If you’re researching your family history, you’ll find our online guides are a great place for research tips and resources. To help you get the ball rolling, this month we’re going to shine a spotlight on some of the resources in each of these guides.
If you’re just getting started with your research take a look at the Beginning your Family History page in the Births, deaths and marriages Research Guide. Our family history librarians have shared some of their best tips for making the most of the historical records available.

**Start with what you know**

The first tip from our Family History Librarian's is to find out as much as you can from your parents, grandparents or great-grandparents. You'll be amazed at the records that people hold onto!

Take what you discover and look up the NSW Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages Index Historical records, 1788–1914. Here you can find certificate index entries for births from more than 100 years ago, marriages from more than 50 years ago and deaths from more than 30 years ago.

- The information available from an index search is limited, but you may be able to purchase the certificate or find more details in Ancestry Library Edition.
- If the certificate is not available or you’re not ready to buy just yet, usually the index entries will give you information like the names of the baby’s parents, bride’s maiden name or deceased person’s name. You can usually guess the year of the event from the registration number.

You can then use the information you uncover to fill in more gaps using family notices in digitised historical NSW newspapers. Other family members or addresses are often listed.

**Looking for gravestones?**
See our Cemeteries [6] page for resources for searching gravestones without risking an encounter with a ghost.

Look for your ancestor’s gravestone inscriptions, which might also list other family members. Once you know the grave’s plot or section details you can conduct a wider search for more family members that may be buried close by.

The library has a number of cemetery indexes in book or microfilm format, or if you visit the library [7] you can use Ancestry Library Edition or Findmypast.com for free. You’ll also find links to crowdsourced gravestone inscription websites where family history enthusiasts may have done the leg-work for you.

**Looking for more?**

If you’re struggling to find what you need online you might like to try the Mutch Index [8], in the Mitchell Library.

**Thomas Mutch** [9], journalist, politician and historian, compiled these indexes which claim to cover all existing birth, death and marriage records relating to New South Wales.

The index is split into two date ranges; 1787–1814 and 1815–1957. In the first part you will find information from records at St Philip’s (Sydney), St John’s (Parramatta) and St Matthew’s (Windsor). In the second part you will find information from church registers of all denominations across NSW with the exception of the Methodist Church. It is most comprehensive for the period 1788-1831.


**Links**