

Reverse Genealogy: Working Forward to Break Down Brick Walls

<http://www.familytreeuniversity.com/reverse-genealogy>

When we first begin researching our family tree, we're taught that we should start with ourselves and work backward. Starting at the end of someone's life and working backward is the most efficient and accurate way to research—in most cases. But two genealogical challenges call for a change in strategy:

- Overcoming brick walls
- Finding living relatives

When you drive a car down an alley and you come to a dead end, what do you do? Throw the car into reverse, of course! The same is true when we hit a research dead end. We need to throw our research strategy into reverse and find an alternative route to get to where we want to go.

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- The keys to reverse genealogy
- Reverse genealogy research strategies for dead-end ancestors
- How to think like a private investigator
- Strategies for finding living relatives
- How to apply these principles to everyday research situations

WHO SHOULD TAKE THIS COURSE

- Genealogists stumped by brick-wall ancestors
- Researchers who want to improve their technique
- People who want to get back in touch with a long-lost relative or discover distant cousins

COURSE SYLLABUS

Lesson 1: Getting Started

- Introduction
 - Example scenario: Break through a brick wall
 - Example scenario: Using reverse genealogy to find a living relative
- The keys to reverse genealogy
 - Key #1: Research strategy

- Key #2: Organization
- Key #3: Documentation

Lesson 2: The Strategies and Records

- Reverse genealogy research strategies for dead end ancestors
- Applying records to the concept
- Records types
 - Census
 - City directories
 - Death
 - Probate
 - Marriage and divorce
 - Birth
 - Social Security Administration
 - Voter registration
 - Court
 - Real estate

Lesson 3: Finding Living Relatives

- Keeping private investigative principles in mind
 - Nobody lives in a vacuum
 - People are creatures of habit
 - People are reluctant to change affiliations
 - Few people are free of bureaucracy
- Strategies for finding living relatives
 - Write down everything you remember about the person
 - Folks may be hiding in plain sight
 - Run basic online searches
 - Check social networking websites
 - Sending mail to an old address
 - Contacting local churches
 - Does your relative practice a licensed profession?
 - Check campaign contributions
- Resources and records
 - Social networking and online family trees
 - Online message boards and mailing lists
 - Telephone directories
 - Online directories
 - Political donations
 - Licenses and registrations
 - Government public records online resources