

Exploring Your Hispanic Roots

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Where to start?

Create a research question- What or who are you trying to research? What is the goal of the search?

Keep a research log- include information that proves or disproves your research question. This log will act as a reference point when you or someone else picks up your work.

Research begins with things you know.

- Ask yourself the questions who, what, where and when to have a starting point.
- Look through your home for old photos, bibles, documents & records.
- Ask your family to look through their homes.
- Record family stories and interviews
- Start a log of things you remember or have found to help assist in your search
- Pictures and memories are based on that person's experiences and may differ from your own. These differences may provide insight into new areas to research.

Research is also done the by browsing through books, documents and papers. Visiting historical locations, libraries and societies that have reference materials.

Online research includes websites like Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.org, Newspapers.com, Fold3.com, etc.

Not all documents are online and some will never be online.

Family Search Centers & Libraries are also available for both on & offline research and they offer individualized help and guidance. These services are offered for free.

Genealogical Societies are also a good source for help and learning.

Ancestry.com Library Version is available to search records and family trees.

- Records can be emailed to yourself or saved to a portable flash drive.
- You cannot access any of your personal records, tree or DNA.

FamilySearch.org website

- Free website, requires you to sign up for a free account
- Search from anywhere, some restricted items are available only at a Family Search Center/Library
- One family tree that everyone adds sources, pictures, etc.
- Records can be added to the tree, downloaded or printed
- Access to the catalog index and digital records, books and Wiki

Search for records-

- Understand the naming customs:
 - Compound given names, not a first and middle name “Ana Maria”, parts of the name may be dropped or a variation of the name used “Maria” or “Mary”
 - Women retained their parent’s names when married “Ana Maria Jesus Del Perez”
 - Married women don’t usually take the husband’s surname. However, they may show up on US records under their husband’s name. “Maria Robles de Sanchez” or “Maria Sanchez”
 - Understand the male and female version of a name. “Maria Jesus”- female, “Jesus Maria”- male
 - Families would “reuse” a child’s name if that child died young.
 - Children names were a given name, father’s paternal surname, mother’s maternal surname “Drew Sanchez Robles” parents Juan Sanchez and Mary Robles.
 - Occasionally, the surname of a benefactor or important family member would be used.
 - Naming customs changed in 2000’s allowing parents to name their children with both maternal surnames (father’s maternal surname and mother’s maternal surname).
- Use the catalog or interactive map
- Search by location- Mexico (Spain, Portugal, Azores, Columbia, Brazil, Puerto Rico, etc.)
- Know the general location your family came from, State, providence, towns, rancho, etc.
- Look at the Mexican Civil Registration & Church Records
 - Civil records started in 1859, became required in 1867 (government records), vital records- birth, marriage, death
 - Catholic Parish Records began in the 1500’s (not as detailed as Civil records), Birth, baptism and death records
- Records will likely be in the native language of the area. Google Translate can be used by typing/saying the words into the translator. An extension can be added to Chrome to translate websites, not individual documents. Some AI websites offer translation capabilities.
- 1930 Mexico National Census (only census available to the public)
- Border Crossing Records
- US Naturalization Records
- US Census Records
- Military Records

Additional Resources:

- “Finding Your Mexican Ancestors: A Beginner’s Guide” by George & Peggy Ryskamp
- “Finding Your Hispanic Roots” by George R. Ryskamp
- “Mexican-American Genealogical Research: Following the Paper Trail to Mexico” by John P. Schmal and Donna Morales
- FamilySearch Wiki, Mexican Genealogy-
www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Mexico_Genealogy
- FamilySearch Wiki, Hispanic Family History Resources-
www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Hispanic_Family_History_Resources
- Azores Gen Web: <https://www.azoresgenweb.org/>
- Portuguese Parish records for Portugal, Azores & Madeira: <https://tombo.pt/en>
- Portuguese Genealogies: <http://www.ghp.ics.uminho.pt/>

Notes:

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