

# GETTING STARTED

Using Ancestry.com

## Where to Start

- Census records are the backbone for starting ancestor research
  - *Start from the most recent and work backward. The 1950 is the most recent so gather everything you know about your family that would appear in that census.*
- For more current family you might want to start by searching for Obituaries, Death Certificates, or gravesites. The information on these records is considered a secondary source (except date of death on DC) so will need to be verified. Even if the person who provided the information is someone who should know, the emotional situation provides a greater risk of mis-information.
  - *Relationships mentioned could be generalized (not step, in-law, etc)*

Example:

I asked my granddaughter's boyfriend if I could use his family for this demonstration.

Kyle in his 20's is likely to marry my granddaughter.

What I requested

- I requested as much information as known for Kyle's four grandparents (all deceased) and their siblings. Including:
  - *Birth dates and locations*
  - *Death dates or years of death and locations.*
  - *Any additional information*

## Information provided

### ■ Paternal

- *Thomas Wilson*
- *Virginia McGee, Blue Springs, Jackson, Missouri*
  - Children
  - Thomas Wilson
  - Robert Wilson
  - Debbie Wilson

### ■ Maternal

- *Ole Olson d. abt 1999*
- *Betty Olson Brandvold d. abt 2022*
  - Children
  - Steve Olson
  - Sharon Olson

#### Note:

No maiden names given

Names of children rather than siblings provided.

## Starting Search

Fortunately the maternal grandmother had a possible unique surname of Brandvold which appears to be from a second marriage assuming that Olson was her first married surname. Although I thought Betty could be a nickname for Elizabeth or Margaret my first search resulted in this record from the *U.S., Cemetery and Funeral Home Collection, 1847-Current*.

Detail	Source
Name	Betty Jean Olson-Brandvold
Gender	Female
Death Age	93
Birth Date	30 May 1928
Birth Place	Council Bluffs, Iowa
Marriage Date	28 Dec 1947
Death Date	12 Sep 2021
Obituary Date	15 Sep 2021
Parents	Raymond Christensen; Lela Christensen
Child	<a href="#">Steve Olson</a> <a href="#">Sharon Wilson</a>

## Verifying information

I was born in Independence, MO and still have family there. So I recognized the Funeral Home, Speaks Chapel and know exactly where it is.

If I were building a full profile for Betty I would contact them and request additional information. Include a picture of the Funeral Home, the entrance to the Cemetery and the headstone.

### Detail Source

#### Source Citation

*Speaks Chapel*; Publication Date: 15/ Sep/ 2021; Publication Place: Independence, Missouri, USA; URL: <https://www.speakschapel.com/memorials/betty-olson-brandvold/4721885/index.php>

#### Source Information

Ancestry.com. *U.S., Cemetery and Funeral Home Collection, 1847-Current* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2011.

Original data: See source information provided with each entry.

#### Description

This collection is an index of information taken from online obituaries published by cemeteries and funeral homes in the United States between 1847 and the present. [Learn more...](#)

## Information gained

This record contains:

- Betty's parents
- Maiden name
- Birth date
- Birth Location
- Death Date
- Death Location
- Age
- Marriage Date
- names her children

By adding this information into her profile will allow Ancestry to generate hints.

However if we look at the record for this hint on the right side of the screen will populate a different list of hints.

Suggested records are different from HINTS or a different type of hint.

They show up based on the record you attach to your tree because other people have attached these records to who they believe is the same person in their tree.

They are very useful, but be careful. Just because someone else thinks they are the same person doesn't make it so.

So lets go to Ancestry.com to see these.

#### Suggested records



U.S., Find a Grave® Index, 1600s-Current

Betty Jean Brandvold



Idaho, U.S., County Marriage Records, 1864-1967

Betty Jean Christensen



1940 United States Federal Census

Betty Christensen



1930 United States Federal Census

Betty Christensen



Idaho, U.S., Marriage Records, 1863-1971

Betty Jean Christensen



1950 United States Federal Census

Betty J Olson

## Sometimes the Records are Wrong.

### Census

- Enumerators write what they hear
- Some people lie about their age
- There is a stigma attached to divorce.
- The person answering the questions didn't know

### Other Records

- Draft records – is there a benefit to be older or younger
- Marriage records – – is there a reason to be older or younger
- Naturalization – process easier of under 18 when immigrated

## Transcription Errors

Sometimes errors are made. And sometimes it is not possible to recognize those errors if you don't have personal knowledge.

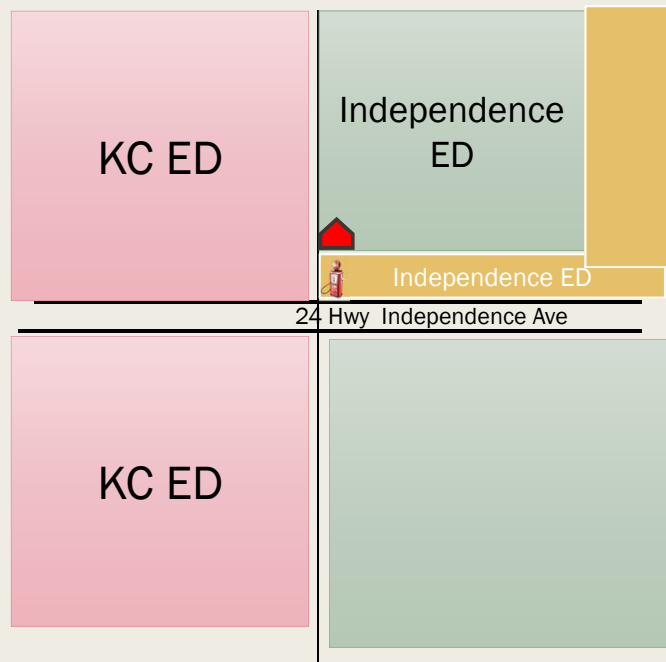
In the 1880 Census image below the son of Luther and Effie was transcribed as Carl. And that transcription was used and referenced in the very well researched and documented book "The Roebucks of Virginia". However Luther named all of his children starting with the letter "E" so Earl is the correct name.

182	187	Robert Luther	W	F	31			1	Farmer
		Effie	W	F	27	wife		1	Keeping house
		Carl	W	M	12	son		1	
		Gibson	W	M	14			1	Farm Laborer
		Jindel	W	M	11			1	Com Laborer

## Family missing from the 1950 Census

I was very excited to find my family in the 1950 Census when released. I wouldn't be in it but my brother born in 1947 would, I expected they might still be staying with my grandparents at 11800 Independence Ave. So I searched no luck, I waited a few days till the indexes came out and searched, no luck. Although the house itself was on Forest Ave all mail was addressed to the station. So used Stevemoris.org to find the ED's and searched each by page. Not found!!!

Conclusion: The ED lists & maps relied on postal information. It wasn't until the late 1950s to early 1960s that the post office insisted mail be delivered to the house rather than the station and gave my grandparents a postal address on Forest Ave. Therefore the enumerator responsible for the east side of Forest Ave didn't have a listing for the house and the enumerator for the north side of 24 Hwy recognized the station as just a business and didn't stop to ask.



## Organize Your Research

- Use a research log
- Always document your sources
- For conflicting information
  - 1) *verify the best most reliable source*
  - 2) *note why it is the best source*
  - 3) *do adequate additional research to ensure there are not multiple people of the same name, approximate age and location.*

## Build a Historic narrative.

- Tell a story – include the facts but not just the facts.
  - *Tell about the town, other family in the area, news of the day, weather,*
- From a single event **Examine** each fact to build a narrative of that event.
- Is there anything unique about the event. For example: Did a marriage take place not in a church? What ship did they come on?
- Time period, how is it unique? (War, etc)
- Is this the first event for this location? Last event or only event?
- Are other people mentioned, if so what is their relation? If not related why at the event?

## Genealogy or Family History

### ■ Genealogy

- *Starts with an ancestral couple and continues downward*
- *Decide how many generations to include*
- *Use an overall narrative and/or a narrative for each generational couple.*
- *Include siblings or just direct line?*

### ■ Family History

- *Starts with self, parents, or grandparents and continues back in time.*
- *Decide how many generations to include*
- *Use an overall narrative and/or a narrative for each generational couple.*
- *Include siblings or just direct line?*