



Koetjie's Guide To Genealogy

Chapter One

Basics

Most people start out by doing their ancestral chart (kwartierstaat) and then some also do a whole family tree.

An Ancestral chart is all your direct ancestors. In SA most people only go as far back as the progenitor (Stamvader), ie the first person of that surname to arrive in SA.

The Familytree is when you compile a full record of all persons of a certain surname or in some cases where there are more than one progenitor, only the descendants of particular one. A lot of SA surnames have already been done in this way.

Before you start, there are some things that you must keep in mind:

You are bound at some stage, to find out things about your ancestors that you may not like. There may be unwed mothers, criminals and all sorts of other things. Most of the white folk in SA have some non white blood somewhere in our ancestry.

Also, you cannot do genealogy without history. You are going to have to read up on some history somewhere along the way.

It is a slow and painstaking job and often very frustrating. You cannot practise genealogy in a vacuum. If you are serious about it, I encourage you to join a genealogy society or at the very least an internet forum. It is very helpful and a necessity.

Lastly, genealogy as with most hobbies, cost money. It can cost a lot, or not so much depending on what resources you have easy access to, or on what type of research you do.

So, how do we start?

If you want to do an ancestral chart, you start with yourself and work your way back ie. you, your parents, then grandparents and so on. You will need:

1. Full names and also nicknames. You may find that your granny whom you knew as Fanny, was in fact Frances Helen or your grandfather Edwin, was William Edwin Beach.
2. Date and place of birth
3. Date and place of baptism
4. Date and place of marriage
5. Date and place of death

Write down as much info as you have. Speak to other family members and find out what they know. Also note names of uncles, aunts and cousins because family names often provide valuable clues if you get stuck, but more about that at a later stage.

Also get hold of old family pics. They are gold.

Chapter Two

The Nitty Gritty

Before I get down to the nitty gritty I want to share 2 stories::

The first one is about a seniors genealogy group at Kleinfontein. There was one retired gentleman with a rather uncommon surname. Let's say he was Piet Pompies. He decided to do the whole Pompies family tree, so he gets hold of all the Pompiese listed in the various telephone directories and starts phoning people to get their family info. One call he makes goes like this:

Ring ring

hallo, Pompies speaking

Good day, this is Piet Pompies and I would like to know your father's name please.

Piet, this is your brother Koos. Have you forgotten your own father's name now?

The second is a C&P of an article in the paper:

Lees die storie by: http://www.news24.com/Beeld/Pretoria-Beeld/0,,3-69_2466667,00.html

Lappe Laubscher: Oor genealogie het die vuiste al lustig geklap

Feb 10 2009 09:22:27:577AM

Daar is twee dinge wat saamgaan soos brood en botter: Die nagaan van jou familiegeskiedenis en familiesaamtrekke.

Vir baie jare was die nagaan van familiegeskiedenis 'n stokperdjie. Die ou mense het foto's van voorgeslagte teen die mure gehang en 'n nuwe geslag wou dan weet wie die ooms en tannies was. Sulke nuuskierigheid het natuurlik gelei tot stories oor die familie.

lemand vertel nou die dag dat, in die dae toe familiegeskiedenis 'n stokperdjie was, wit Afrikaanse families tog so graag wou bewys dat hulle almal spierwit was.

En toe word familiegeskiedenis 'n wetenskap: genealogie. Die genealoog Isabel Groesbeek vertel my nou die dag dat mense nou al doktorsgrade kry vir familie navorsing.

En dat baie Afrikaanse families bewyse wil hê dat daar slaweblod in hul are pomp.

Wie kan die geweldige ongelukkigheid in Afrikaanse geledere vergeet oor rolprente soos Katrina en Die kandidaat? Dit was uit die dae toe ons almal spierwit was (wel, die meeste van ons het so gehoop).

En toe kom dr. H.F. Heese met sy boek Groep sonder grense. Met bewerige vingers is deur die boek geblaai, as jou naam daar was, was jy nie eeltemal wit nie. Hieroor het vuiste geklap, selfs in die voorportaal van die Stadsraad van Pretoria.

Ek het aan al die vrolikhede oor genealogie gedink nadat ek nou die dag by 'n baie besondere man gaan koffie drink het. Malcolm Moodie is nou reeds in sy tagtigs, maar hy gesels nog heerlijk familiesake.

Jy gaan sit skaars of hy vertel jou dat hy 'n direkte afstammeling van Robert de Bruce is en hy het die bewyse. Robert de Bruce was natuurlik die koning van Skotland tussen 1306 en 1329, as Robert I. En so terloops, oorlewering wil dit hê dat De Bruce se ma, die hertogin van Carrick, sy pa, die sesde markies van Annandale, opgesluit het totdat hy ingewillig het om met haar te trou..

Malcolm vertel dan rustig hoe die Moodies in 1817 van Orkney na die Kaap gekom het. Tipies Skots voeg hy dadelik by: Ons was beslis nie deel van die Britse setlaars van 1820 nie.

Later het 'n deel van die familie hulle in die Oos-Vrystaat gevestig en onder die Scheepse en die Van Reenens ingetrou. Die tak van die Moodies het heeltemal verafrikaans.

Maar dit was oom Malcolm se opmerking met die groetslag wat my weer laat dink het.

Vanjaar hou die Moodies vir die 60ste jaar, sonder onderbreking, familie-saamtrek. Ons is lankal nie meer net Moodies nie, die saamtrek is nou al 'n Moodie-Van Reenen-byeenkoms.

Ek het hulle almal bygewoon. Aanvanklik as een van die jongklomp, maar vandag as die pater familia. Die lede van die uitgebreide familie kom deesdae van oor die hele wêreld. Is daar nog 'n familie in Suid-Afrika wat kan spog daarmee dat hulle reeds vir 60 jaar familiefeste hou?

En dan is daar sowaar nog mense wat wil weet wat dan tipies is aan die Afrikaner se kultuur.

Ok, That over and back to business:

Now that you have written down what you know, the best thing to do next is to get a genealogy program. There are free webpages where you can build your tree online, such as at Ancestry24, but they are very limited in what you can do.

You can also download a program from the internet. Any of the following programs are very good and have a free version with limited functions, or if you are a serious researcher, you can buy the program to be able to make use of all the functions:

Legacy – this is a very popular one and also has a setting for Afrikaans. It is what “G” and I use. Find it here: www.legacyfamilytree.com

Family Tree Maker – also good. I used to use it before legacy. Find it here: www.familytreemaker.com

PAF – another very popular one among serious genealogists. Find it here: www.familysearch.org

I don't want to go into websites too much just yet, but for “homework” 2 good places where can start you ancestral searches are the abovementioned www.familysearch.org – that is the site of the Mormon church and it is free. Another one is www.ancestry24.co.za. This site is partially free = some content is restricted to members.

Other places to start are the libraries. Most decent libraries will have the series SA Genealogiee or Genealogies of old South African Families. There are 17 volumes of SAG, although many libraries may not yet have volume 17. Start by looking up the surnames you are interested in and copy the pages. The chances are good that you will not find all your info there because it only goes to about the year 1900, so there will be gaps. Also even info before 1900 is not 100% complete, but eventually you will link up your tree with that in the SAG. Just a word of advice: surnames such as Du Plessis or van Wyk will be found under “P” and “W” respectively and not under “d” or “v” as one would think. These volumes give info on the progenitors and where they came from as well as the initial familytrees. Often there are more than one progenitors

and often 2 or more similar surnames are listed as one as they have the same progenitor.

Chapter Three

Down to Business

So we know our grandfather was let's say Thomas Ingram and he died around 1950 in the Freestate. He was married to Charlotte, maiden name unknown and one of his children was Bernard Ingram.

This is all we know. How do we find more?

As we do not know when or where he was born, but we do have some idea about his death, we will look for his death notice/estate papers. These are found in either the archives or Master's office of the province where he died. If he died before 1960, as in this case, his papers will be at the archives and because we know he died in the FS, we know it will be at Bloemfontein.

Now we go to NAAIRS to search for documents about him. DO THIS WITH ME!

So we log on to: www.national.archsrch.gov.za/sm300cv/smws/sm300dl

You will see a list of repositories. Even though we know in this case that he died in the FS, we will click on RSA anyway. That will then allow us to search all the repositories in SA and not just one.

We now get a page where we can type in data. In the first line we type Ingram and in the second line we type Thomas. It does not matter which we put first, I just prefer to do it with the surname first.

At the bottom we see a place to enter date parameters. we know he died in 1950, but we decide to 10 years in both directions, so we type 1940 as the beginning date and 1960 as the end date. If we did not have a date, we can just leave that part blank.

Now we click on search.

The report will tell us that it found 12 documents. Click on Result summary to see details on these 12 documents.

We look at the list for clues as to which on we are looking for. As you use Naairs more often, you will start to recognise the source codes. For instance MOOC is Cape Town and Bloemfontein is MHG. So we can immediately exclude 5 documents, leaving us with 7. We look at those and see that for 2 of those, the surname is not Ingram, so away they go.

We look more closely at the remaining 5. We see that there is a Thomas Daniel Ingram who was married to a Charlotte Clarkson. We also see that her death notice is also listed. we tick the blocks next to those 2 and click on Multiple documents on the top bar.

Now we get details on these 2 documents, ie: Depot: FS, source: MHG, reference and description.

That was the easy bit. Now comes the leg work. We now have to go to the archives in Bloemfontein to physically look at the document. Yes, I know you don't live in Bloem, but we will deal with problem at a later stage. Let's say that you do live in Bloem for now.

So you tootle off to the archives – find out the times first as some are open on Saturdays as well, but it differs from place to place.

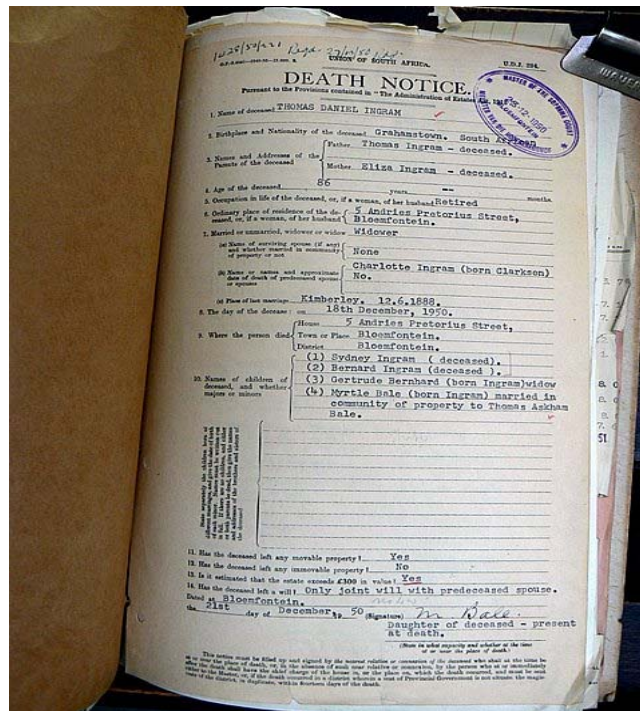
You get there, sign in and go to the reading room. There you will find request slips to request the documents you want.

You wait a while for the staff to bring out the volumes and once you have them, you look up the documents you want.

Now: Very important: In all the archives except Cape Town, you are allowed to photograph the documents. This is a huge advantage as it saves a lot of time and effort. Sadly, in CT, we still have to do things the long way.

So now you quickly photograph the documents and you see it contains all sorts of interesting info: Where Thomas was born, who his parents were, where he lived, what he did, who his wife was, when and where they married, when and where he died, the names of all his children, that he left a will and that he had a bit of money.

Here is an example of a Death Notice:



Now: This was a very easy example because:

1. There were not many documents in NAAIRS to search through. Imagine if his surname were Smith.
2. The death notice were typed – this is the exception not the rule.
3. Most of the fields were actually filled in. This is also rarely the case.

Most of the time the death notice does give you some info to follow up on. In some cases however, it is a complete dead end and in some other cases you find that it was not the person you were looking for after all.

In this case we have now learnt:

1. The names of Thomas' parents. We can now search Naairs again for the death notices of the parents etc, etc.
2. We know his date of death and age of death, so we know approximately when and where he was born. This will help us find his birth date. (future lesson)
3. We know his marriage date and place
4. We know the names of all his children and also the married names of his daughters.

In this case there was only a death notice on file, but often you will also find the will, as well as the Liquidation and Distribution accounts. This will tell you who inherited what. There are often some valuable clues there.

Chapter Four

Estate Files

So last week we dealt with Death notices and I mentioned that often there are more documents in the file than just the death notice. Today we will look at those.

There are 2 main parts that can also be found with the death notice (take note: CAN not will), namely the Will and also Liquidation and Distribution info. What can we learn from them?

A lot is the simple answer.

Let's look first at the Will: Often you will find it to be in Dutch and also written by hand. This can be tricky, but persevere. Often, also wills are drawn up at the start of the marriage and therefore does not tell you much, but wills drawn up later in the lives of the deceased are quite valuable.

You will find names of people who inherit and often mention of their relationship to other people mentioned in the Will. That helps to build the puzzle. Here I must give an example out of my own research: I had trouble finding the parents of my great-grandfather as two sources contradicted each other. After a lot of agonising search, I found the answer in a Will. My great-grandfather's mother bequeathed a mattress, 2 blankets and 2 pillows to her grandson Pieter Willem Clarke. If she had not named him together with his relationship to her, I never would have found the answer.

You will also find names of farms owned by the deceased in the Will. That will also help paint the picture. Sometimes you will come across a complete dead end and often it is these bits of collateral information, such as names of farms, that can help you construct the relationships between people.

I am now going to insert portions a Will that I transcribed. This will illustrate what I have said. In this case the deceased was a well to do lady and she died childless. Note the different surnames mentioned. All these people are however nephews of the deceased and therefore cousins.

Op Heden den 28th dag ter Maand Augustus 1915 verklaar ik Anna Susanna Petronella Jordaan (geb Du Plessis) besloten te hebben over mijne met den dood nalatene goederen te beschikken en herroep by deze alle vorige testamenten op codicillen.

6. Casper Johannes Coetzer het bezet en andere vruchtgebruik van dat deel van het plaats "Paardekraal" groot 1000 morgen die hy nu bewoont, zijn leven lang gedurende, en op zijn overleden zal gezegde grond vervallen aan zijn twee oudste zonen en zoo aan weder tot aan de derde geslacht i?e. de oudste zoon van elk se twee oudste zonen van gezegde Casper Johannes Coetzer kom in het plaats als vrije eigenaar van hunne overledene vaders respectieflyk.

Op deze bemaking van Paardekraal zal gezegde Casparus Johannes Coetzer de somme van ses honderd pond stg in mijne boedel belaaen en hy zal gerechtig zijn om zulks op te neemen by wuze vaneen leening op het grond en zijn gezegde zonen en klein-zonen aan welke grond op uiteinde vevallen zulle verantwoordlyk wezen en blyven voor zulks schepenkenis en renten zoo lang hetzelode bestaan.

Johannes Petrus Coetzer hierna benoemd als voogd over de kinderen onmondig verband Paardekraal te tekenen.

Aan Jakob Jeremias Du Plessis en Jakobus Francois Du Plessis zonen van Ducrot Du Plessis een duisend morgen grond zijnde deelen van Jordaanskraal en Paardekraal zoo las afgesijden-de door landmeter Reitz

Aan Paul Jakobus Du Plessis (zoon van Ducrot Du Plessis) en Napoleon Du Plessis (Zoon van Jakobus Du Plessis) mijn woonhuis en erf in Sprigg straat Cradock.

Aaan Jakobus Francois Coetzer (zoon van J.P.Coetzer) het erf in Dundas Straat Cradock.

Mijn 630 aandeelen in het Handels Maatschappy Cradock aan Frantz Thaba Bosigo Wepener (zoon van Louw Wepener)

Aan Jan Gideon Roux en Paul Jacobus Du Plessis Wepener bovengemelde zomma van £600. i.e. ieder de somma van 300 stg.

Als voogd over mijne onmondige ergenamen te noem ik Johannes Petrus Coetzer wonden de te Wildepaardehoek.

En als Execureen van did testament gezegde Johannes Petrus Coetzer en Labau Du Plessis (Zoon van Jakobus Du Plessis)

As you can see, there are a lot of valuable information there, but at the same time it takes some concentration in the first parts to figure out what she

actually says. It is through this will that I discovered the relationship between my great grandfather and Labau Du Plessis. It turns out that they were first cousins.

Now we can quickly look at Liquidation and distribution accounts. What are they and what can we learn from them.

Basically they are the balance sheets of a persons estate. That stuff the executors have to do.

It has lists of assets and liabilities and finally the distribution of the assets. So it shows us what the person owned and what he owed. There are also valuable clues hidden there, i.e. a doctor's bill can give you a clue as what the person died from, or a piano listed in the assets can tell you that the person could probably play.

Chapter Five

Making sense of the numbers

The De Villiers-Pama (DVP) numbers is the system most often used in South African family trees and it is used the SA Genealogies, which is the most comprehensive publication of South African Family trees.

So let us begin:

The progenitor(s) or "stamvader" is always "a".

If there are more than one progenitor, as with the Van Rooyen's for instance, they will be numbered a1, a2 and a3. For the purpose of this exercise, we will deal with only a family that has only one.

a1-Pieter Traut b. , Rotterdam, Netherlands
+Johanna Jacoba Loubser b. 1775, Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa

Pieter Traut was the progenitor and he married Johanna Jacoba Loubser – "+" indicates a marriage.

They had 6 children. They are all "b's", from 1-6 in order of birth. Let's take a look:

1-Pieter Traut b. , Rotterdam, Netherlands
+Johanna Jacoba Loubser b. 1775, Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa
|--a1b1-Jan Pieter Adrianus Traut c. 28 May 1797, Cape Town, Western Cape,

| South Africa
 |--a1b2-Susanna Elizabeth Traut c. 26 Aug 1798, Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa
 | Africa
 |--a1b3-Carel Willem Traut c. 11 Aug 1799, Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa
 |
 |--a1b4-Pieter Wentzel Traut c. 21 Sep 1800, Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa
 | Africa
 |--a1b5-Godlieb Philip Traut c. 16 Oct 1801, Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa
 | Africa
 |--a1b6-Jacob Wentzel Theodorus Traut b. 5 Jan 1806, Zonnebloem, Western Cape, South Africa, d. Oct 1879

So: Jan Pieter Traut (b1) is the firstborn child. He was christened (c) on 28 May 1797.

Jacob Wentzel Theodorus Traut is the 6th child and therefore b6. Also take note: b. 5 Jan 1806. In this case we are sure of his date of birth, therefore the "b" instead of the "c".

Now we can look at the 3rd generation and this is where it gets tricky:

a1-Pieter Traut b. , Rotterdam, Netherlands

+Johanna Jacoba Loubser b. 1775, Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa
 a1b1-Jan Pieter Adrianus Traut c. 28 May 1797, Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa
 a1b2-Susanna Elizabeth Traut c. 26 Aug 1798, Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa
 +Louis Matthys Greeff
 a1b3-Carel Willem Traut c. 11 Aug 1799, Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa
 a1b4-Pieter Wentzel Traut c. 21 Sep 1800, Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa
 a1b5-Godlieb Philip Traut c. 16 Oct 1801, Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa
 +Catharina Johanna Maria Petronella Greeff
 a1b5c1-Pieter Charles William Traut b. 23 Feb 1840, Swartland, South Africa
 a1b5c2-Catharina Johanna Susanna Traut b. 10 Dec 1841, Swartland, South Africa
 a1b5c3-Johanna Elizabeth Hester Traut b. 14 Nov 1843, Swartland, South Africa
 +Maria Barendina Van Eyssen

a1b5c4-Anna Catharina Traut b. 30 Mar 1849, Swartland, South Africa
a1b5c5-Godlieb Matthys Traut b. 2 Mar 1851, Swartland, South Africa
a1b5c6-Coenraad Jacobus Van Eyssen Traut b. Nov 1853, Darling, d. 21 Oct 1921, Hartebeesfontein
a1b6-Jacob Wentzel Theodorus Traut b. 5 Jan 1806, Zonnebloem, Western Cape, South Africa, d. Oct 1879
+Susanna Wilhelmina Loubser b. 1 Dec 1811, d. 14 Mar 1879
a1b6c1-Johanna Petronella Traut c. 8 Dec 1833, Lutherse Kerk
a1b6c2-Pieter Godlieb Philip Traut b. 15 Jul 1836, Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa
a1b6c3-Susanna Louisa Elizabeth Traut b. 1 May 1838, Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa
a1b6c4-Jacob Wentzel Traut b. 1 Oct 1839, Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa
a1b6c5-Carel Michiel Traut b. 1 Sep 1843, Swartland South Africa, d. 5 Apr 1913, Vredenburg, South Africa
a1b6c6-Hendrik Oostwald Traut b. 16 Jun 1845, Swartland, South Africa
a1b6c7-Michiel Casparus Traut b. 16 Jun 1845, Swartland, South Africa
a1b6c8-Johanna Jacoba Traut b. 2 Feb 1850, Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa
a1b6c9-Helena Maria Traut b. 25 Feb 1852, Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa
a1b6c10-Sibella Jacoba Traut b. 19 Jan 1857, (Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa)

I am using colours to make it easier to follow: Pieter Traut the progenitor is in black.

His six children and their spouses are in red, but now you see green and blue as well.

Look at the first "green" child: a1b5c1 Pieter Charles William Traut. He is the firstborn of the 5th born of the progenitor = therefore a1b5c1. Make sense?

Now look at the first "blue" child: a1b6c1 Johanna Petronella Traut. Note how she is also c1? BUT: she is c1 of b6!!! in other words: the firstborn child of the 6th born of the progenitor. This is what often confuses people.

All the grandchildren of the progenitor will be "c's" but there will be more than one "c1" because they have different fathers. Pieter Charles William and Johanna Petronella are therefore first cousins.

The great-grandchildren will all be "d's" etc, etc.

When we come to 6 and 7 generations, it can become rather tricky to follow, but when you find a name that is for instance a1b5c7d8e11f7g1, you will just have to very slowly work your way back. I make a photocopy of the text and use a highlighter. I will highlight a1b5c7d8e11f7g1, then go back and find f7 and highlight that too, then go further back and find e11 and highlight that as well and so forth. That way you have a easy path to follow into the direct line of the person you are looking at. I would have liked to show an example, but it would take up way too much space. If anyone would like a more detailed illustration, you can let me know and I will email you.

One last thing: The children of the daughters are not normally listed here. They would be listed in the family tree of the daughter's husband.

Chapter Six

Naming Conventions

This is a short one, but very important none the less.

Understanding naming convention can help us sort complex families.

The Naming conventions in the traditional Afrikaans families is believed to have originated with the Scottish missionaries in the early 1800's.

Although it has mostly died out in modern society, some of it is still practised here and there.

This is how it works:

Firstborn son is named after the paternal grandfather
Second son after the maternal grandfather
Third son after the father, if the father not already named

Firstborn daughter is named after maternal grandmother
Second daughter named after paternal grandmother
Third daughter after the mother, if not already named.

Thereafter it gets a little bit more fuzzy, but usually the brothers and sisters of the parents were named, but there was no real set order. Often close family friends or business acquaintances were also named.

In the 1800's it was much more common for children to die in infancy than today.

Where you find a family tree with say a firstborn and fourth born son with same names and very little other info on the firstborn, one can fairly safely assume that the first son died young. Exactly how young, can be determined by when the second set of names appear. In this example, one can assume that the child died after the birth of the 3rd son, otherwise the 3rd son would have been given the names of the child that died.

With this convention, you would find several cousins with the same names. All were named after the paternal grandfather. Sometimes you are not sure who belongs where. By looking at the names of their children, you should be able to figure out who goes where. It gets really tricky though in cases where 2 brothers marry 2 sisters.

For me, the most interesting part regarding names, is trying to figure out where non family names come from. Two of my grandparents were the youngest of very large families and were not given family names, but named after family friends. It took me quite a while to trace where the names came from.

Chapter Seven

Baptism & Marriage Registers

We have looked at death notices and estate files and those have given us a lot of info such date of death, parents, children etc, but complete our data on a person, we also need the date of birth and date of marriage.

The best way to get this info is to look at the baptism and marriage registers. These were kept by the churches and can therefore be a bit problematic: a; you need to know which church denominations and b: you need to know the congregation.

This is not always straightforward for various reasons: Churches were few and far between and pastors were also few. Also, most folk lived on farms and were far from towns. You could not just hop in a car to go to church – often it was a 3 day journey by donkey cart.

What often happened in practise is that denomination sometimes took a back seat to convenience. Even if you were Dutch reformed – if the Presbyterian church were closer, that's where you baptised your child. Sometimes people lived in an area where they had 3 congregations to choose from and went from one to another as was most convenient.

So where do you find the registers, how does it work and what info will you find in them:

Where: Basically one of two places: GISA and Family history centres.

GISA= Genealogical institute of SA and is located in Stellenbosch.

Their webpage: <http://www.gisa.org.za/> They will also search on your behalf for a fee.

Family History centres are part of the LDS (Mormon Church). They have FHC's in most cities, but only Parktown carries a full range of microfilms. In the other centres you will have to order the microfilms. Webpage with list of FHC's in SA: <http://www.familysearch.org/eng/default.asp>

How: The church registers have all been microfilmed. You will have to have an idea which congregation and which period you want to search. You then ask the staff to show you how to look up which film you need. Once you have the film on the microfiche, the hard work starts. You have to scroll through entry after entry till you find what you want. Make no mistake: It is hard and backbreaking work. You can very easily spend up to 6 hours on 1 film and walk away with only one piece of the puzzle. The registers are written by the Dominee and are often very difficult to decipher. Always take a magnifying glass with you.

What: A baptism entry will give you: Date of baptism, date of birth, names of child, names of parents, names of godparents and often the name of the farm where the child was born

Marriage entry: Names of bride and groom, ages, occupation, date of marriage, witnesses. Unfortunately South African marriage registers does not give the names of the parents of the bridal couple.

Advice: Names of godparents and witnesses are important as they are most often relatives. These names together with the farm names, can help clarify matters in case of doubt.

When you are working through a register, also write down the details for other related names. Say for instance I am looking for the children of Piet and Sannie Pompies, but I come across entries for children of Koos and Maria Pompies, I write them down too. Next month I may need to find Koos and Maria's kids, then I have them already.

Birth=and marriage registers in my opinion are the most difficult part of the search.

Chapter Eight

Graveyards and other records

So, we have now searched for a death notice, a baptism and marriage entry and looked in some books, but the person we are looking for is still missing. Now what?

The next place to look is in the graveyards. There are internet and other resources available to help us here, thanks to some very crazy and dedicated people.

There are groups of enthusiastic genealogists that go to graveyards and photograph or record the data, so that people like you and me can try and find a grave without having to go to the cemetery ourselves.

This is hard and backbreaking work and in today's times also dangerous. Graveyards are often very neglected and derelict. You have to clear away grass and branches and sometimes even lift up headstones that have fallen over. When going on these expeditions you have to carry quite a lot of tools and equipment, but that is a story in itself and as my knowledge is limited to capturing of data and not the actual photography I will leave it there.

So where do we find this data: There are two places in the 'net that I know of: www.findagrave.com, which is an international site. There is some SA Data, but is also useful if looking someone who died elsewhere.

The "big" one in SA is: http://www.eggsa.org/library/main.php?g2_itemId=43
Here you can see a picture of the actual gravestone.

There is another source, also a product of the GGSA. It is a cd and dvd with almost 500 000 graves written up. On the CD there is no pictures, only written data as to the info on the gravestone. On the DVD there are photographs.

To give you an idea of what you can see and what info you can get:



There you have the names of husband and wife, the maiden name of the wife, their dates of death and also the husband's age. That is the long and short of graves.

Other resources:

I don't know too much about these, so I will just give it a brief mention:

Voter's rolls – all sorts of info there. I think these are found in the Pretoria archives.

TANAP and TEPC: these are transcriptions of the very early Cape inventories and muster rolls and other data. There are some valuable bits of info, but it's hard work.

Find it here: <http://databases.tanap.net/vocrecords/>

These are also on CD.

There are also many more old records at the archives, but you will have to speak to an archivist to find out about them.

Chapter Nine Useful Websites

When it comes to websites I almost don't know where to begin, there are so many.

I will try to give you a basic overview that will lead you to more handy sites.

The first aspect I want to address is family websites. There are many South African families that already have their own sites. The most accurate list of all these sites can be found on the Greeff webpage. Here is the direct link:

<http://www.greeff.info/tng01/familywebsites.php>

This really a very comprehensive list.

Still with families are the list of people doing research into families. This list gives you the surname and the email of the person working on that surname:

<http://home.global.co.za/~mercon/surnames.htm>

Next we come to Genealogy societies and their pages:

The GGSA has two sites: www.gensa.info which is the main site, but the more useful one is the site of their electronic branch: www.eggsa.org. On this page pay particular attention to the "contents" section and under that the "library" and "transcriptions" section. The "links" has a very comprehensive list of all sorts of handy webpages.

Then we have the Cape Family History Society: <http://www.family-history.co.za/index.html> - they mostly research English surnames

The Cape Family Research Forum researches Muslim surnames: <http://www.capefamilyresearch.com/>

The last one is the South East Witwatersrand Family history Society: <http://www.geocities.com/SEWfamhistory/index.htm>

I don't know too much about these last 4 groups.

Next we deal with resources. There are so many that I will only deal with a few. Remember to look at the "links" section on the eggsa webpage for a comprehensive list of sites.

The first resource site I want to talk about is our own Ancestry24. This is an extremely useful site. The site has open content as well as member content. It costs about R120 for a year's membership and if you are serious about research, I would suggest you make that investment. New genealogy fans must definitely browse around in the "learning centre". Most of the stuff I have discussed in this series are covered in more detail in this section. There are also sections with research books and research records. Go browse this site! <http://ancestry.mweb.co.za/eng/default.aspx>

The "bigwig" in genealogy is the site run by the Mormon church: <http://www.familysearch.org/eng/default.asp>

This is an international site where you can search for ancestors not only from SA, but also other parts of the world. It is in the process of undergoing a major revamp, with lots more data being added, but as yet there is no date for the launch of the new site.

The best thing about this site is that it is free.

Many of you, myself included, also have ancestors from other countries. I am not very clued up on this, but I do know of a few:

<http://www.genlias.nl/en/search.jsp> This is a Dutch site and is free.

The next 3 sites deal with UK ancestry, but unfortunately comes at a price:

Scotland: www.scotlandpeople.gov.uk
England and Wales: www.findmypast.com
Ireland: <http://www.brsgenealogy.com/>

The last section I want to cover is mailing lists. What is mailing list?

A mailing list is a group who share information. Each mailing list has their own rules, just like club. You have to apply to become a member.

How does it work? I have a question which I put in an email and send it to the list. It then gets sent to all the members of the list. Hopefully a fellow member has the answer to question or at least a suggestion.

The upside of mailing lists are that it is an easy way of sharing info and solving problems.

The downside is that you gets lots of mail in your inbox every day.

Here are a few:

Buitenposten: <http://lists.rootsweb.ancestry.com/index/intl/ZAF/BUITENPOSTEN.html>

SAGenealogie:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SAGenealogie/>

These two are Afrikaans lists

The next 2 are English lists:

<http://lists.rootsweb.ancestry.com/index/intl/ZAF/SOUTH-AFRICA.html>

<http://lists.rootsweb.ancestry.com/index/intl/ZAF/SOUTH-AFRICA-EASTERN-CAPE.html>

The last one is mostly for people with Eastern Cape roots.

That is it from me on the subject of webpages and this also brings us to the end of the series on genealogy.

Right, off you go then. Have fun!



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