



Runnin' Down Grandma: Researching Your Female Line

Just the facts, please. Use the vitals

- Death, marriage, birth (hers, her siblings, her children's) certificates
- U.S. and state censuses (day's ride rule)
- Obituaries
- Funeral Home records. Who paid the bill. Who were pallbearers, musicians, minister?

Dig deep and deeper

- Look at original documents or microfilm of them
- Where did land come from?
- Look at all the hints in the census. Where were parents born?
- Go out on the limbs: look at siblings, others with same surname, etc.
- Official marriage record, minister's record, church record. Who were God parents of her children?

Cemetery

- Who is buried in the same area/cemetery?
- Maiden names may actually be on stones of her or a known sister.
- Church or records of cemetery. Who bought the plot? Who made arrangements?

Land and Legal Records

- Land transferred to daughter or granddaughter
- Pay attention if land is given for a token sum such as \$1.
- From whom was land acquired?
- Who were the neighbors?
- Homestead records (woman could homestead if single, head of household)
- Probates
- Guardianships, often mother's brother.
- Divorces
- Dower rights
- Know the law relating to females

It WAS a man's world

- Look at and trace the male with whom she is most closely associated: husband, son, brother, uncle, father.
- BUT, women are keepers of the "stuff" and the communicators. Descendants of a female may have the Bible, photographs, stories, etc.

Family names

- Look for naming patterns
- Mother or grandmother's maiden name used as name for child.
- Names passed down through family

Newspapers

- Obituaries of the grandmothers. Look at her siblings, especially brothers.
- Local news items. Visiting relatives, attending weddings and funerals.
- Anniversaries, wedding and engagement stories

Personal books

- Family owned Bibles
- In Bible collections such as DAR, area, state, etc.
- Diaries of your relatives or someone who may have known them.
- NUTMUC
- Family histories, both published and unpublished

Collections

- Indian-Pioneer collection in Oklahoma
- Veterans (Tennessee, etc.)
- Pioneer organizations
- Veteran papers: pension applications for all wars, retirement, etc.
- County and local histories

Place them geographically

- Then study the area
- Look at the neighbors, fellow church members
- Church records (marriage, baptisms, etc.)

Create a Timeline

- Include birth dates and places for children
- Marriage place and date
- Places and times of residence
- Education records

Church and organizations

- Baptisms, marriage, women's groups, membership lists, deaths
- Godparents were often siblings of parents

Lineage groups

- DAR
- Confederate and Union Daughters
- 1812, Mayflower, First Families of the Twin Territories, Descendants of Nancy Ward, etc.

Education

- Graduate associations
- School records for elementary, high school, higher education
- School census

Organizations

- History of organizations, yearbooks (Red Cross, sororities, education (Kappa Kappa Iota, Business and Professional Women), lodge (Eastern Star), Women's Temperance Movement, study groups, extension groups

Tribal records

- Rolls
- Dawes Roll asked for parents
- Guion Miller
- Church and missionary records

Family heirlooms

- Photographs, writing on back, photographer information
- Friendship quilts
- Original owner of heirloom
- Vacation photographs: visited relatives or former place of residence
- Recipe collection. Does it list who gave the recipe?

Fleshing Out the Bones

- History of area
- History of someone else in the area
- Study fashions, social history
- Online: Women's history sites (Tennessee and North Carolina), Cyndi's List, Google Books, etc.

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