



THE ROOTED LINEAGE METHOD

Get to Know Your Ancestor

*a guided workbook to discover more depth to your
ancestor's story*

FIVE STEPS

01

Foundation

02

Records

03

Trauma &
Resilience

04

Pattern

05

Wisdom

You don't need a full tree. You need one person.

Most people never start learning more about their ancestors because they think they need a full family tree, or access to records that have been handed down. You don't. Just a small amount of information is all you need to start.

This workbook mirrors the exact five-step process I use, called The Rooted Lineage Method. It takes you from what you already know, to asking questions, to beginning to understand how your family history has and is affecting your life today.

Before you begin, pick one ancestor. Not the most interesting one, not the best documented one - the one that you keep thinking about. The one that you feel a pull toward.

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- 01** **Build the Foundation**
Start with what you already know — even if it isn't much.
 - 02** **Follow the Records**
Find the documents that help to tell their story.
 - 03** **Identify Trauma and Resilience**
Read their timeline for the hard years — and what enduring them required.
 - 04** **Recognize Patterns**
Find where their story is still running in yours.
 - 05** **Integrate the Wisdom**
Decide what you're choosing to carry forward.

You CAN know your ancestors. Let's start with one.

01 Build the Foundation

What you already know — even if it isn't much.

Write down everything you have, including the parts you're unsure of. Guesses are allowed — mark them with a question mark and let the records correct you later.

THE VITALS

ANCESTOR'S NAME

RELATIONSHIP TO YOU

BIRTH DATE

BIRTH LOCATION

DEATH DATE

DEATH LOCATION

MARRIAGE DATE(S)

SPOUSE'S NAME(S)

PLACES THEY LIVED

THEIR CHILDREN

BIRTH YEAR

THINGS YOU KNOW ABOUT THEM

02 Follow the Records

What you want to know — and where to look for it.

THE THREE QUESTIONS I MOST WANT ANSWERED ABOUT THEM

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW...

LOOK FOR...

what they did for work

Census records, city directories, marriage or death records

where they were born

Census records, vital records, newspaper archives

who their people were

Vital records; church records, newspaper archives

what they lived through

Newspaper archives, military and draft records, historical context, court records, vital records of family

what they were like as a person

Newspaper archives, biographies

where they lived

Land records, census records, city directories, newspaper archives



WHERE TO LOOK, PLACE BY PLACE

Once you know which record you want, the FamilySearch Research Wiki tells you where that record actually lives — by country, state, and county, and it's free. Search your ancestor's place name, then read the record type you need.

familysearch.org/en/wiki

JOURNAL PROMPT

Where will you start — and what's stopped you before now?

03 Identify Trauma and Resilience

What they carried. What they survived.

Trauma rarely announces itself in a record. It shows up in the timeline — in ages, gaps, and how often a family had to start over. Do the arithmetic on their life and the hard years surface on their own.

DO THE MATH ON THEIR TIMELINE

How old were they when they married?

How old was their spouse?

How old were they when their first child was born?

How old were they when a parent died?

Did their spouse die young — at what age, and how?

How old were they at their own death, and of what?

CHILDREN WHO DIED YOUNG

AGE

CAUSE OF DEATH

JOURNAL PROMPT

Which number on this page surprised you — and what does it tell you about their life?

03 Identify Trauma and Resilience

What the records hint at — and what enduring it required.

WHAT DID THEY LIVE THROUGH? CHECK WHAT APPLIES, THEN NOTE WHERE YOU SAW IT

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ War, occupation, or conscription | ☐ Famine, crop failure, or hunger |
| ☐ Epidemic or untreated illness | ☐ Forced or urgent migration |
| ☐ Persecution for race, religion, or language | ☐ Enslavement, indenture, or forced labor |
| ☐ Poverty, debt, or loss of land | ☐ Orphanhood, separation, or institutions |

WHERE I FOUND IT — RECORD, DATE, PLACE

Which hardships did they actually endure — and for how long?

What did surviving that require of them, practically — what did they have to do or become?

If they were "just a boring farmer" or "just an immigrant," what might that be hiding?

Their resilience is in the fact that they kept going. Name it — what strength came out of what they went through?

04 Recognize Patterns

Where they show up — in you, right now.

This is the part people feel in their chest before they can explain it. Take your time here.

Is there a pattern in your own life — relationships, money, ambition, silence — that you suspect didn't start with you?

Where might that pattern show up in this ancestor's story, once you know more of it?

If this pattern were a survival strategy that outlived its usefulness, what was it originally protecting?

05 Integrate the Wisdom

What you're choosing to carry forward.

Knowing them isn't the end of the work. Deciding what to do with what you know is.

What do you understand about yourself differently, just from working through this workbook?

What would you want this ancestor to know about how their life reached you?

What's one thing of theirs — a strength, a habit, a belief — you want to keep on purpose?

The better you know your ancestors, the better you understand yourself and your family. Where you find wisdom and strength in them, let it reach you. Name it, keep it, let it change how you live. And if you find an ancestor who did harm, to themselves or to others, you don't have to admire them to learn from them. Look at what shaped them, and see whether understanding makes room for a little compassion, or a little grace. Don't force it. Some things aren't yours to forgive. But let knowing their life bring you more peace in your own.
