DOCUMENTS TELL STORIES • RECORDS BUILD LEGACIES • DISCOVER YOUR HERITAGE



ANCESTORS RESEARCH

South Africa

BEGINNERS GUIDE 11

TYPES OF DOCUMENTS



BAPTISM RECORDS

These are found in church archives or in the original church office. It gives the date of birth of the individual and the names of their parents. Baptism records are a way to trace ancestors born before official birth records were instituted. They are also a way to cross-reference a birth certificate, so that you can be sure you're tracing the correct family tree.



"Free slaves" were also baptized more than we realise and records from the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries are particularly useful.



BIRTH CERTIFICATES

Birth records are closed for 100 years after the birth of the individual, so you won't be able to access birth certificates from in the archives only birth registers.

- Only birth registers for the Cape in the Cape Town Archives between 1895 - 1970 and Natal. <https://www.ancestors.co.za/birth-records-south-africa/> can be obtained and not the Transvaal or the Orange Free State.
- However, you can request a copy of the certificate from Home Affairs but make sure you always order and **unabridged or vault birth certificate** otherwise there will be no parents names given.

BAPTISM CERTIFICATE SAMPLE

Page 18.

BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of Holy Trinity in the Division of Caledon in the Year 1927.

When Baptized.	Christian Name.	Declared Day of Birth.	PARENT'S NAME.		Abode.	Quality, Trade or Profession.	Sponsors, or (in the case of adults) Witnesses.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
			Christian.	Surname.				
1927 Feb 27 th No. 64	Adam Johannes	Jan 5 th 1927	Alexander Johannes & Anna Sophia	Williams	Caledon	Shor Boy	Paulus barth Bartholomew Annie Aletta Engel	B. R. Heymans
1927 March 13 th No. 70	Isabella Maria	Jan 25 th 1927	Fraony & Bella Maria	Lions	Howe Hoek	Railway Labourer	Adel Donnie : Irene Helen Daniels Frenchie Hudson	B. R. Heymans
1927 March 13 th No. 71	Maria Margartha	Aug 5 th 1911	William Absalom & Sophia Gabriella	Swart Lyalynis	Bot River	Labourer	James Swart Maggie Pauline Swart Doctien Lyalynis	B. R. Heymans
1927 March 13 th No. 72	William Abraham	Dec 23 rd 1924	William Abraham & Sophy Antoneta	Swart Lyalynis.	Bot River	Labourer	James Swart Katie Hess Anna Jacobs	B. R. Heymans

▲ This Anglican Church baptismal register entry from St. Saviours in Claremont is a sample of what information you might glean from a normal church baptismal register.

BIRTH CERTIFICATE SAMPLE

FORM OF INFORMATION OF A BIRTH : ACT No. 7 OF 1894.

WARNING—The penalties for false statements willfully made are the same as those for perjury. Anyone who loses a COMPLETED registration form is liable to a penalty not exceeding £10.

CHILD—(a) Twenty second November 1894

1. Date of Birth Twenty second November 1894

2. Place where Born Port Hottel

3. Christian Names (if any) Beatrice Louisa

4. Sex Female

CAUTION—It is hereby declared, that no person, who is not a duly qualified Registrar, shall, without the sanction of the Registrar-General, be permitted to issue any Birth Certificate, or to receive any fee in connection therewith.

FATHER—

5. Christian Names and Surname Richard Arthur Woodland

6. Occupation Logger and Tidewarrier Customs Inspector

7. Race (b) European

MOTHER—

8. Christian Names and Maiden Surname Hannah Louisa
Lionel

9. Race (b) European

INFORMANT—

10. Original Signature (or Mark) B. R. Heymans

11. Qualification Father

12. Residence Port Hottel

▲ This old birth certificate from 1898 gives the child's full name as well as the parents' full names and mother's maiden name and the father's occupation and address.





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TYPES OF DOCUMENTS



MARRIAGE CERTIFICATES

This gives the names of the people getting married, their witnesses and the date and place. Often the place of birth is recorded and if the married couple are minors, the names of their parents.

Depending how old the certificate is, in many instances someone over the age of 21 was no longer a minor – but these rules have changed over the years.

You can access marriage certificates before 1970 in the Cape Town Archives but they do not always cover marriages from churches or from the magistrates court, otherwise you need to apply in person at Home Affairs.



However you can contact one of these companies that offer a logistics service. Please tell them that you were recommended by me:

1. www.apostil.co.za
2. www.docassist.co.za
3. www.docs4u.co.za
4. www.bunnyhop.co.za

MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE SAMPLE

1891, Marriage solemnised at *Ladysmith* in the County or Division of *Klip River*, Colony of Natal, 1891.

No.	When Married.	Names and Surnames.	Age.	Condition.	State of Profession.	Residence at time of Marriage.	Age of Person at Licence.	Consent, by whom, or Judge's Order.
11	May 5 th 1891	<i>Madalambane Ka Gomwana Gunene</i>	full	Bachelor	Native	Ladysmith		Licence
		<i>Salamine Ka Ralarla Mabaso</i>	19.	Spinster	—	Pre-born Jr. Ladysmith		

Married in the *Wesleyan Parsonage* in *Ladysmith* aforesaid by me *N. Coliff*

This Marriage was solemnised between us
Madalambane Ka Gomwana Gunene X
Salamine Ka Ralarla Mabaso X
 In the presence of *Benjamin Moltjivarbo* X
Matomba Kumene X

▲ This sample of a marriage certificate from 1895 tells us that both the bride and groom were illiterate (see their "marks" middle bottom) but the witnesses were not – unfortunately they don't give parents' names which is standard in South African marriages.



DIVORCE RECORDS

These are referred to as illiquid cases and are kept in the National Archives up to about 1970 – this varies from Archive to Archive – modern ones are kept the High Court.

The marriage certificate is often attached within the illiquid case file and finding it here is usually easier than getting it from Home Affairs.



J 2097/1933.
**DIVORCE
 ILLIQUID CASE**
 HIGH COURT

ILLIQUID CASE SAMPLE (DIVORCE RECORD)

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF SOUTH AFRICA
(TRANSVAAL PROVINCIAL DIVISION)

J 2097/1933.

In the matter between

ALFRED HENRY JOHNSON

Plaintiff

and

MARY ELIZABETH JOHNSON (née WILSON)

Defendant.

PETITION FOR DIVORCE.

Attached:

1. Marriage Certificate
2. Defendant's Answer
3. Affidavits
4. Decree Nisi
5. Decree Absolute



▲ A divorce record.





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TYPES OF DOCUMENTS



BURIAL RECORDS

These are found in municipal offices. Burial records will usually show many people are buried in one grave. Stillborn children's names are not engraved on tombstones. During economic hard-times families could not afford to purchase a family gravesite or to put up or engrave a headstone. Family members were either buried in municipal plots with friends or other family members, or simply in an unmarked grave.

You can find burial records

- <https://www.ancestors.co.za/cemeteries/>
- <https://www.ancestors.co.za/database/cemeteryimg.php>
- <https://www.graves.eggssa.org/>



PLOT CARD EXAMPLE

Name and Address	Woodland, Joseph, Alfred Street.	Div. No.	Woo
Allotment	Roman Catholic Site Inner Plot No. 50 C	CERT. OF OWNERSHIP	414
Monumental Dpt.		Olda.	
RECORD OF BURIALS.			
Date.	Name of Person.	Position.	Undertaker.
25/1/1892	W. G. Woodland.	50 c.w.	J. S. Hoogendoorn.
20/11/1892	child of J. Woodland.	50 c.w.	nil
1/7/1893	child of W. J. Woodland.	50 c.w.	nil
19/8/1894	Maud Woodland.	50 c.e.	Funeral Association.
30/4/1899	George Edward Woodland.	50 C.E.	J. S. Hoogendoorn.
1/12/1899	child of W. J. Woodland.	50 C.E.	"
30/6/1900	child of W. Woodland.	50 B.E.	"
14/1/1902	William D. Woodland.	50 B.E.	Goodall & Co.

▲ This plot card is a poignant example of a grave with 8 still births from one woman over a period of years. These children would not have had birth certificates or death certificates and would be the only record that they existed besides the register of still births in the archives.



BURIAL HEADSTONE EXAMPLE



▲ Compare the names on the headstone of Janet Adam and the names on the cemetery plot card. You will notice that John Michael F. Evans does not appear on the headstone.

BURIAL RECORD EXAMPLE

Name and Address	Adam, Janet. 150, Buitengracht Stre	C. T. Div.No.	Ad
Allotment	United Site Inner Plot No. 830	CERT. OF OWNERSHIP	1235
Monumental Dpt.		11593.	
RECORD OF BURIALS.			
Date.	Name of Person.	Position.	Undertaker.
8/7/1896	Sherriff Paterson Adam	11593 A	J. S. Hoogendoorn.
4. 8. 1932	Adam, Janet	11593 B.	Jb. Wasscofold & Sandick
10. 1. 1934.	Evans, John Michael F.	11593 C.	"

* Memorial on this plot was go. b. lowry caret and broken, by violent storm on 7/11/1962. J.S.H.

▲ This burial record shows burial dates, positions in the cemetery and undertakers. The note at the bottom provides valuable history about the grave.



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OTHER RECORDS

Once you start researching your family, you'll discover all sorts of archived primary source material to confirm and expand your investigations. This is just a handful of the absorbing documents you will find yourself poring over, once you're bit by the genie bug.



DECEASED ESTATE RECORDS

When someone dies their Estate Papers are lodged with the Master of the High Court. After a 50 years, these are moved to the nearest Provincial Archives. If someone died in Natal before 1975 then their estate papers will be found in the Pietermaritzburg Archives and if they died in the Cape before 1996 then they will be in the Cape Town Archives.

Estate Papers dating from before the dates below will be found in the archives. Those dating from after these dates will be found in the Master's Office in the towns concerned.

Archive	Source Code	Year
Cape Town	MOOC	1996
Grahamstown	MOG	1962
Pietermaritzburg	MHG	1975
Bloemfontein	MHG	1951
Pretoria	TAB	1978
Kimberley	MOK	1957

The earliest estate papers are in the Cape Town Archives. The source code is MOOC from the 6/9/ series and covers death notices from 1831 until 1959. Slave death notices also fall under the MOOC source code but are in the 6/1-6/3 series. Early death notices were filed separately to Liquidation and Distribution accounts and wills, and only from the late 1900s were all three sets of documents included in one estate file.



Read more here about deceased estates
<https://www.ancestors.co.za/deceased-estates-south-africa/>



The inventories in a deceased estate list all the possessions, including livestock and slaves. Estate papers from Grahamstown and Kimberley are also housed in the Cape Town Archives.



VOTERS ROLLS

Municipal voter's rolls reveal a wealth of information, including addresses, occupations, value of property (in some) and ID numbers. (This information changes from year to year and century to century.) Ancestors South Africa has captured several voters records in their online database.
<https://www.ancestors.co.za/database/electoral.php>

NAME OF VOTER.	ADDRESS.	OCCUPATION.	NATURE OF QUALIFICATION.	ESTIMATED ANNUAL VALUE OF PROPERTY.	P.T. No.
Johnston, Thomas	23 Church St.	Clock	Tenant	£40	5581
Joubert, Pieter	15 Market St.	Shopkeeper	Homeholder	£120	5582
Johann, Mary	23 Church St.	Widow	Homeholder	£30	5583

DEATH NOTICE. No 17060. 13 DEC 1927
FORBIDDEN TO THE PROVISIONS CONTAINED IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF ESTATES ACT, 1913. OFFICE OF ESTATES, CAPE TOWN.

of the deceased: **JOHN HILL.**

Birthplace and Nationality of the deceased: **Glasgow, Scotland. Sooteman.**

Parents and Address of the Family of the deceased: **Father: THOMAS HILL, 10 Beldale St., Glasgow. Mother: ROBE HILL, 179 Bellabouston Drive, Mowbray, CAPE TOWN.**

Age of the deceased: **Forty-six** years **Eleven** months.

Occupation of the deceased: **Shipping Clerk**

Usual place of residence of the deceased, as of a tenant, at last deceased: **Port Elizabeth, Cape Province.**

Rank or Position, Navy or Army, or Widower: **Widower.**

If there is pending claim of debt, and whether payable by mortgage of property or not.

If there is any and approximately date of date of payment of same: **HELEN HILL (born HOUSTON) 3rd November, 1900, Port Elizabeth, Cape Province.**

If there is any mortgage: **Port Elizabeth, Cape Province.**

The day of the decease: On **6th September,** 1927.

Where the person died: **Port Elizabeth, Cape Province.**

Name of children of deceased, and whether married or widowers:

MARY JACKSON LEANE, Shawlands, Glasgow. THOMAS GEORGE HILL, 55 Goteswold Drive, Saronwold, Johannesburg. DAVID HILL, 10 Beldale St., Croeshill, Glasgow, Scotland. ELIZABETH TUSKIE, do: do: ISABELLA YIPOND JACKSON, 179 Bellabouston Drive, Mowbray, Glasgow. JESSIE MCARTHUR HILL, do: do:

Has the deceased left any movable property? **Yes.**

Has the deceased left any immovable property? **Yes.**

Is it believed that the estate exceeds £500 in value? **Yes.**

Has the deceased left a will? **Yes.**

Executed at **Beaufort West** on the **11th** day of **October** 1927.

P. (Not printed at death)

ESTATE LATE
Liedtich Johannes

No. *1734/1898.*

Inventories and
and
Liquidation and Distribution
Accounts.

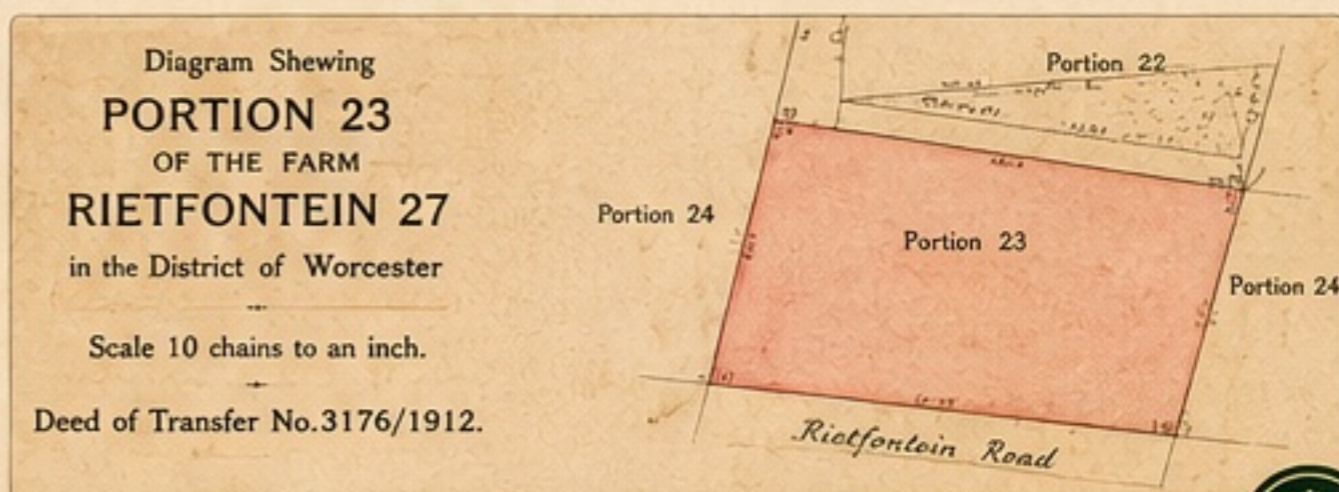
INVENTORY of the Estate of the late *Liedtich Johannes*

2 Horses	£60.0.0
1 Cow	£20.0.0
1 Cow	£20.0.0
1 Wagon, harness &c, aged 15 years	£9.0.0
1 Saddle	£9.0.0
1 Pot	£15.0.0
1 Samovar	£15.0.0
1 Town Folding Stairs, aged 15 years	£18.0.0
1 Slate Top	£60.0.0
	£390.20.0



LAND RECORDS

Land records confirm where family members owned property and sometimes what it looked like back then. These are found in the deeds office.
<https://www.windeed.co.za/>





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OTHER RECORDS

1 OPGAAFROLLE

These contain information collected for tax purposes between 1692 to 1845. These documents include information on members of the family and how many slaves they had, as well as possessions such as vines, sheep, guns and wagons. They also include the name of the farm the family and their slaves lived on and how much was harvested that year. These records can be found in the Cape Town Archives.

Opgaaf Rol. Anno 1732.

<i>Name van den Ingelande</i>	<i>Speeck</i>	<i>Paarden</i>	<i>Rundvee</i>	<i>Scharre</i>	<i>Wagoni</i>	<i>Wynen</i>	<i>Land</i>	<i>Hoeveel geproduce.</i>
<i>Jan van der Stel</i>	2'	1'	5'	1°	3	2'	<i>Constantia</i>	1200 muid
<i>Pieter Walbeeck</i>	1'	1'	3	3	3	13'	<i>Boschenveld</i>	900
<i>Gorrit Becquaine</i>	2	3	3	5	13'	17'	<i>Rondebosch</i>	600
<i>Jacob Rompioen</i>	3	3	5	13	13'	2	<i>Drakenstein</i>	1100
<i>Mylanc Leagner</i>	15	19	3	5	5	1'	<i>Vergelegen</i>	900

2 COURT OF JUSTICE RECORDS

Kept in the Western Cape Archives and Records Service (source code CJ), these document civil and criminal cases tried by the Dutch East India Company at the Castle.

These can be fascinating documents as in many cases testimonies were taken from people involved, illuminating details of their lives. See also the Magisterial Archives for later cases from the outlying districts of Cape Town.



Extract Uit de Resolutien van den Raad van Justitie op het Kasteel de Goede Hoop.

Anno 1737.

Comparcerde voor den Raad Jan Claas van Bosch, en verklaarde op eede, dat hy op den 2^{de} May jl. door Hendrik Pieters geslagen ende gevebeckt was, en dat hy daar door Seer gefracéerd is.

Was getekend J. C. van Bosch. (merk.)

Ter Ordonnantie van den Raad W. van der Stel. (merk.)

3 GOVERNMENT GAZETTES

These publications are to be found in the Cape Town Archives.

Government gazettes in South Africa originated on August 16, 1800, when the first official newspaper, The Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser (Kaapsche Stads Courant en Africaansche Berigter), was published. This publication served as the government's official mouthpiece to communicate laws and notices to the public.

These publications are mines of information and are often consulted by genealogists for names from shipping intelligence, passenger lists, deserted soldiers, deceased estate references, items for sale, marriages, baptisms and criminal issues such as "lying drunk in the street" is not uncommon finding in these publications

No. 1.

THE CAPE TOWN GAZETTE AND AFRICAN ADVERTISER.

(KAAPSCHE STADS COURANT EN AFRICAANSCHER BERIGTER.)

SATURDAY, AUGUST 16, 1800.

GOVERNMENT NOTICE.

By Order of His Excellency
The Acting-Governor,
Cape Town, 16th August, 1800.



ARRIVALS.

The ship Maolin, Thompson, from London.
The brig Favorite, Baker, from Calcutta.
The ship Princess Royal, Bayley, from Portsmouth.

GOVERNMENT GAZETTE. (STAATSKOERANT.)

May 31, 1910.

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA.

PROCLAMATION.

By His Excellency the Governor-General.

Whereas it is expedient to publish the following Acts and Proclamations for general information: Now, therefore, I hereby proclaim and give notice of the same.

THE KING.

L. Botha

NAME CHANGES OVER THE CENTURIES

- 1800: Launched as The Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser during the first British occupation.
 - June 1826: Changed its name to The Cape of Good Hope Government Gazette.
 - May 1910: Following the formation of the Union of South Africa, the national Government Gazette was officially established to publish laws, proclamations, and notices for the entire country.
- Today, the national Government Gazette (Staatskoerant) is still published by the Government Printing Works to keep the public informed of new legislation, and legal notices.



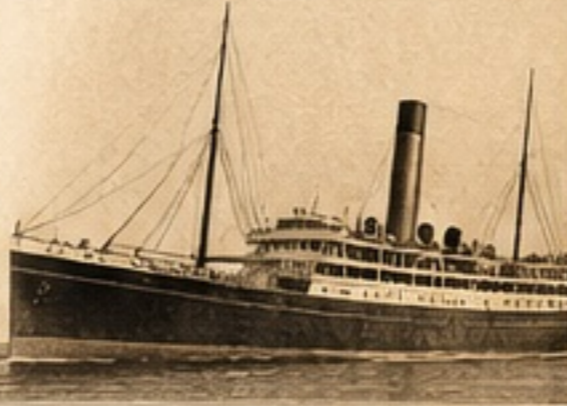
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HOW AND WHERE TO FIND THE DOCUMENTS

The documents discussed are archived in a variety of repositories across the country. Finding them usually means going direct to the source. Happily, there are online databases that can help you work out what you're looking for before you make your trek.



ONLINE

The best place to start your research is on <https://www.ancestors.co.za> but the National Archives is the official Government resource. The best way to start searching the National Archives is through the powerful, free, on-line search facility called NAAIRS (short for National Automated Archival Information Retrieval System) at www.national.archives.gov.za. This facility searches all the documents of the various physical archives around the country. While it doesn't give you the document itself, it provides you with the repository and source codes so that you can request the document you need from the correct archive.

Insert a term (preferably a single word) and use the operators to help narrow your search.



STEP 1: NAAIRS - RESULT SUMMARY

National Archives of South Africa (NASA)
Database: All Archives Repositories and National Registers of non-public records

NAAIRS - Result Summary

New Query Refine Query Saved Queries Multiple Documents Clear Multiple Document List Select Page Clear Page Change Database

Please Note: For the purposes of enquires about specific archives or the ordering of copies, it is essential to provide the full information in the SOURCE, VOLUME and REFERENCE fields.

Result Pages: 1

SELECT	SOURCE	VOLUME NO	REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION	BEGIN DATE	END DATE
<input type="checkbox"/>	MOOC	6/9/23606	2295/55	WOODLAND, HERBERT RICHARD, ESTATE PAPERS.	1935	1935
<input type="checkbox"/>	MOOC	6/9/17152	2733/50	WOODLAND, RICHARD ARTHUR, ESTATE PAPERS.	1950	1950
<input type="checkbox"/>	MOOC	6/9/524	1699	WOODLAND, RICHARD, DEATH NOTICE.	1905	1905
<input type="checkbox"/>	MOOC	13/1/1342	177	WOODLAND, RICHARD, LIQUIDATION AND DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT.	1905	1905
<input type="checkbox"/>	MOOC	13/1/1378	60	WOODLAND, RICHARD, LIQUIDATION AND DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT.	1905	1905



Use the reference numbers to request the document from the relevant archive.

STEP 2: NAAIRS - QUERY INPUT

National Archives of South Africa (NASA)
Database: All Archives Repositories and National Registers of non-public records

Query Input

Search Clear New Query Change Database Saved Queries

Search Words (Insert one or more SearchWords)

woodland
richard

Operators

Near
And
Or
Not

Chronological Selection (Optional) Beginning Date Ending Date

CCYY Comparand

>=
=<

Chronological Sequence (Optional) Ascending

Help for structuring queries.

Search Clear New Query Change Database Saved Queries

USE THE OPERATORS

- **AND** = finds both terms
- **ADJACENT** = finds both terms right next to each other
- **NEAR** = finds both terms when they occur close to each other
- **OR** = finds either term, or both
- **NOT** = finds one of the terms (useful when the surname is the same as that of a prolific person: eg. Luthuli NOT Albert).





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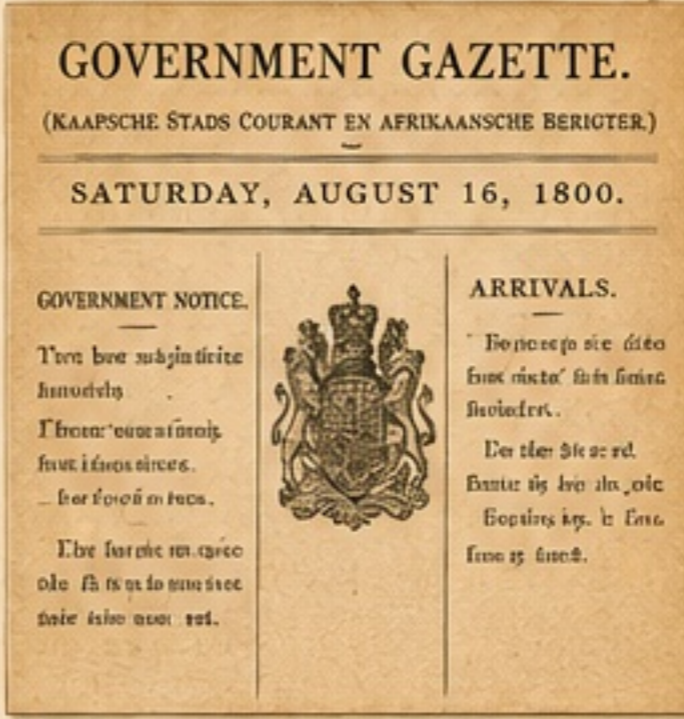
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HOW AND WHERE TO FIND THE DOCUMENTS

NAAIRS – DATABASES ON THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES WEBSITE

GEN	Data of the South African Genealogical Society on Gravestones
HER	Data of the Bureau of Heraldry on registered heraldic representations
KAB	Cape Town Archives Repository
MAN	National Registers of Manuscripts and Photographs (NAREM and NAREF) National Archives' cartographic and library material, microfilms and copies
NAB	Pietermaritzburg Archives Repository
OVM	National Register of Audio-Visual Material (NAROM)
ROS	National Register of Oral Sources (NAROS)
RSA	All Archives Repositories and National Registers of non-public records
SAB	National Archives Repository (Public Records of Central Government since 1910)
TAB	National Archives Repository (Public Records of former Transvaal Province and its predecessors as well as of magistrates and local authorities)
TBD	Durban Archives Repository
TBE	Port Elizabeth Archives Repository
TBK	Cape Town Records Centre
VAB	Free State Archives Repository



STATE ARCHIVES

There are a number of archives and other document storage facilities spread all over South Africa. Specific archives house location-relevant documents (for example, the Bloemfontein Archives contain documents about prisoners held in Boer War concentration camps). You will be able to find the reference codes to the material you're looking for on NAAIRS, but may find yourself travelling the country to lay hands on the originals.

The Western Cape Archives and Records Service (or simply Cape Town Archives) in Roeland Street, Cape Town, houses South Africa's oldest documents on seven floors. Placed end-to-end, the records kept here stretch 45km. As Cape Town was an entry point of immigrants of all races to South Africa there are many relevant documents here for South African genealogists.

You can find a list of the contact details of all the archives on [Ancestry24](#).

All the archives in South Africa are open to the public, although you must observe protocol: don't take food, cameras or pens past the check-in. You will not be allowed into the archives themselves, but you can request documents and they will be brought to you in the reading room (you can't have more than three at a time). Archivists are trained professionals with large amounts of experience and some impressively arcane knowledge, so ask for assistance – you'll be pleased with the information you get.

If you want to use a camera to take photographs of documents you will need special permission in advance from the head archivist in charge of the reading room at "Readroom@pgwc.gov.za"



M00C	M00C	M00C	M00C	M00C	M00C
M.09/ 23606	6/9/ 17152	6/9/ 524	6/1/ 1342	13/1/ 1342	13/1/ 1378
2295 55	2733 50	1699 50	1699 7	177 1	60 60





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HOW AND WHERE TO FIND THE DOCUMENTS



CEMETERIES

Standing at the place where your ancestor is buried and reading their headstone can be a moving experience. However, you'll want to do research at the Municipal offices to get the full picture: Burial records will usually show many people are buried in one grave.



RECORD OF BURIALS.			
Date.	Name of Person.	Position.	Undertaker.
8/7/1896	Sherriff Paterson Adam	Evans	... Grogan, Bloemfontein
27/1896	Adam Janet	Evans	Boj. Bantworen. & Bloemfont.
1-1/1896	Evans John Michael F.	Evans	Boj

See report by Joseph Boj to the Board, by Notice of Special. on the 10th. of Nov. & also heard Report on the 10th. of Nov. 1896.

Refer to our beginners guide 13 as well as:

- <https://www.ancestors.co.za/church-cemeteries-cape-town/>
- <https://www.ancestors.co.za/somerset-road-cemetery-lost-inscriptions/>
- <https://www.ancestors.co.za/cemetery-project-for-school-children/>
- <http://www.findagrave.com>
- <https://www.graves.eggssa.org/>



CHURCH ARCHIVES

The earliest church records are Dutch Reformed Church records, which date from 1660 – for many years this was the only church in South Africa.

Website: <https://ngkerk.org.za/english/>

The bulk of Methodist Church registers are housed at the Cory Library in Grahamstown. They also have Presbyterian, Congregational, Catholic, Baptist and Hebrew registers for certain areas. A full list of their collection can be viewed at www.ru.ac.za/corylibrary/.

The Anglican Church Archives contact <https://www.wits.ac.za/historicalpapers/contact-us/>

Other denominations' archives are scattered in different churches across the country and not all churches even maintain their own archives. Ancestors.co.za offers a selection of church records online, including records from the historic St George's Anglican Cathedral Church in Cape Town.

Other Anglican Church records can be found online at the Anglican Church Archives at Wits University <https://www.wits.ac.za/historicalpapers/> and at <https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/location/africa/south-africa>



MUSLIM GENEALOGISTS

Muslim genealogists may find it harder to trace documents as records usually leave the mosque with the imam. However, there are individuals who personally house small collections of documents, including kitaabs (diaries).

The Simonstown Heritage Museum is a good place to start (Amlay House, King George's Way).

Tel: MUSEUM CURATOR
Igshaan Amlay
+ 27 (0) 82-216-2600
<https://amlay.co.za/amlay-house/>





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HOW AND WHERE TO FIND THE DOCUMENTS



DEEDS OFFICE

Members of the public can access title deeds at these offices throughout the country. It is possible to trace the entire history of a single building – ownership, price paid and amendments – by simply presenting an erf (plot) number (they can also help you determine the erf number through a street address). The offices charge fees for enquiries and copies – quite small, unless you want certified copies.

Slaves, who were kept at the Cape from 1658 to 1838, were considered property and therefore records of slave ownership can be found in the Cape Town deeds office in Plein Street. Documents called Slave Transfers (*Transporten en Scheepskennis*) are archived here up to 1730. Both these are available on Robert Shells Changing Hands <https://www.ancestors.co.za/changing-hands/>

Another way to search the deeds offices is through Land Reform and Rural Development at <https://www.deeds.gov.za/>



DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS

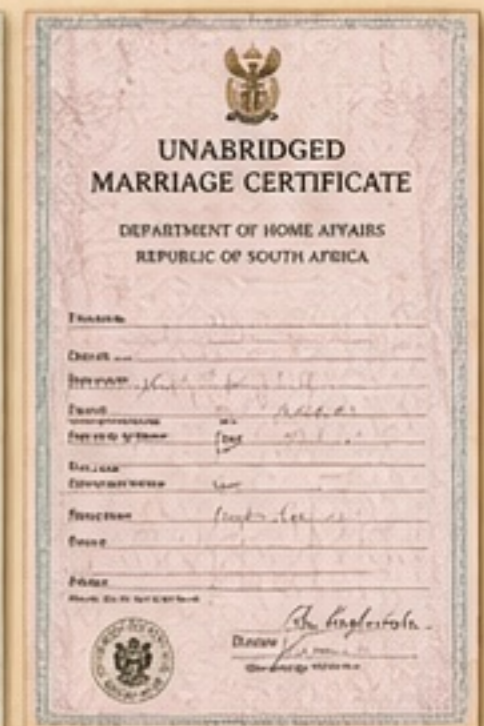
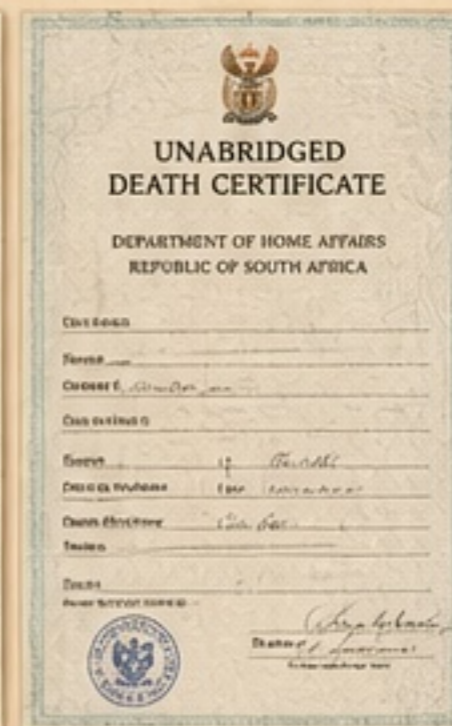
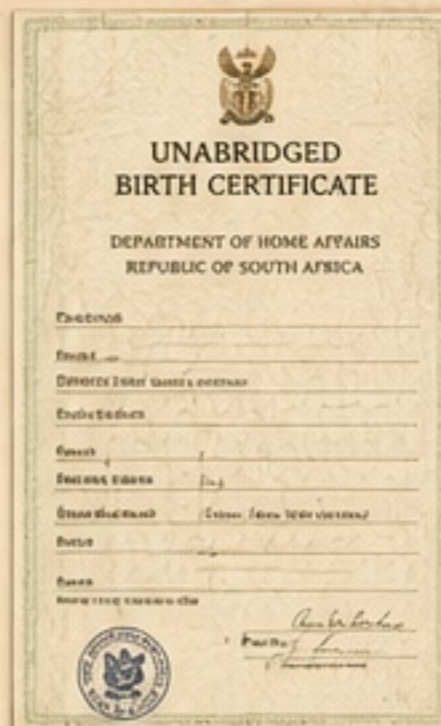
The Department of Home Affairs keeps birth, death and marriage certificates. You need to apply in writing for a copy – specify that you want a “unabridged certificate” or “vault copy”: it’s more detailed.

As you have probably experienced, getting documents out of Home Affairs is a tediously drawn-out process: expect to wait up to a year for your puzzle piece (if you have an ID number, it will go much quicker). They will charge you a small fee (about R100).



There is no online application portal at all - all applications need to be made in person.

Also refer to the *Ancestors Research Beginners 11 + 12*.

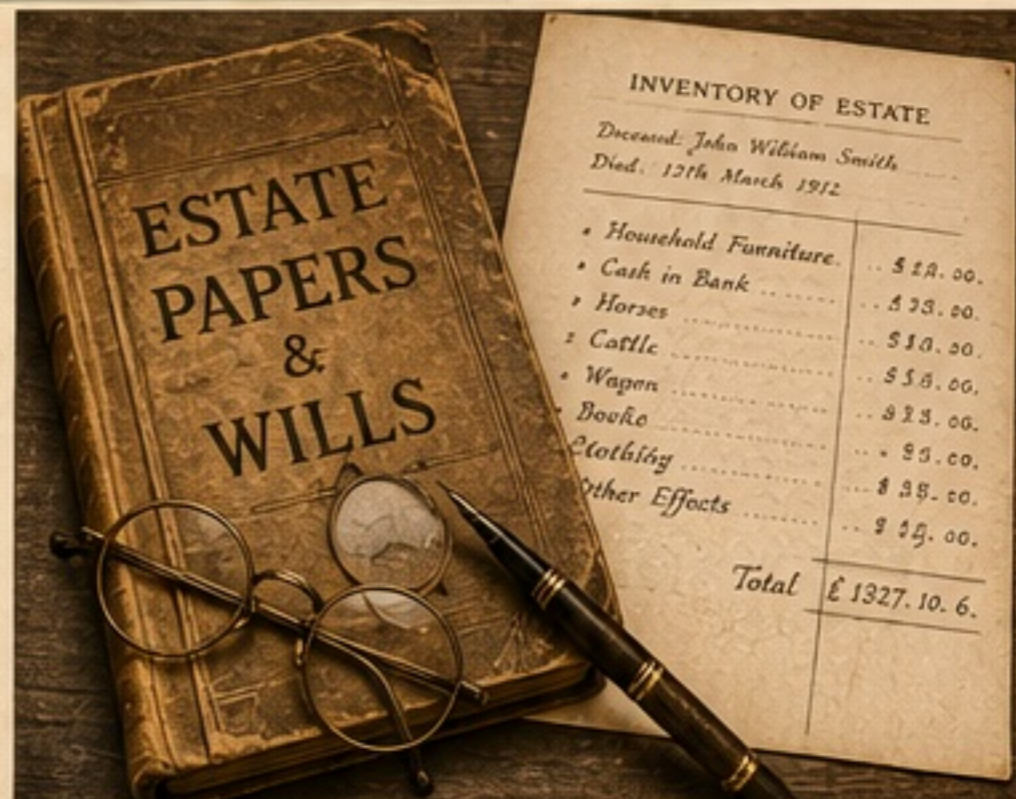


MASTER OF THE HIGH COURT

The Master of the High Court holds information on deceased estates, including wills.

Estate papers dating from before the dates below will be found in the region’s archives.

Cape Town	1996
Grahamstown	1962
Natal	1975
Gauteng (Transvaal)	1978
(Orange) Free State	1951
Kimberley	1957



Contact details for the various Masters of the High Court can be found on the Department of Justice’s website at <https://www.justice.gov.za/>





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South Africa

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GOING BEYOND THE BASICS

The documents listed in the previous sections of this beginners guide are all potentially rich resources. But sometimes that information isn't available – perhaps your ancestor wasn't born here, or they didn't get married, or (shockingly, at the time) they had a child out of wedlock. Perhaps they were of a racial or religious group that wasn't particularly well-documented by the government or institutions. Sometimes you simply want to fill in gaps in your ancestor's personal history. This means you'll need to imagine your ancestors' lives in a broader sense than "born, married + died" and look at different ways to find out information about them.

Put on your trenchcoat and deerstalker – it's time to become a seriously hardboiled family detective!



HOW DID YOUR ANCESTORS ARRIVE?

The colony needed labour and many people were enticed or coerced to South Africa over the centuries. Europeans formed part of incentivised immigration schemes, while people from Indian Ocean islands, South and East Asia and West Africa were brought here as slaves in other parts of the world.

In the early 1800s the Children's Friend Society recruited destitute street children as apprentices. In the mid-1800s assisted immigration schemes brought 12 000 more people into the country from England and 2300 of these were German Legionnaires from the Crimean War. Later in the century, 2000 Dutch people were brought in to work on railways. In 1904 Chinese immigrants came to work on Transvaal mines and after WWI ex-British Service men were encouraged to settle here.

Here are details on some of the bigger and better known immigration schemes:



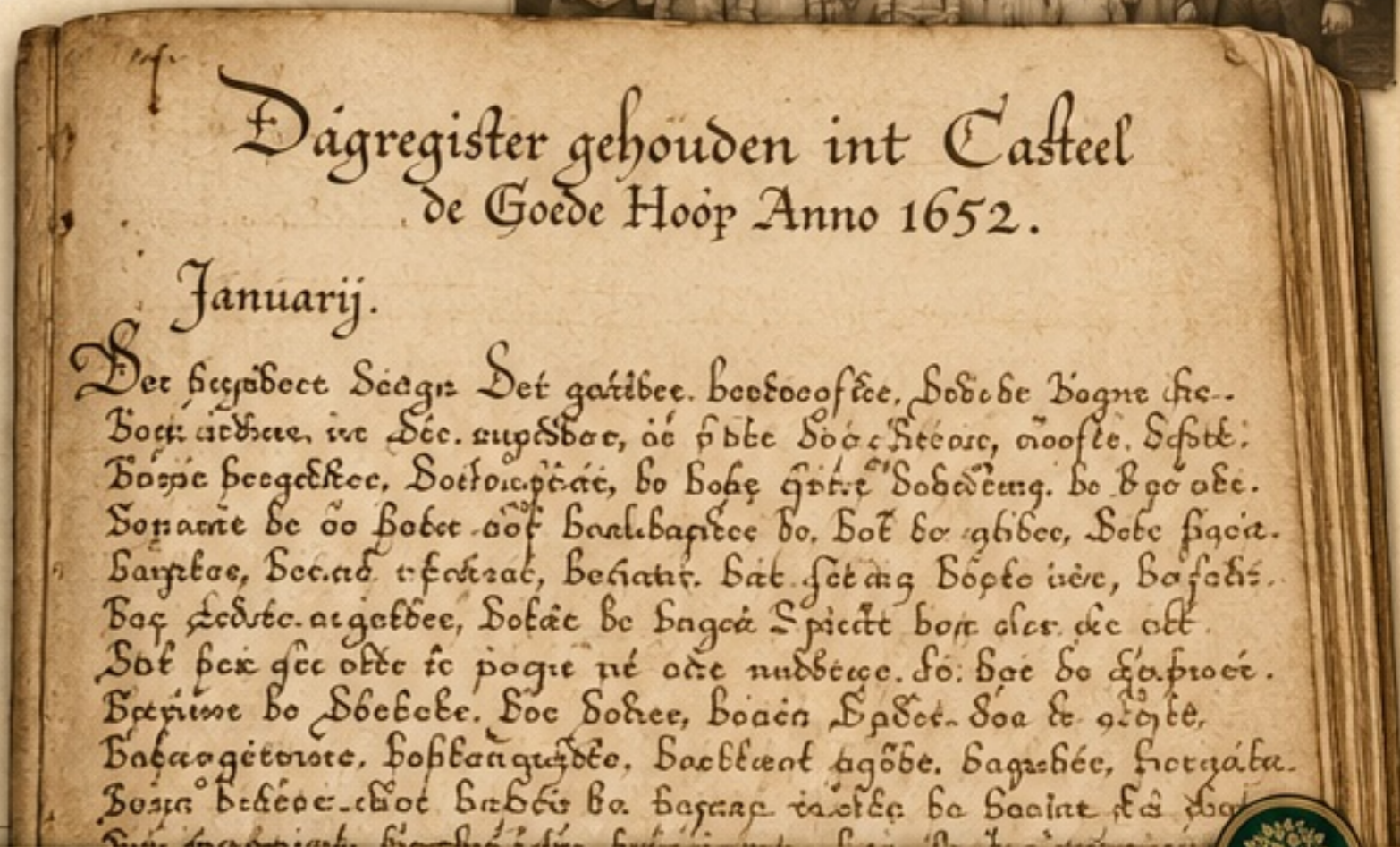
VOC (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie): It

was The Dutch East India Company that sent Jan van Riebeeck to set up a refreshment station at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652. Along with him they sent a tough group of men (there were few women) who were good with their hands. Many of these men had children with slave women, who began to arrive at the Cape in 1658.

The documents of the first 70 years or so at the Cape (which are housed in the Cape Town Archives) are written in Gothic script in High Dutch, and can be difficult to read.



JAN VAN RIEBEECK





Ancestors South Africa

Genealogical Research Services

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GOING BEYOND THE BASICS



FRENCH HUGUENOTS:

Hundreds of thousands of Protestant French fled to other parts of the world during the seventeenth century. The main influx to South Africa was in 1688–89 and these refugees settled in Franschhoek: among them were the De Villiers', the Du Plessis', the Le Roux's and other families familiar to South Africans today.

Contact the Huguenot Society of South Africa:
<https://huguenotsociety.org.za/>



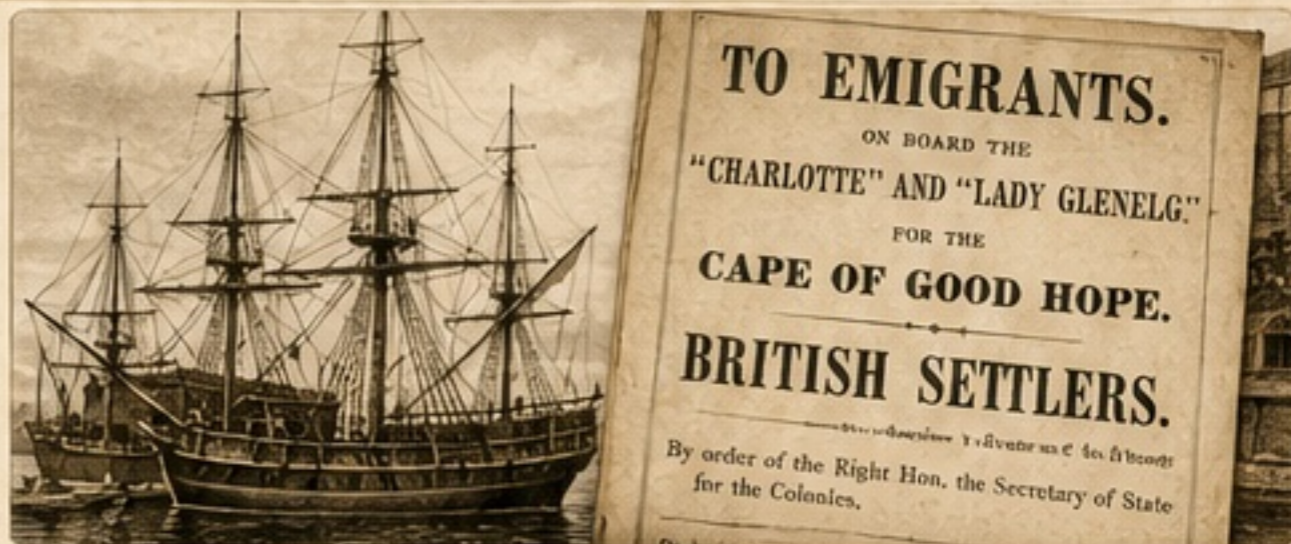
1820 SETTLERS:

Four thousand British Settlers arrived on ships in the Eastern Cape in 60 parties during 1820.

These settlers have been extremely well documented and their descendants keep detailed and up-to-date genealogical information.

Visit: <https://www.1820settlers.com/>

Original official documents can be found in the Cape Town Archives in the Colonial Office Archives (code CO).



LITHUANIAN JEWS:

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, millions of Jews fled persecution in Eastern Europe. About 30 000 Lithuanian Jews (Larvii) settled in South Africa: 80% of

South African Jews today are of Baltic descent. Other than consulting the archives for naturalisation certificates (look in the Colonial Office Archives, code CO), you can research the history of Jews in South Africa in the Gitlin Library in the Holocaust Centre in Gardens

<https://ctholocaust.co.za/>, Cape Town or contact the South African Jewish Board of Deputies in Johannesburg or visit <https://www.jewishgen.org/safrica/>

ALSO on Ancestors Research South Africa there is the 1929 Jewish Year Book <https://www.ancestors.co.za/database/jewishbook1929.php>



MISSIONARIES:

Missionaries and the schools they set up have played an important role in the history of South Africa. Many mission stations and church archives have records (Lovedale in the Eastern Cape is a particularly well-documented mission and school). These are also

useful in tracing the stories of freed slaves and indigenous black South Africans.





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GOING BEYOND THE BASICS



INDENTURED INDIAN MIGRANTS: Between 1860 and 1911 over 150 000 Indians arrived in Natal, many on five-year contracts as indentured labourers, others as free "passenger Indians" (usually merchants). Only about 35 000 of them returned to India.

The Indian Shipping Lists (compiled by Prof J. B. Brain), which contain information about indentured labourers, are available on the Ancestors Research South Africa

<https://www.ancestors.co.za/database/indianmig.php>



SHIPPING AND PASSENGER RECORDS: Many new South Africans arrived on their own steam – their details can be found in passenger records, which are usually pieced together from Government Gazettes.

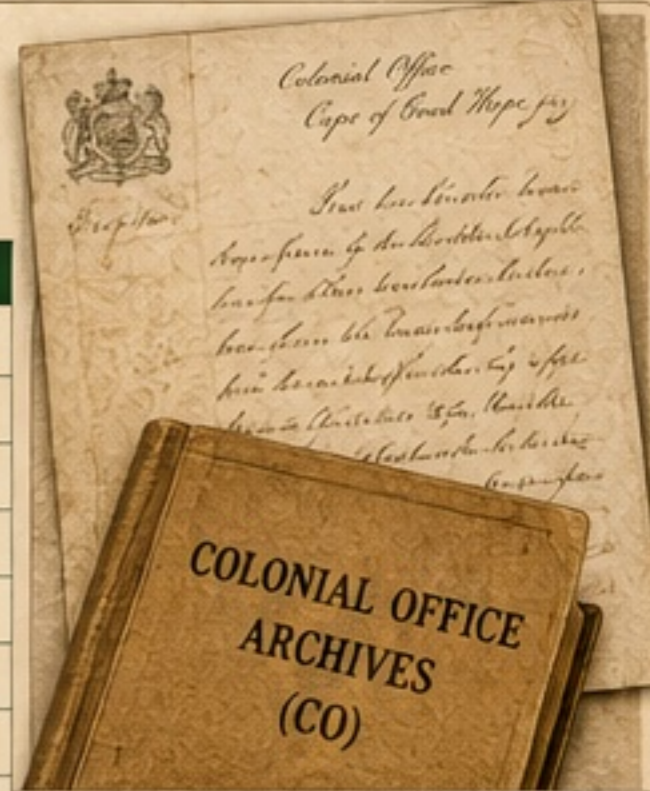
- Links to websites featuring passenger lists of particular ships can also be found on Ancestry24.
- You can read more about shipping and passenger records here <https://www.ancestors.co.za/shipping-and-passenger-records-in-south-africa/>
- and here <https://www.ancestors.co.za/immigration-references-for-the-cape-colony-19th-and-20th-century/>
- Another useful site, particularly for ships docking in Natal, is www.sa-passenger-list.za.net and <https://www.eggsa.org/arrivals/eGGSA%20Passenger%20Project.html>



IMMIGRATIONS REFERENCES FOR THE CAPE COLONY 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY

Immigrations References for the Cape Colony 19th and 20th Century are not as difficult as people imagine, however, most of them are not indexed and you would need to physically visit the archives or pay a professional researcher to do it on your behalf, which is much more cost-effective than either flying halfway around the world or your time, parking, petrol, ordering copies of documents, etc.

Volume	Description	Period	Collection	Archive Reference
6054 Vol 1 – 4	Permits to remain in the colony	1806 – 1828	Archives of the Colonial Office	CO
6055 Vol 1	Index to Permits to Remain in the Colony	1806 – 1838	Archives of the Colonial Office	CO
6055 Vol 2 -3	Register of Permissions to remain in the Colony	1806 – 1838	Archives of the Colonial Office	CO
6056 Vol 1	Register of Permissions to remain in the Colony	1839 – 1843	Archives of the Colonial Office	CO
6056 Vol 2	Permissions granted to British Settlers	1806 – 1809	Archives of the Colonial Office	CO
6059	Sundry Permits to leave/remain in the Colony	1809 -1844	Archives of the Colonial Office	CO
6060 – 6066	Permits to leave the Colony	1806 -1844	Archives of the Colonial Office	CO
5760 – 5769	Letters of Naturalization	1806 -1902	Archives of the Colonial Office	CO
8552 – 8696	Application Letters of Naturalization	1865 -1911	Archives of the Colonial Office	CO
6137 – 6138	List of British Settlers to the Cape	1820	Archives of the Colonial Office	CO
136, 158, 178, 2011, 223 and 249	Letters received from Settlers	1820 – 1825	Archives of the Colonial Office	CO



Every document tells a story. Look beyond the obvious and uncover the journey, struggles and triumphs that shaped your ancestors' lives.

Happy Hunting!

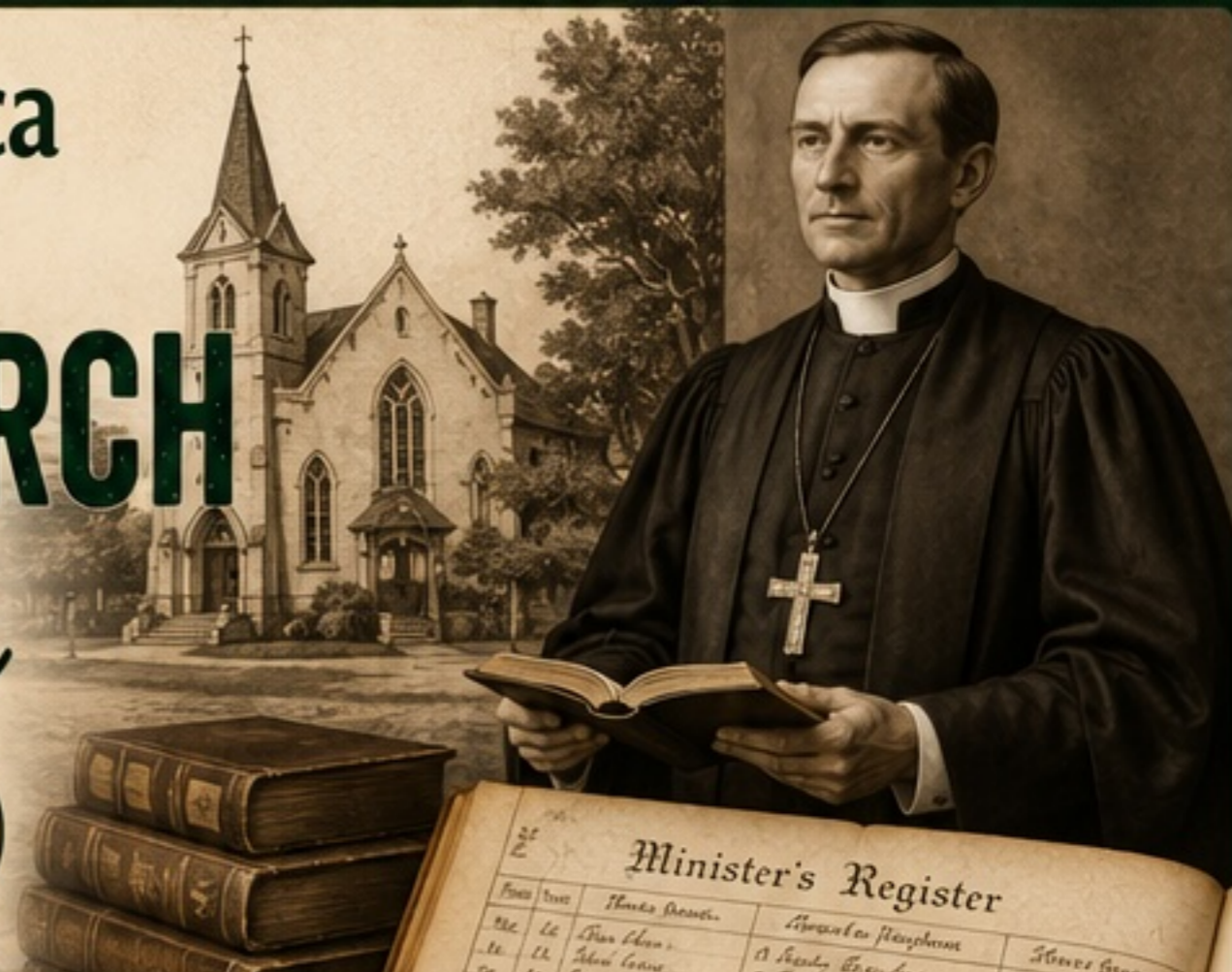




ANCESTORS RESEARCH

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Minister's Register			
Date	Name	Spouse	Notes
18. 11.	Peter van der Merwe	Elizabeth van der Merwe	
19. 12.	John Smith	Mary Smith	
20. 01.	James Brown	Anna Brown	
21. 02.	David White	Rebecca White	
22. 03.	Thomas Green	Sarah Green	
23. 04.	George Black	Elizabeth Black	
24. 05.	Richard Taylor	Margaret Taylor	
25. 06.	Henry Adams	Ann Adams	
26. 07.	Samuel King	Elizabeth King	
27. 08.	Robert Lee	Mary Lee	
28. 09.	John Walker	Rebecca Walker	
29. 10.	Thomas Young	Sarah Young	
30. 11.	George Hall	Elizabeth Hall	

WHAT DID YOUR ANCESTORS DO?

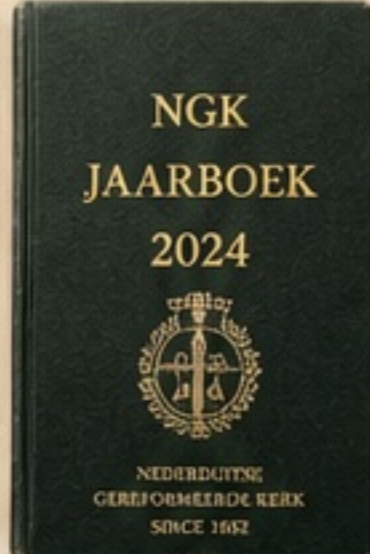
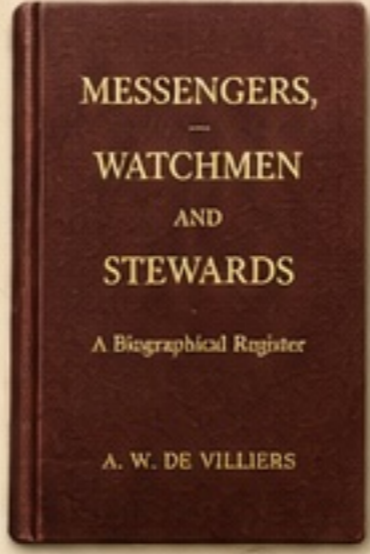


WHAT DID YOUR ANCESTORS DO?
You can discover interesting information and add "colour" to your ancestors' life stories by researching them via their occupations.



CLERGY: You can write to the various church archives, or consult *The Dictionary of South African Biography Volumes 1-5*: these contain thousands of biographies and can be found in your local library. University libraries also hold a lot of private papers and unpublished acquisitions which are a wealth of knowledge. For particular denominations, books like *Messengers, Watchmen and Stewards* by Andries William De Villiers – a biographical register of clergymen licensed, ordained for service, or otherwise active, in the Anglican diocese of Cape Town prior to the death of Archbishop William West Jones on 21 May 1908 – are useful. The *NGK Jaarboek*, an annual publication is a good source for Dutch Reformed ancestors.

You can contact Ancestors Research to do this for you:
<https://www.ancestors.co.za/contact/>



MILITARY: Ancestors research offers a comprehensive military research service for WW1 + WW2 and you can contact us here <https://www.ancestors.co.za/contact/>

They also have various records including the **Anglo Boer War Free State Call Up Register** containing more 7000 names and the **World War I and II Roll of Honour**, containing more than 25 000 entries. If you've found a medal or military decoration in your scratchings in the attic.

- <https://www.ancestors.co.za/database/bwcasualties.php>
- <https://www.ancestors.co.za/database/rhodesianreb.php>
- <https://www.ancestors.co.za/database/sawarmedals.php>
- <https://www.ancestors.co.za/database/townguard.php>
- <https://www.ancestors.co.za/database/constabulary.php>



ANGLO BOER WAR



WORLD WAR I



WORLD WAR II



The Documentation Centre of the SANDF will provide copies of service records for members of the Army, Navy and Air Force if an application is made in writing to:
Documentation Centre of the SANDF
Department of Defence
Private Bag X289
PRETORIA 0001
Or e-mail: sandfdoc@mweb.co.za





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WHAT DID YOUR ANCESTORS DO?

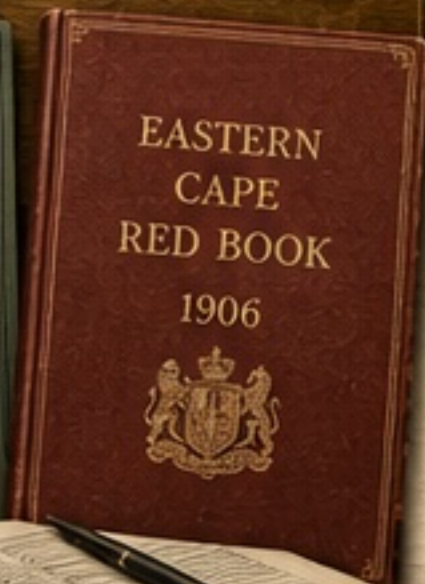


CIVIL SERVICE:

Detailed books were kept of members of the civil service – you can even see how much your bookkeeper great-grandfather earned. Civil service lists were published for many years in the late 1800s and early 1900s. These publications can be found in the National Archives such as:

- 1904 Orange River Directory – Bloemfontein
- 1906 Eastern Cape Red Book – East London, Tarkastad, Victoria East, Griqualand East, Spring Valley, Klarafontein, Steynsburg, Bedford, Dordrecht, Burghersdorp, Adelaide, Queenstown, Tembuland, Barkly East, Cathcart, Aliwal North, Fort Beaufort, Grootvley
- 1907 Slater's Directory for Grahamstown
- 1908 Civil Servants Pension List for Cape Town
- 1908 Field Cornets Pension List for Cape Town
- 1908 Widows Pension for Cape Town

You can also search in the National Libraries and the National Archives.



Name	Position	Salary
A. J. Smith	Clark	£120 0 0
W. H. Brown	Bookkeeper	£96 0 0
J. van der Merwe	Massenger	£48 0 0
G. Pienaar	Storekeeper	£72 0 0
T. Williams	Inspector	£150 0 0



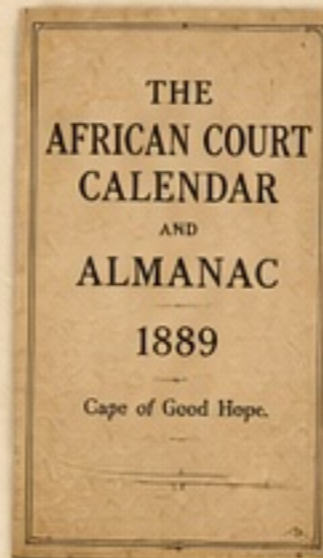
SHOPKEEPER:

Almanacs and the African Court Calendar are excellent sources of information, giving the occupation and address of shopkeepers, craftsmen, innkeepers, hoteliers and even civil servants, teachers and militia men – just to mention a few.

Ancestors Research offers a selection of these books covering the years 1813–1894 as well as other trade and street directories.

<https://www.ancestors.co.za/database/capealmanac.php>

Taking the address to the deeds office can uncover more historical details. The street names and numbers may well have changed, so this will help you confirm a particular site in the current day.

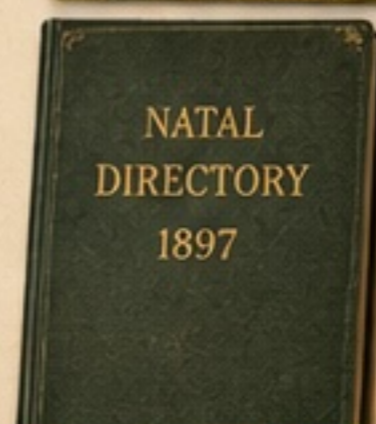


FARMER:

You can also find information in trade directories such as:

- 1813 - 1889 African Court Calendars and Almanacs <https://www.ancestors.co.za/database/africourtcal.php>
- 1828 - 1870 Cape Almanacs <https://www.ancestors.co.za/database/capealmanac.php>
- 1897 Natal Directory <https://www.ancestors.co.za/database/nataldirectory.php>
- 1904 Orange River Directory – Bloemfontein
- 1906 Eastern Cape Red Book – East London, Tarkastad, Victoria East, Griqualand East, Spring Valley, Klarafontein, Steynsburg, Bedford, Bedford, Dordrecht, Barkly, Barburg, Adelaide, Queenstown, Tembuland, Barkly East, Cathcart, Aliwal North, Fort Beaufort, Grootvley
- 1907 Slater's Directory for Grahamstown

You can also find information in voter's lists, some of which can be found on Ancestors Research South Africa - <https://www.ancestors.co.za/database/electoral.php> (otherwise the Western Cape Archives).



No.	Name	Occupation	Address
235	J. J. Burger	Farmer	Stellenbosch
236	P. du Toit	Farmer	La Motte
237	H. C. Visser	Farmer	Jonkershoek
238	A. Erasmus	Farmer	Doon Valley





ANCESTORS RESEARCH *South Africa*

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Mission Station Register.

Names	Baptism	Date	Remarks
Mkhonto, P.	6 95	25. 95	Baptised
Nongavu, M.	7 95	18. 96	Baptised
Gqchani, J.	16 95	15. 99	Baptised.
Mabelana, F.	15 95	19. 96	Baptised.
Langa, S.	15 95	29. 97	Baptised.
Qwabe, N.	8 95	8 97	Baptised.

RESEARCHING YOUR INDIGENOUS BLACK ANCESTORS



“You need to rely a lot on oral history,” says Palesa Shongwe, researcher on the TV show *Who Do You Think You Are?*

Black South Africans weren't as rigorously documented by the colonial government as Europeans or even slaves, although a handful of black people owned enough property to vote in the early days of the Colony. Royal families have oral ancestral “charts”, but what if you're not part of that line? What if evidence of your black African history was hidden, considered shameful, and now you want to discover it?

You might find written, even photographic, evidence of your ancestors in missionary archives, although details before the mid-1800s are sketchy. People with Xhosa heritage may be able to find documentary evidence further back, as the Eastern Cape was one of the first places missionaries settled. Another way black people were written about was through conflict with European settlers.



WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE? SOUTH AFRICA – EPISODE 6 JABULANI TSAMBO

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CZ7RXHoAzw4&t=11s>

The National Archives

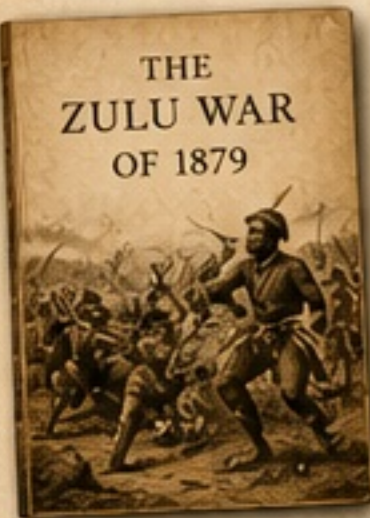
has thousands of records in its collection as well as death notices for these people.
www.national.archives.gov.za



NATIONAL ARCHIVES
OF SOUTH AFRICA

KHOI HERITAGE

Several individual Khoi people are also well-documented. They had the most contact with the settlers (and other passing Dutch) from the 1600s. One of the most written about is Krotoa (renamed Eva) who was adopted by Jan van Riebeeck and was the first Khoi woman to marry a Dutch man, Pieter van Meerhof, in 1659.



There have been several books written on various wars, including the Eastern Cape Xhosa wars in the early 1800s and the Zulu War of 1879. The older books, written by white people, are often prejudicial to black people, but it is possible to glean information from them.

ROYAL BAFOKENG NATION OF THE NORTH-WEST PROVINCE

www.bafokeng.com



LINEAGE OF ZULU KINGS

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Zulu_kings





ANCESTORS RESEARCH *South Africa*

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FILLING IN THE STORY

Gazing at your carefully researched family tree, there's little doubt you're going to find yourself intrigued by how these names on paper actually lived their lives. This is a linked yet different train of research, drawing on social history (which is why some genealogists distinguish between a family tree and a family history).



FACEBOOK:

Follow Ancestors Research South Africa
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063602228606>



LIBRARIES:

The National Library of South Africa in Cape Town and Pretoria has archives of newspapers dating back hundreds of years – many genealogists have gathered illuminating insights into their ancestors' lives by finding a detailed obituary or a mention of them in an article. Ancestry24 gives a list of potentially useful libraries on the website.



MUSEUMS:

Now that you've got a personal interest in South African history, museums will become even more interesting (yes, even those really dusty little ones in one-horse towns). The Slave Lodge next to the Company Gardens in Cape Town is a museum of particular interest to genealogists.



HERITAGE ROUTES:

A number of extensive Heritage Routes are being developed by government as a necessary process of recording historical landmarks and to boost cultural tourism. For example, the new KhoiSan Heritage Route is a nation-wide project of significant sites including Adam Kok's grave in Griqualand, the sites of Griqua churches and other institutions, as well battle sites associated with the War of 1799 to 1803. Happily, South Africa is filled with avid amateur historians and you'll find them conducting more informal walking tours in small towns, like Muizenberg (see <https://www.awhaleofaheritagerroute.co.za/whatson.htm>) + (<https://www.capetownheritagetours.co.za/>)

- ↑ KHOISAN HERITAGE ROUTE
- ↑ ADAM KOK'S GRAVE (GRIQUALAND)
- ↑ GRIQUA CHURCHES
- ↑ BATTLE SITES 1799-1803





Ancestors Research South Africa
Genealogical Research Services

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WHAT IF I DISCOVER A SECRET?

This can be exciting or frightening, depending on what you find and how long ago it happened. Discoveries could be relatively inconsequential (a still birth) or completely earth-shattering (an adoption or a violent criminal record). If these revelations involve a living relative, you will have to think carefully about whether they'd want this information made know to them (or about how upset they'll be that you've found out). You can pretty much guarantee that they will ask you not to reveal particularly shameful information, and it will probably be in your best interests to respect that.



South Africa is truly a rainbow nation and the colours shine through in family history research. Mixed marriages, though often discouraged, were only officially made illegal in 1949. Don't be surprised to find ancestors of different racial groups in your family tree. Genealogy is full of surprises!



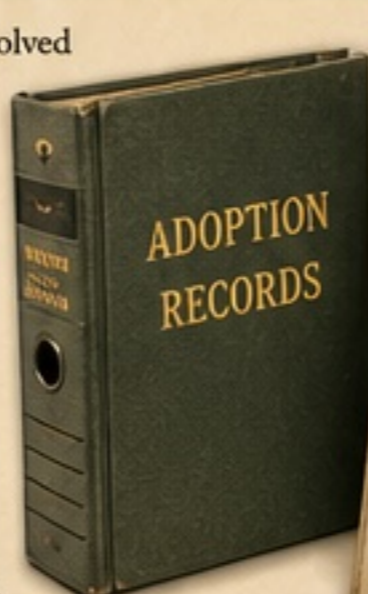
WHAT IF THERE'S AN ADOPTION IN THE FAMILY?

Adoption is a very sensitive issue and it is suggested that all parties involved go for counselling before attempting to apply for adoption papers.

These documents can be applied for at:

The Registrar of Adoptions
Private Bag X 901
Pretoria 0001
Tel: +27 (0)21 312 7608

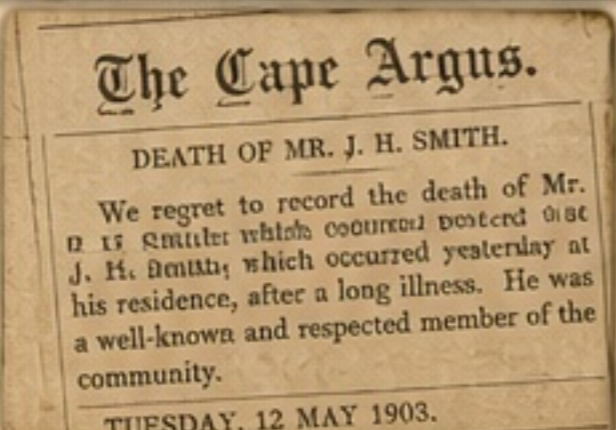
Older adoption papers after 1910 until about 1950 (but not all) are housed at the National Archives www.national.archives.gov.za. Unless you are the adoptive person or you are the parent you will not be allowed access to this records unless through an attorney or social worker.



You can read more on adoptions records here
<https://www.ancestors.co.za/adoption-records-in-south-africa/>



Doing a DNA test with either www.ancestry.com or www.myheritage.com or www.familytreedna.com is great way to locate close DNA matches where sometimes half siblings and full siblings can be found – its definitely worth taking the chance if you have little to work with.



DISCOVER YOUR PAST • PRESERVE YOUR HERITAGE • PASS YOUR LEGACY





ANCESTORS RESEARCH

South Africa

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WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I CAN'T FIND WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR?

“When you hit a wall you’ve got to move sideways and backwards,” advises professional genealogist Heather MacAlister. So you might look at your great grandmother’s sister’s death notice to see what it says about her children and then find evidence in their histories that confirm who your great-great grandmother was. “It’s like putting the outline of a puzzle in place, before you can fill in the pieces,” says Heather. Like building a puzzle, genealogy is painstaking work, but oh so satisfying when it comes together!



HEATHER MACALISTER
Professional Genealogist

DEATH NOTICE.
In loving memory of
MARY ANN SMITH,
who passed away on
12th March 1898,
Aged 74 years.
—At Rest—
Deeply lamented by
her loving family.



SCHOOL REGISTER.

Date	Pupil Name	Age	Teacher
24	...	7	...
30	...	8	...
38	...	9	...
39	...	10	...
56	...	11	...
58	...	12	...
59	...	13	...
59	...	14	...
59	...	15	...



And what if you still don't find anything? “Go back to the grassroots level and find out as much as you can about the activities of the time. Look for school records, records of forced removals, newspaper clippings and which hospitals, clinics or churches they were likely to attend. Consider sporting activities that were practised at the time, like judo, badminton, table tennis and soccer, and look for club or competition records. Also find out what pastimes the family was involved in, for example scouting, girl guides or Sunday schools. You might be able to find them through these organisations’ records.



The Cape Argus.
LOCAL AND GENERAL NEWS.
TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 1908.

SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOL.
ADMISSION AND ATTENDANCE REGISTER.

No.	Name of Pupil	Date of Last Admission	Age	Father or Guardian	Remarks
1	John Daniels	13.1.1902	7	J. Daniels	
2	Sarah Williams	15.1.1902	8	J. Williams	
3	Albert Foster	16.1.1902	6	A. Foster	
4	Annie Jacobs	17.1.1902	9	J. Jacobs	
5	William Petersen	18.1.1902	7	C. Petersen	



ATHLETIC CLUB.
ANNUAL SPORTS.
to be held on
SATURDAY, 3rd FEB.
Entries close
JANUARY 27th.

CHURCH REGISTER
BAPTISMS
MARRIAGES
BURIALS



To contact Heather MacAlister a professional genealogist to help you with your research you can email her at:



<https://www.ancestors.co.za/contact/>

