

## Clues in the Shadows- Tackling Genealogy Dead Ends with Family Search Labs

### Objectives:

- We will discuss a few basic points of AI
- I will share with you 2 case studies of Brick Walls and talk about some of the Genealogical principles of Research used to break them down.
- I will walk you through 'step by step' getting into the Labs, Experiments and using the Filters.
- Finally, we will use some of your Ancestors to explore the Lab.

### AI:

- Generally we know AI for indexing, including the 1950 census in 2022 which was completed quite quickly- with numerous errors I might add. In 2010 reading script, cursive began with OCR- **Optical Character Recognition**.
- Reading other languages for translation, matching records, all followed.
- In Genealogy - AI can be used to create a Biography of your Ancestor. It can help with organizing and computer aided indexing.
- It CAN'T search page by page and line by line through church records, passenger lists, yet.
- AI can have Hallucinations when it can't find an answer= these are general falsehoods, misleading or nonsensical information. Ex- Hezekiah Kidwell-15 letters not 19 letters of gibberish.
- Ex: 19 January 1809 becomes 19 January 1899, Deed of Elisha McAtee.
- Ex: Kidwell Kidwell instead of Sylvester Kidwell.
- Ex: Inlet Kidwell instead of Juliet Kidwell daughter of Hezekiah **France** Kidwell.

The Family Search Labs were introduced at Rootstech 2024 with 5 "Experiments" - presently there are 8 "Experiments".

- The experiments use actual State Records, not records created by AI (but use AI to read the Documents).
- Today we will discuss Full Text Search, one of the 8 labs.
- Even the Title for this program was written by AI- ChatGPT
- When Family Search started the Labs it was mostly Deeds, not so now.
- At first it was only United States records, Now many countries are included.
- Records are added daily and the format has changed at least twice so be aware of changing locations especially in layout of the page.

#### FS Labs: Step by Step

1. Sign Into FS
2. Scroll down, on the right side, to Family Search Labs
3. Click New Experiments
4. 8 Experiments appear now (only 5 originally)
5. The tutorial is well worth watching if you are using this for the first time
6. Click on 'Go to Experiment'
7. Use "Quotation" marks- either full name or Surname only, spelling counts. When changing the name use the Reset Button.
8. Proceed to the Filters on the upper left corner. I start with Place because it narrows the numbers, then Date, Collection and Record type. Sometimes I take all records available; if I have time constraints I do one section at a time. The correct County matters. You may have to try several counties for information if you are unsure of the county.
9. Record the Document Number to easily find it again.

# Case Study 1

Malinda Masterson Nevin	Timeline GMNK-VP1	Event	Date	Source
1850	Pennsylvania	Birth 1850-1852	Census records not listed 1850	
1857	Family moved to Wisc.			
1860	La Crosse, La Crosse, Wisc	With Mich/Anna, 10 years, Tilda	Census records	
Abt. 1868	Marriage	First child born 1869, birth age approx.		
1870	Wheatland, Vernon, Wisc	Birth 1850, Penn	Census records, married, one child	
1875	Whitestown, Vernon, Wisc	State Census		
1880	Whitestown, Vernon, Wisc	Birth 1850, Penn	Census Records	
1885	Whitestown, Vernon, Wisc	State Census	Find a Grave	
1891	Death of Husband John	Memorial #70268948	FS Lab, Vernon County, Wisconsin	
22 December 1894	Deed signing off of Deed	Entire family listed, Lindie Nevin	U.S. Indexed county Land ownership Map(A)	
1896	Land Tax	240 Acres, Vernon Cty, Wisc, Sec 19&20		
1900	Whitestown, Vernon, Wisc	Birth Jan. 1851, Penn	Census Records	
1905	Whitestown, Vernon, Wisc	Birth 1855, Penn	State Census	
20 December 1908	Death of son Michael		News clipping, Cashton Record Newspaper, Monroe County Historical Society	
1910	Ontario, Vernon, Wisc	Birth 1852, Penn	Census Records, GrandDaughter	
1915	Land Tax	Son, William, owns 80 acres, sect 19	U.S. Indexed county Land ownership Map(A)	
1920	Whitestown, Vernon, Wisc	Birth 1852, Penn	Census Records	
1930	Ontario, Vernon, Wisc	Birth 1850, Penn	Census Records	
18 April 1937	Cashton, Monroe, Wisc	Obit- no information given	18 April, Cashton Record Newspaper, Monroe County Historical Society	
		Memorial #249517775 Find a Grave	Monroe County Death Records Index, 1850-1968, No additional information	

## Case Study 2

Birth	Death	Facts	Adoption Name	Adoption Date	Married name	Census	Find A Grave
Frank Haynes Aug 1867, IL	abt 29 Sept, 1910, Newspaper Article					all	No
Caroline Gremore 25 Sept 1883, 1958, IL	1958, IL	Lost home 1911			Organ-1917	all	Yes
Lola June 1899, IL	bef 1910, IL	? No death/Burial				all	No
Lela Louise 10 Oct 1902, IL	15 May 1965, IL	1921 Family reunion	Kerr	? Bef 1920	Burnside-1921	all	Yes
Aileen Flora 8 Sept 1904, IL	3 Aug 1987, IL	1954, Vac w? Caroline	Teel	1913 from Obit	Bowers-1927	all	Yes
Josephine Sarah 20 July 1906, IL	15 Oct 2000, IL		Berg	1912 Court Reco Mills-1925		all	Yes
Helen Caroline 16 March 1908, IL	26 Sep 1999, TX		Castle	? Bef 1920	Miller-1933	all	Yes
Frank Elmer 18 Sept 1909, IL	13 Dec 2002, CA					all	Yes

## Resources:

<https://AdvantagePreservation.com>, FREE Newspapers from across the country in small towns and by County. Ex: Lawrence County, Illinois- Knox County Indiana. Includes a directory on the main page.

For missing graves- call or email the Cemetery. The staff is usually very helpful and of course FREE. If the Cemetery is defunct- contact the Township, they may have the records.

Historical Societies in the area you are researching can be found using Google. They have so many resources to share including area Cemeteries. Some charge a fee while others are FREE. A small gratuity is in order as they have limited budgets. I contacted The Lawrence County Historical Society in Illinois - Not regarding the Haynes family but the person I was speaking to is a distant cousin.

Legacy Family Tree Webinars- Most Programs are free to view the first week- no handout- but the company runs sales several times a year. Over 2000 programs on every topic related to Genealogy and all levels of experience are in their library with the syllabus. The programs are zoom style and are taught by some of the most experienced Genealogists.

Google Books- Great for learning about the location you are researching; the history of the area, etc. Sometimes you will see a snip-it of a book, other times the entire book is included. If a book is not available it will show you where it can be found on [WorldCat.org](http://WorldCat.org).

[Newspapers.com](http://Newspapers.com) and [ChroniclingAmerica.gov](http://ChroniclingAmerica.gov) - Always valuable.

# Tip Adoption Angels Project

[wikitree.com/wiki/Project:Adoption\\_Angels](https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Project:Adoption_Angels)

accessed 06.04.2025



*Welcome to the Adoption Angels Project!*

Adoption Angels are volunteers who help members with unknown parents connect to their biological family.



## Adoption Angels Mission

The mission of the Adoption Angels Project is to help adoptees, NPEs, donor children and others with unknown parentage connect to their biological family. They also help connect adoptees to the the global family tree once birth family is found. With our global family tree and our DNA features, WikiTree can be an invaluable asset for assisting those searching for birth families.

**(Note: "Adoptees" can also include non-paternal events (NPEs) and other cases of unknown parentage.)**

## Apply For Help

If you have taken a DNA test, Adoption Angels can assist you in finding your birth parents. **Contact the WikiTree Adoption Angels to apply for help.** Please see our **Application Checklist** before applying. The more items you complete before applying will ensure your place at the top of our list for the next available Angel who will assist you in finding your birth family.

## Are you interested in the Adoption Angels Project?



- Project Leaders: Eowyn Langholf and Emma MacBeath
- Coordinators: Pam Smith (Mentors)
- Answer our G2G welcome post to join the Adoption Angels project and get a badge.
- Add [adoption\\_angels](#) to your followed tags.
- We use Adoption Angels Google Group for communication.
- Adoption Angels Project Member List.
- Here is what our members are working on.

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## How to Join: Becoming an Adoption Angel

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### Requirements for joining:

- Have Family Member level membership and sign the Honor Code.
- Be a member of WikiTree for 3 months.
- Have 100+ WikiTree contributions.
- Before you commit to being an Adoption Angel:
  - Read through our Mission Statement and be sure you understand what Angels do and don't do.
  - Read the project roles to understand what you are signing up for.

### Once you join we ask you to:

- Make at least one contribution towards the project's goals every three months.
- Join at least one project team.
- Join the project's Google Discussion Group.
- Have access to information needed to participate in the project.
- Regularly update the project as needed on your activity.
- Respond to the six-monthly check-in and to your team leader/coordinator.
- You can also add Adoption\_Angels to the tags you follow to keep up with project posts.

## Goals

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### Adoption Angel goals:

- Help Adoptees to set up their WikiTree profiles.
- Help Adoptees to find information needed for a birth family search such as birth records and non-identifying information.
- Help Adoptees use the information they have to search for birth families.
- Help Adoptees who have found their birth parents to get started on creating their biological trees.
- Help in searches for birth parents for deceased members of the family up to grandparents.
- Integrate DNA test results into the search for family.

## Teams

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- Adoption Angels: Family Finders
  - Adoption Angel Family Finders use both DNA and traditional Genealogy experience to find biological family. They do the work alongside the adoptee to actively search for family. DNA experience is required.
- Adoption Angels: Mentors
  - Adoption Angel Mentors greet all new applicants, answering questions and helping them make sure they are set up and ready for their search with a Family Finder. They answer questions in g2g.

## Mission Statement

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We recognize that unknown parentage is emotional and sensitivity is needed in working with applicants to find information and family connections.

The following is our mission statement laying out what our Adoption Angels will and will not do in aiding applicants with their search for their families and roots.

Adoption Angels will:

1. Help Adoptees to set up their WikiTree profiles.
2. Help Adoptees to find information needed for a biological family search such as birth records and non-identifying information.
3. Help Adoptees use the information they have to search for birth families.
4. Help Adoptees who have found their birth parents to get started on creating their biological trees.
5. Help in searches for birth parents for deceased members of the family further back on the tree (up to the grandparent generation).
6. Help integrate DNA test results into the search for family.

Adoption Angels will not:

1. Research for or on behalf of minor children (under the age of 18).
2. Make contact with the biological family of searcher.
3. Pressure any individual to make contact once the birth family is located.
4. Assist someone other than the adoptee without the adoptee contacting the Angel to give consent.
5. Charge for their services.
6. Work on historical adoptions (past grandparents).
7. Search for living family members (children, cousins, aunts/uncles, siblings who have been disconnected from the family).

Further, privacy is a key point of our Honor Code. As such, Adoption Angels will keep all private information 100% confidential.

**(Note: "Adoptees" can also include unexpected parentage (NPEs), donor children, and other cases of unknown parentage. Adoptee is often used generically by Adoption Angels.)**

## Earned Wings

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The first time an Angel helps make a connection between an adoptee and birth family through the Adoption Angels project they'll earn this badge:

