

Pennsylvania Family History Research Kit

Presented by:

**Stephanie Hoover
PennsylvaniaResearch.com**

(717) 754-0283 ♦ Fax (717) 724-5482 ♦ pennsylvaniaresearch@gmail.com

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Stephanie Hoover
PennsylvaniaResearch.com

Voicemail (717) 754-0283

Fax (717) 724-5482

Email pennsylvaniaresearch@gmail.com

Thank you for your interest in our genealogy research services. To help us create the best research proposal, we ask that you regard this *Pennsylvania Family History Research Kit* as a road map of sorts -- one that guides you through the process of providing information we need to search for your ancestor.

Genealogy is both a rewarding and rigorous pursuit. It requires patience, ingenuity and – perhaps most importantly – strong organizational skills. When you consider that in just 13 generations you accumulate more than 8,000 relatives it becomes obvious why detailed record-keeping is essential. One of the most basic organizational tools is the family group sheet. We have included one for your use, as well as other tips and information that will aid in your research – whether you conduct it yourself, or hire us to do it for you.

Family history researchers never find all of the answers they seek. Time has a way of eroding both documents and memories. But the details, photos, and clues that you DO find will be valued by generations to come.

Happy hunting, and may all of your ancestors wish to be found!

Cordially,

Stephanie Hoover
PennsylvaniaResearch.com

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I. What You Need before You Start

To save time and get your research off to a solid start, gather as much of the following information as possible:

- Full names (including alternate spellings) and nicknames of the ancestors you want to search
- Social security numbers for 20th and 21st century relatives
- Birth, marriage, divorce, death and burial dates and places
- Names of states and counties in which your ancestors lived, owned land, etc.
- Recollections of stories told to you by family members about previous generations

Once you've got this basic foundation, you'll need the following organizational tools:

- Family Group Sheets (see page 10)
- Notebooks in which to keep your research notes, thoughts, to do lists, etc.
- File folders and storage space (information will pile up quickly!)
- OPTIONAL – a computer and genealogy software

II. Key Genealogical Sources

The following are valuable sources of family history. Ask family members if they might help you find these items:

- Family bible
- Journals and diaries
- Memorial/funeral cards
- Newspaper clippings (i.e. obits, wedding notices, etc.)
- Scrapbooks
- Photos
- School records
- Employment records
- Legal and court records (i.e. wills, deeds, mortgages, tax notices, marriage, divorce papers, etc.)
- Military records
- Church and cemetery records
- Immigration information

III. Beware the Myths

It is important to have realistic expectations when doing genealogical research. Forget the myths and keep the following facts in mind:

- Contrary to popular belief, the best genealogical resources are still safely housed in libraries, historical societies, genealogical societies, and other similar repositories – NOT on the internet. While an abundance of indexes and other transcriptions have recently appeared online, to have the best chance of success you must view the original documents themselves. These contain context that transcribed indexes do not. And, rather than relying on a stranger's interpretation of this information you can rely on your own judgment.
- Few lineages can be proved absolutely. But, with careful research and documentation, family lines can be proven “beyond a reasonable doubt.”
- Though we would all like to be descended from Revolutionary War heroes or even royalty, chances are you have a more “common” bloodline. But, that doesn't make your ancestors any less interesting or less worthy of discovery.
- There is probably NOT a fortune at the end of your genealogical rainbow.
- Neither you nor a professional genealogist will ever likely answer all of your questions about your family history.
- Professional genealogists cannot guarantee results. You are paying for that person's time and expertise – not specific findings. Think carefully before sending money off to a researcher who guarantees success.

IV. What A Professional Researcher Can Do for You

Professional researchers should have a PROVEN area of expertise.

In the case of **PennsylvaniaResearch.com**, for instance, we are Mid-Atlantic research specialists. This is because not only do we visit all 67 counties in Pennsylvania -- we also visit repositories in the surrounding states of New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia and Ohio. These are the places Pennsylvanians moved "from" and "to." Therefore, these are the places in which we have developed expertise -- and can ***physically visit*** to view original documents.

We have a simple philosophy: if you can not (or never have) conducted research **in** Pennsylvania, you should not call yourself a Pennsylvania expert. We are the "real deal" in this regard. We live here. We know the people, the culture, and the history. And, we conduct research from Philly to Pittsburgh, Erie to Gettysburg -- and every place in between.

While we can't promise results, we can guarantee the following:

- Knowledge of the history of the area in which your ancestors lived
- An honest assessment of what we can or cannot do for you
- An overview of the pertinent resources accessible
- A research strategy
- Thorough searches
- Detailed reports on research activities and sources used

An ethical researcher will gladly provide details about his/her experience, fees, and turnaround times. Complete details on our qualifications can be found at PennsylvaniaResearch.com -- and we always offer full, fair and honest quotes for research.

V. PennsylvaniaResearch.com Services

Effective May 1, 2010

For one individual in one county:

Document Retrieval - \$35.00

Examples: deed, will, obit, passenger list, city directory, etc. where sufficient detail is provided.

For one individual and his/her immediate family:

Combined Pennsylvania State Library and Pennsylvania State Archives Research Package Search - \$450.00

Includes (as available and applicable) county resources (including church and cemetery records), newspapers, maps and atlases, military records, passenger and immigration lists, family histories, county histories, published *Pennsylvania Archives* series, county court records (including estate, land, tax and others), municipal government filings, military records, family papers, railroad and other industry files, prison records, and various special collections, subscription databases, and other pertinent resources.

For one individual and his/her immediate family:

Comprehensive Search of either the Pennsylvania State Library or the Pennsylvania State Archives - \$250.00

On-Site PA county research:

Quoted on an individual basis.

Research by the hour:

\$40 per hour with two-hour minimum.

Home Histories:

Quoted on an individual basis.

Research in other states: Quoted on an individual basis

**Please note: Fees cover the researcher's time and expertise *only*.
No specific research results are implied or guaranteed.**

Please see our web site for additional searches such as church records, etc.

VI. Family Group Sheet

On the following page you will find our copyrighted “family group sheet.”

Feel free to use it when conducting your personal research, or when ordering research services from **PennsylvaniaResearch.com**.

Other reproduction or distribution of this form is strictly prohibited.

Subject's Name:		
	Date (and spouse, if applicable)	Place
Born:		
Married:		
Married:		
Married:		
Died:		

Father:	POB:
Mother:	POB:

Spouse's Name:		
	Date (and spouse, if applicable)	Place
Born:		
Married:		
Married:		
Married:		
Died:		

Father:	POB:
Mother:	POB:

Children:				
	DOB	DOD	Place of Birth	Place of Burial
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				

VII. Research Request Form

Enclosed please find my check in the amount of \$_____.

I am ordering the following research services (explain):

I understand that by ordering these research services I am only paying for the time and expertise of the researcher, and that specific results cannot be guaranteed.

I am including all pertinent research notes, document retrieval forms (as applicable) and family group sheets (as applicable.)

Client Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Please make check payable to: Stephanie Hoover
 P. O. Box 4921
 Harrisburg, PA 17111

APPENDIX

Settlement of Pennsylvania pre-dates the birth of our nation by more than 90 years.

Pennsylvania is called “The Keystone State” for good reason. Here William Penn first experimented with the concept of religious freedom. Pennsylvania’s Quaker legislature abolished slavery generations before the Civil War. The Declaration of Independence was drafted here and in this state the Constitution was adopted. A wonderful collection of this vast and rich history still exists in state repositories, libraries, historical and genealogical societies, and private collections.

Genealogy research in Pennsylvania is primarily conducted at the county level. Before searching for ancestors, **you must know the county** (or, at the very least, specific region) in Pennsylvania in which they lived. You must also know the genealogy of the counties themselves. When were they established? From what other Pennsylvania county(ies) -- or what other state -- were they carved? Who were the first settlers? What industries, natural resources, political and military history are these counties known for and how does this affect your search for ancestors?

Also key to successful Pennsylvania genealogical research is in-depth knowledge of the history of the state as a whole. Knowing where specific ethnic groups traditionally settled and worked can greatly assist the researcher in finding family bonds. Understanding the impact of wars, financial downturns and natural disasters can aid in guessing where and when families may have moved. Placing genealogy research within the context of events of the day creates a far more complex and vivid portrait for the researcher -- and offers a better chance of success.

We hope this family history research kit encourages you to take the first step toward recording your own family history.

If, in the future, you decide to entrust your research to a professional, please consider our services. While I can’t promise I’ll find answers to all of your questions, I can assure you that I will treat your family’s history like my own.

With sincere wishes for success,

Stephanie Hoover

PennsylvaniaResearch.com