



## Unit 1 - Lesson 7 - Searching by Place

**Y**ou are hot on the trail of your ancestors when...POOF! They are gone, vanished and you don't know where to look for them.

This can be a very puzzling and frustrating thing to encounter, but with a little bit of knowledge, it does not have to become a brick wall. The question here is why they disappeared, why can't you find them?

Welcome to Genealogy Beginner Lesson Seven. In this lesson you will be moving into new territory, learning the ins-and-outs of researching the places your ancestors were born, where they died and all of the locations in between. You will extend your knowledge to include an awareness of the geography of genealogy. In short, you will understand what to do if all of a sudden your ancestors have disappeared from the record.

There can be a number of answers to the question above, and one of the big ones involves place names. They may have moved and you may need to search by place in order to find them, on the other hand, they may not have moved at all...but their borders did.

As you go further back, you may discover that your people travelled in groups, perhaps not on the same ships at exactly the same time, but to the same places. One member of a family may have made the initial journey and then were joined at a later date by other family members and even friends. Keep this in mind during your research. Knowing where some of them went may lead you to the one individual you are looking for.

### ***Let's get started!***

What should you do if suddenly your ancestors have vanished?

What does that mean?

Through the years the names of towns and borders sometimes change. Towns can vanish and there can be several towns and/or districts with the same name. Sometimes the wrong town is listed on a document. How that can happen and what are your resources when it does?

When you are faced with these situations your first step should be to look at a death certificate or obituary. Starting at the conclusion of your ancestor's life could reveal important clues, as death certificates usually include the place of birth and obituaries often mention the places they lived.

Other documents to look for when you begin this type of search are Estate and Probate Records. Within the existing affidavits, you may find information on the towns or parishes they have lived in. Land records; including deeds, grants, and mortgages, will often mention the residences they may have had. Lastly, if your ancestor were to have appeared in court, the court records will often give a place of residence.

As is the case with most beginning genealogists, at some point you will have to do research in other countries. In many instances you will find that a town associated with your immigrant ancestor is not actually their hometown but rather a geographical term or place name that may have been altered due to a language barrier or clerical error. You should still record this information as it could provide a needed clue.

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