

# What will you find?

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I recently had the opportunity to go to the Virginia-West Virginia area and get in a few hours of genealogical research. My time was limited so I wanted to make the most of it and decided to concentrate on the libraries.

I went online to the Hampshire County Library site and got a list of books that had potential information on my families. Another library in that county was on the way to my destination so I decided to stop there as well. They did not have an online catalog, so imagine my surprise when this small library in a very small town had a genealogy section. I decided to check the index in each family book since I have several families in my tree that settled in that area. I found a lot of information I never had seen before.

In my library research I have developed a few tips that have helped me in my search. First find libraries in the area where your ancestors lived. The county might have more than one library and even consider checking the adjoining counties for information.

Also, look up the catalog for that library so you will know what books are available for your research. Some libraries now have the catalog set up so you can enter the family name. When I checked in at the Hampshire County Library, the librarian entered my family names into the database, and a list of books came up that I would not have checked. If this feature is not available, check the index of the other family books in the collection for your family names. Years ago, people tended to stay in the same area and married neighbors. So even though a family name is not familiar to you, you might find family members in that book.

Some libraries have family files. These are usually folders with family information that has been donated to the library. You might think you will not find anything on your family but you never know what might turn up. The website [www.publiclibraries.com](http://www.publiclibraries.com) is one link for libraries in all the states.

The help you receive from libraries varies but some libraries will do look-ups and charge you for the copies. You will need to be patient as libraries are very busy and usually only help you as time permits. Good luck in your search.