

# Genealogy Basics

## Family History Research at the BC Archives

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Everyone needs a little help when they are first learning to navigate the archives. Family history research can pull you in many different directions. Here are some basic tips to keep you on track.

- Gather and keep in one place, all the information you already know about the person you are researching.
- Talk to any living family members about what they know about the person you are researching.
- Map out a chronology of the individual's life. A chronology may include the dates and locations where key life events took place. Try to get beyond birth, marriage and death dates. List moves, changes in career, divorce, building or purchasing of homes, medical events, bankruptcy, or even trouble with the law. (Black sheep of the family are often the most fun to research!)
- List your sources. Where did you get your information? Are your sources reliable? Do you need to double-check some of the information you have collected? Sometimes family events are exaggerated, or conveniently forgotten if people think they are embarrassing! It's a good idea to try and verify some of these stories by checking independent sources such as the records you may find at the archives.
- Identify the gaps. What information is missing that you'd really like to know?

If you need help finding ancestors who lived outside of BC, most communities have a family history or genealogy society.

### Top Ten Genealogical Sources at the BC Archives:

- Vital events records (birth, baptismal, marriage and death registrations)
- Court records
- Police and prison records
- Coroner's records
- Crown land records
- Settlement scheme records
- Census records
- Institutional case files
- Colonial records
- Published sources like newspapers



First Nations family in their Sunday best outside A.C. Hirschfeld's Atlin studio.  
Credit: BCA D-06271 Photographer Hirschfeld. (A.C., 1866-1926)