

# Researching your Family History

There are many sources and records that can help you to find out who your ancestors were, where they lived and what they did. It can sometimes be a bit overwhelming knowing where to start and what to look for. We hope the following will show you some of the information that can be found.

NB. Many of the sources cover a wide timespan.

Ancestry and FindMyPast can normally be accessed for free at Northamptonshire Record Office.

## Start with you

Talk to elderly relatives to find out more details about your family. If possible, try and attend a Family History course as this will give you a good overview of the records you will use in your research

## Your parents and grandparents

Their birth certificates will give you their dates and places of birth and parents names. The marriage certificate should confirm these details.

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Ranking or the Time of Marriage.	Partner's Name and Surname.
1894.	20-11.	Mabel Spence	17	Single	Teacher	1893	John Spence
		John Spence	28	Single	Teacher	1893	Mabel Spence



NOTE - This Certificate is to be issued without any alteration or correction.

Certificate of discharge of No. 220350  
Name: John Spence  
Regiment or Corps: 1st Bn. Northants Regt.  
Date of discharge: 5th May 1919  
Signature: [Signature]

Did your grandfather serve in WW1? Service records (where they survive) and medal rolls can be found at the National Archives. Or search online at Ancestry.co.uk or FindmyPast.co.uk



Northants Mercury - Saturday 1 October 1791  
PARTICULARS may be known by applying to Mr. Pierlon, at Eastbury; Mr. Fox, at Byfield; Mr. Grillo, at Chawston; Mr. Grillo, at Deventry.  
Mr. GRIFFOCK'S HOUSE in FLORE-HILL, also open for the Reception of Patients.  
WHEREAS JOHN GARDNER, of Weldon, in the County of Northampton, did assign all the Remainder of his Estate to Mr. David Atchison and to the said Mr. Benjamin Wall, of Weldon, Beck, for the Benefit of his Family, as by Inventory and Deed of Gift, bearing Date the 6th Day of February, 1791, in New 1 do hereby certify, all People in future not to traile the said John Gardner, or to make any Business of a pecuniary Nature with him, as (in Justice to his distressed Family) I cannot, and will not be answerable for

## Emigration

The late 1800s and early 1900s were a time of mass emigration to America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Search passenger lists online at Ancestry.co.uk or FindMyPast.co.uk

## Newspapers

Look in newspapers for obituaries and other local information. Digitised copies of the Northants Mercury (and some other local papers) are available online at [britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk) (1770-1954). Northampton Local Studies and Northants Archives have some collections on microfilm.

John Gardner	Head	M	36	Groom (Domestic)	Worcester	Dr. Weldon
Emma	Wife	M	36			Dr. Home
Lillian	Daughter	F	11	School Girl		Dr. "
Dorothy	Daughter	F	7	School Girl		Dr. Mansfield

## 1921, 1911, 1901 census

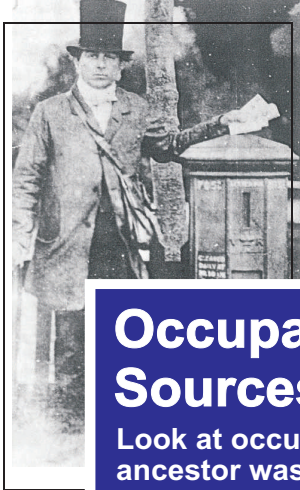
Look for your ancestors in the 1911 & 1901 census on Ancestry.co.uk or 1921 census on FindmyPast. These will give details of members of the household, occupations, age and places of birth.

Registration District of <i>Pottersbury</i>		In the Parish of <i>St. Nicholas Northampton &amp; Bucks</i>	
1901	1911	1921	1931
John Gardner	Emma Gardner	Groom	W. Gardner
Dorothy	James Gardner	Domestic	Mother
	James Gardner	Servant	Wardley
			John Bred
			1893
			Registrar

## 1891 census

## Certificates

Obtain copy certificates to confirm family relationships and other details found in the census or elsewhere. The General Register Office Indexes can be searched online on various sites. You can order copy certificates online at [www.gro.gov.uk](http://www.gro.gov.uk)



REGISTRATION DISTRICT <i>Pottersbury</i>						
DEATH in the Sub-district of <i>Pottersbury</i> in the <i>Parish of St. Nicholas</i>						
Column	1	2	3	4	5	6
No.	When and where died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death
						Signature, description and residence of informant
		<i>John Gardner</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>Groom</i>	<i>Worcester</i>
		<i>Emma Gardner</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>Domestic</i>	<i>Worcester</i>
		<i>Dorothy Gardner</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>School Girl</i>	<i>Worcester</i>
		<i>James Gardner</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>Servant</i>	<i>Worcester</i>

## Occupational Sources

Look at occupational sources: If your ancestor was a publican, shopkeeper, farmer, or tradesman then they are likely to appear in trade directories. Museums across the county will have information about their area and any local industries such as shoemaking or canals.

## School Records

You may be lucky enough to find your ancestors names in a school admission register.

School log books record snippets of information about the daily life of the school. They often record instances of epidemics such as measles or whooping cough and details of lessons taught.

<i>John Gardner</i>	<i>Emma Gardner</i>	<i>Dorothy Gardner</i>	<i>James Gardner</i>
<i>Worcester</i>	<i>Worcester</i>	<i>Worcester</i>	<i>Worcester</i>
<i>1891</i>	<i>1891</i>	<i>1891</i>	<i>1891</i>

## 1881 census

The 1881 census has been indexed and can be searched online. Use it to find members your family especially if they moved around.



## Memorial Inscriptions

The NFHS has published over 200 booklets of MIs. These can give useful information about family relationships and confirm dates of burial.

## The Workhouse

If your ancestor became too ill or infirm to work, then they may have had to go into the Workhouse. The Record Office has records for the Poor Law Unions which may help you. Orphaned children were often admitted to the Workhouse.



Year Married	Name and Surname	Age	Condition	Rank or Profession	Address at the Time of Marriage	Parish	Signature
1856	William James	23	Bachelor	Prover	Flore	Peter James	M. St. John
	Mrs. Robinson	22	Spinster		Flore	John Robinson	Parish Clerk

County of Northampton

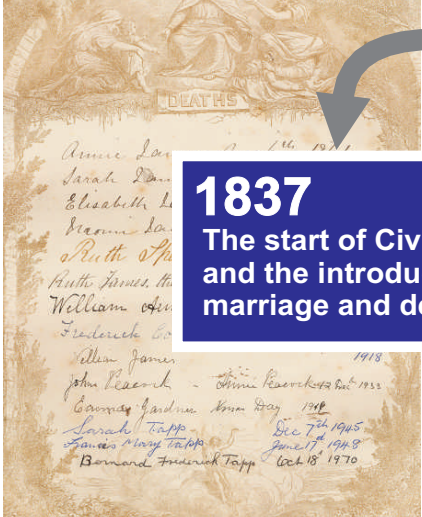
1856

County of Northampton

1856

**1871/1861/1851 census**  
 Using the information from previous census you can now search for earlier generations in the census for 1871, 1861 & 1851. Available online at Ancestry & other sites. Fiche copies available at the Record Office & some libraries. Check details against earlier census - they occasionally differ!

**Continue obtaining as many certificates as you can afford!**



**1837**  
 The start of Civil Registration and the introduction of birth, marriage and death certificates.

**Parish Registers**  
 You will now need to start looking at parish registers for baptisms, marriages and burials. For Northamptonshire these are online on Ancestry (to c1912) or can be seen on microfilm at the Record Office.

Year Married	Name and Surname	Age	Condition	Rank or Profession	Address at the Time of Marriage	Parish	Signature
1856	John Gardner	21	Bachelor	Retainer	Flore	John Gardner	
	Emma James	21	Spinster		Flore	William James	

**Non-Conformity**  
 Your ancestor may have been a Non-Conformist and it is worthwhile checking these records (including membership lists) if you are unable to find an entry in the parish church registers.

**Parish Chest Records**  
 Prior to the setting up of parish and county councils, the church was the administrative body in a parish. Their records often contain a wealth of information. Records include Vestry Minutes, Churchwardens Accounts and records of the Overseers of the Poor. Where they survive they can be found at the Record Office.

Northwood Home of 1868

Marrd in this Church by

the Day of January in the Year One Thousand Seven Hundred and Eighty Three

The Marriage was solemnized between Us

In the Presence of

13

Sarah James on the fourth day of September one thousand seven hundred and eighty seven.

Elizabeth James on the twenty second day of April one thousand seven hundred and eighty seven.

Mary James on the fourth day of April one thousand seven hundred and ninety.

Peter James on the sixth day of October one thousand seven hundred and ninety two.

William James on the sixteenth day of December one thousand seven hundred and ninety four.

Esther James on the second day of April one thousand seven hundred and ninety seven.

**Parish Registers**  
 Earlier registers usually only give limited information. You will need to look at other records to confirm family relationships.

**Marriage Licences**  
 Not everyone married by banns and it is worth checking these as the marriage did not have to take place in the bride or groom's own parish.

Francis Horn of the County of Northampton

Parish Register

Marrd in this Church by Licence

the Twentieth Day of February in the Year One Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty Nine

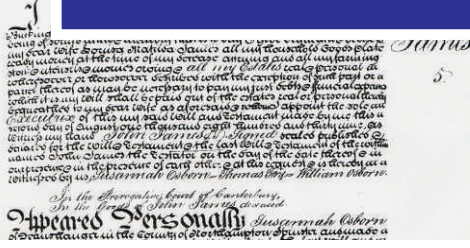
This Marriage was solemnized between Us

In the Presence of

Edmund James born 25.3.1718 died 7.1.1717 taken 14.1.1717	
Purse and apparel in hall, one fennel, one table a waistcot, 2 chairs	1 10.6
ed, 1 bolster, 2 pillows, blanket, bedstead, table, 6 chairs in, 4 tubs	2 17.6
Coal grate, hook and hammer	2 17.6
2 tables, 5 chairs, 2 stools, pots, 1 brass pan, 8 pewter dishes, 10 plates copper pots, 1 jack, 5 iron pots, 2 brass candlesticks, 1 tub	5 8.8
strick, 2 four kindle bottles and other press, pot pins	1 7.6
and other things	0 5.0
one bed feather bed bolster, 2 pillows, 1 one chest, 3 linen sheets, wooden wheel cloth, 18 sh of linen	9 14.06
1 feather bed and bestial curtains and bedding	2 12.06
one wood bed, bedstead bedding and curtains 4 press 6 pr of sheets 6 pr of pillows box, 12 napkins	4 18.0

## Wills and Inventories

You should always check to see if your ancestor left a will. Pre 1858 most wills will be found at the Record Office. They are an invaluable source for confirming relationships in a family as well as listing the items to be bequeathed - which may be anything from the proverbial shilling to a detailed list of household equipment! Up to about the mid 1700s, an inventory was also taken of the deceased possessions, often listed room by room.



## Family and Estate Records

Estate records for many of the larger landowners in the county are held at the Record Office. These include estate surveys, cottage rental books, maps, payments to estate staff and lists of tenants. An invaluable source of information. Check the Northamptonshire Archives website for details

## Militia Lists

These usually record the names of all men aged 18-45 who were eligible to serve in the local militia. The 1777 Militia lists for the county is online on Northamptonshire Record Society site or try FindMyPast

92 NORTHAMPTONSHIRE MILITIA LISTS, 1777

IRCHESTER

A tri list of men who are to serve as militia men betwixt the ages of eighteen and fortyfive in the parish of Irchester in the county of Northampton.

Thos. Richards, farmer	Willm. Campin, maitmaker
Willm. Cox, laborer	John Parker, maitmaker
Thos. Chapman, farmer	John Bledsoe, farmer
carpenter	James Robbins, servant
by, carpenter	John Lewis, glover
n, laborer	Edward Warden, laborer
laborer	Francis Mannin, laborer
s, shoemaker	Willm. Martin, servant
ton, farmer	Willm. Leass, farmer
s, taylor	Joseph Billin, servant
th, farmer	Thos. Goosey, farmer
s, servant	John Partridge, laborer
son	Stephen Neal, servant
son	Samuel Langley, farmer
son	John Campin, maitmaker
son	Joseph Clever, servant
son	Benjn. Hair, servant
son	John Hankins, servant
son	John Jackson, farmer
son	John Passlow, miller
son	Henry Dart, servant
son	Edward Mason, carpenter
son	Willm. Cook, servant

At thinks themselves agrieved may appeal at 8th day of at the Hind Inn in Welingtonborough & that no appeal will be received.

Thos. Angrave } constable.  
Henry Harris }

## Maps

Use maps to find out what a parish looked like when your ancestors lived there. The Record Office & Local Studies have excellent collections



## Quarter Session Records

If your ancestor committed a crime then he is likely to appear in the Quarter Session records. These are indexed up to 1806.



## Further Research

There are many other records and sources that you can check. Some will be held locally at the Northamptonshire Record Office, others may be held at The National Archives.

These include: parish and county histories, Army and Navy records, deeds, other church records, lists of prisoners, apprentice indentures, tax records, maps and more!

Join your local Family History Society: they hold monthly meetings and will be able to offer help and advice with research.

NFHS website [www.northants-fhs.org](http://www.northants-fhs.org) has links to all of the major sites and a section on researching in Northamptonshire.

For more information on Northamptonshire Record Office visit: [www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/recordoffice](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/recordoffice) or email: [archivist@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:archivist@westnorthants.gov.uk)