Solving for the Unknown

The No Math Edition

The Unknowns Project is on a mission to improve connections on WikiTree by identifying those ancestors who have been difficult to identify. Most of these are women, and honoring their lives and their contributions to our family history is an important goal for the project.

How to Find "Unknown" Profiles

There are several ways to find profiles to work on:

❏ Enter "Unknown" in the Last Name search box

❏ Use "Limit Watchlist" to see which ones you manage or follow

How to Find "Unknown" Profiles, cont'd

❏ Use the tools from the Unknowns page
- ➢ Start here:

  https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Space:Unknowns_Team_Process
- ➢ Look for this table:

Unknowns Unsourced Open or Public	17 Mar 2022	5 Oct 2022
16th Century 1500-1599	1,325	1,462
17th Century 1600-1699	3,113	3,262
18th Century 1700-1799	6,773	7,047
19th Century 1800-1899	7,644	7,713
20th Century 1900-1999	1,628	2,223
21st Century 2000-2999	2	2
Total	20,483	21,709

Getting ready to research

Look for Obvious Surname Hints

❏ For women: In places and eras where taking the husband's name is common practice, add married name as Current Last Name to facilitate searching
❏ Check for parents or siblings – probably shares the same last name

Getting ready to research, cont'd

Look for Obvious Surname Hints

❏ Read what's already on the profile - is her name already in the sources?

- "Iowa, County Marriages, 1838-1934," database, FamilySearch (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XJHC-8XZ : 3 November 2017), Fanny Clark in entry for Charles R. Holderness and Francis A. Sykes, 28 Feb 1885, Marengo, Iowa, Iowa, United States; citing reference p54 cn37, county courthouses, Iowa; FHL microfilm 988,207.

- "Iowa, County Marriages, 1838-1934," database, FamilySearch (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XJH4-XYT : 3 November 2017), Fannie Clark in entry for Allen J. Holderness and Anna Oldfield, 19 Dec 1889, Marengo, Iowa, Iowa, United States; citing reference p106 cn143, county courthouses, Iowa; FHL microfilm 988,207.

- "Minnesota Deaths, 1887-2001," database, FamilySearch (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:HPZ8-XZ3Z : 8 April 2020), Fanny Clark in entry for Charles R Holderness, 9 Nov 1947; citing Death, Minnesota State Department of Health, St. Paul.

Getting ready to research, cont'd

Look for Obvious Surname Hints

❏ Consider the possibility that a woman's *Last Name at Birth* (LNAB) is the same as her *married* name.

Name	**Keith A Lyman**
Sex	**Male**
Spouse's Name	**Anna B Lyman**
Spouse's Sex	**Female**
Marriage Date	**23 Dec 1922**
Marriage Place	**King, Washington, United States**
Event Type	**Marriage**

* "Washington, County Marriages, 1855-2008", database with images, FamilySearch (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QPMJ-DVX3 : 16 April 2021), Keith A Lyman and Anna B Lyman, 1922.

Getting ready to research, cont'd

Look for suggestions

❏ Correct any Data Doctor suggestions that are shown for the profile
  ❏ Check the bottom of the profile while in Edit mode - OR -
  ❏ Use the Suggestion link on the Profile ID menu

Save drafts while working. Do a **full save** before closing this window. ❷

WikiTree+ Suggestions ❷ [view on WikiTree+]

1. **Error?** Misspelled word in death location ❷ → wahington -> Washington

Comment if suggestion fixed or false   FIXED   FALSE

2. **Error?** Misspelled country in death location ❷ → wahington, United States ->> Washington, United States

Comment if suggestion fixed or false   FIXED   FALSE

Fix what you can and ignore what you can't!

Getting ready to research, cont'd

Bring the profile format up to standard

❏ Make sure the required sections are present and in the proper format

```
== Biography ==
== Sources ==
<references />
```

❏ Format the profile for readability
➢ See Help:Editing Tips

Getting ready to research, cont'd

Last, but definitely not least, **check for duplicates**

❏ Go to Profile ID menu, choose "Search for Matches"
  ➢ With the additional information, you might be able to find duplicates
  ➢ If you find a duplicate with a sourced last name, congratulations! Can you make more improvements to the profile?
❏ Go to Find > Search to do a more thorough search where you can sort the search results
❏ Propose merges if you can.
  ➢ Come back and check in 30 days if no action has been taken on the merge.

Rev Your Research Engines

WikiTree has a great tool for starting research for a person

❏ RootsSearch

➢ available using the Research link on the bottom of the right side of any person profile or from the Profile ID menu

Collaboration

↪ Edit: As a member of the Trusted List you're invited to improve this profile and upload images.

↪ Private Messages: Send a private message to the Profile Manager. (Best when privacy is an issue.)

↪ Public Comments: These will appear below and on Activity Feeds. (Best for messages specifically directed to those editing this profile. Limit 20 per day.)

↪ Public Q&A: These will appear above and in the Genealogist-to-Genealogist (G2G) Forum. (Best for anything directed to the wider genealogy community.)

[ASK QUESTION]

Research

RootsSearch for Emma (Unknown) Beeson: conveniently search 20+ genealogy websites. [more info]

Search

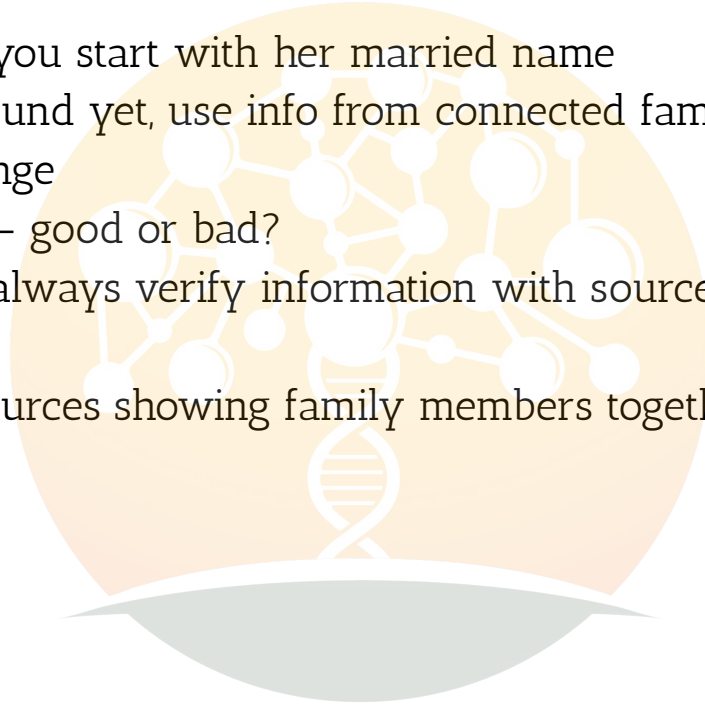| Ancestry.com 🔍	Chronicling America 🔍	FamilySearch 🔍
Find A Grave 🔍	findmypast.com 🔍	Genealogy Gophers 🔍
Google Search 🔍	MyHeritage 🔍	newspapers.com 🔍
USGenWeb Archives 🔍		

✿ More sites

Find-a-Grave

- ❏ For women, make sure you start with her married name
- ❏ If no dates have been found yet, use info from connected family members to estimate a good date range
- ❏ Burial location guesses – good or bad?
- ❏ If you find a memorial always verify information with sources using another reliable repository.
- ❏ Rule of thumb: Use 3 sources showing family members together

❏ The profile has exact dates, but there is no source. Is there Find-a-Grave memorial?

Myrtie B. Moran formerly [last name at birth?]

Born **10 Jul 1898** in **Alabama, USA** 📍

Daughter of [father?] and [mother?]

Wife of **John Robert Moran** — married [marriage date?] [marriage locati...

[add spouse?]

Mother of Dorothy Moran, Rachel L. (Moran) King, Johnny Albert M...
Leander Moran and Francis Moran [add child]

Died **2 Nov 1979** at age 81 in **Limestone County, Alab...**

Profile manager: Pam Smith 📧✉ [send private message]
Unknown-21620 created 31 Oct 2010 | Last modified 23 Sep 20...
23 Sep 2022
(180213836:20220923203133:174.73.241.91) 15:31: Pam (Ande...
(1898-1979). (Minor corrections.) [Thank Pam for this]
This page has been accessed 117 times.

Help cousins find this profile.

Spouse

John Robert Lee Moran
1898–1970

Children

Dorothy Louise *Moran* Jackson
1919–1994

Rachel Lucille *Moran* King
1921–1984

Johnny Albert Moran
1923–1999

Henry Leroy Moran
1924–1998

John Robert Moran
1925–1982

Cecil Leander Moran
1926–1979

Francis Othel *Moran* Macklin
1929–2013

Horace Moran
1931–1932

Wilburn Ertie Moran
1933–2017

Lula Juanita *Moran* Mills
1935–2016

Doris Ann *Moran* Hughes
1940–2010

James Alford Moran
1943–2003

Are all children on WikiTree?

Myrtie Maebell *Bentley* Moran

BIRTH	10 Jul 1898
DEATH	2 Nov 1979 (aged 81)
BURIAL	O'Neal Cemetery
	O'Neal, Limestone County, Alabama, USA 📍 *Add to Map*
MEMORIAL ID	23667691 · View Source

SHARE | ➕ SAVE TO | SUGGEST EDITS | ▾

This is a great hint – use it as a starting point to do more research

❑ The profile has a grave marker picture & dates. Can you find them on Find a Grave?

Bessie M (Bessie M) Howell formerly [last name at birth?]

Born **30 Jun 1888** in **Alabama** 📍

Daughter of [father?] and [mother?]

Wife of **John William Howell** — married [marriage date?] [marriage location?]

[add spouse?]

[children?]

Died **15 May 1972** at age 83 in **Florida** 📍

Bessie M Howell Image 2

BESSIE M. HOWELL
1888 — 1972

Oak Hill Burial Park, Lakeland, Polk County, Florida

+Popularity ➕ | E-Card 📧 | Details 🔳

[location?] [date?] Comments: 0. Popularity: 1.

Family Members

Parents

Romulous Martin
1853–1928

Sophronie Martin
1856–1930

Spouse

John William Howell
1885–1951

Hint for LNAB

Verifying husband's name

❏ Consider broadening the date range if nothing is found on Find-a-Grave

Martha J Bassett [uncertain] formerly [last name at birth?]

Born **about 1805** [uncertain] in **Pennsylvania, United States**

Daughter of [father?] and [mother?]

Wife of **Archibald Bassett** — married [marriage date?] [marriage location?]

[add spouse?]

[children?]

Died **27 Jun 1889** at about age 84 in **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States**

Martha	Middle Name	Bassett

| 1805 | +/- 3 years ▼ | 1889 | +/- 3 years ▼ | Cemetery Location |

❏ Read the whole obituary or newspaper article cited on a profile for clues.

Biography

SIX KILLED IN BUS-CAR CRASH.

Chandler, Ariz., May 3 (UP) - Five members of one family and a bus driver were killed tonight when a car apparently sped through a stop sign and collided with a bus. Two other children in the family were critically injured and may not live. Twenty-three passengers on the bus were injured. Highway Patrolman Coy Beasley said the car, driven by TIVES PERRY, 33, of Collidge, Ariz., sped through the stop sign at Norton's Corners, three miles east of here, at about 45 miles an hour. The car was flattened against the bus, turned over and burned. The bus careened 132 feet along the road and smashed into a tree. Besides PERRY, the dead were his sister-in-law, MRS. HELEN CARTER, 45, of Coolidge, and three of her children, RUTH, 17, HELEN, 12, and SUE ANN, 6. Her two sons, DONALD, 10, and CARMEN, 11, were in critical condition. The dead bus driver was C. R. WINNER, 39, Phoenix.

The Salt Lake Tribune Utah 1948-05-04

❑ Use alternative names on the profile to look for possible surnames or other married names

Sarah Lorena Clements formerly [last name at birth?] aka **Hathcock**

Born **Oct 1864** in **Alabama, United States**

Daughter of William Hathcock and [mother?]

[brothers or sisters?]

Wife of **Peter Clements** — married [marriage date?] [marriage location?]

RootsSearch   Search   Help   Blog   G+   🐦   f

Given Name   Family Name

Sarah   Hathcock

Sara Rena Hathcock

Record of Bertha Elizabeth Lowe (Sara Rena Hathcock's Daughter)

Death • Alabama Deaths, 1908-1974

📑 SAVE   ✏ EDIT   ◁° SHARE

Name   **Sara Rena Hathcock**   **Attached in Family Tree to**
                                        Sarah Lorena Hathcock
Sex   **F**   1864–1928 • KGNX-R98

❏ Alternative names, cont'd

Sarah Lorena Hathcock
KGNX-R98

Birth
1864
St Clair County, Alabama

Death
22 OCT 1928
Tait's Gap, Blount, AL

Sources (11)   Collaborate (0)   Memories (0)

☆   ⌥   ⌳ TREE   ⚲ PERSON

• **Sarah Lorena Hathcock**
1864 – 22 October 1928 • KGNX-R98

Details   Time Line   Sources 11   Collaborate 0   Memories 0

Sources

⬤ Detail View   ➕ Add Source   ⚙ Options

	Date	Title
🌳	1882	Sarah R. Haithcock in entry for Peter Clements, "Alabama Marriages, 1816-1957" View Source
🌳	1882	Sarah R. Haithcock in entry for Peter Clements, "Alabama Marriages, 1816-1957" View Source
🌳	1882	Sarah R. Haithcock, "Alabama County Marriages, 1809-19__" View Source
🌳	1882	Sarah R Haithcock, "Alabama County Marriages, 1809-19__" View Source

❏ Have you found an "Unknown" man? Start with the wife!

John D [middle name?] **Mantel** formerly [last name at birth?]

Born **about 1863** [uncertain] [place of birth?]

Son of [father?] and [mother?]

Husband of **Argent Godwin** — married 2 Mar 1909 in Escambia, Alabama,

[add spouse?]

[children?]

Died [death date?] [place of death?]

❏ Search for wife's profile on FamilySearch
❏ Look for Alabama marriage records in 1909
❏ Click the link for his name in the marriage record to see if he has a FamilySearch profile
❏ Check his family connections to verify his last name – he is the son of a "Mantel"

❏ Stuck on the wife? Start with the husband!

Iola [middle name?] **Ramsey** formerly

Born **about 1898** [uncertain] in **Alabama** 📍

Daughter of [father?] and [mother?]

Wife of **Bruce Ramsey** — married [marriag

Elizabeth A. Weatherby formerly [last name at birth?]

Born **about 1800** [uncertain] in **Virginia, United States** 📍

Daughter of [father?] and [mother?]

Wife of **David Weatherby** — married [marriage date?] [marriage location?]

[add spouse?]

Mother of James W. Weatherby, Peter D. Weatherby and Emily Weatherby [add ch

Died **about 1860** [uncertain] at about age 60 in **prob Marshall County, Alabama,**

❏ Start search husband's profile
❏ Use found records for him to locate his FS profile
❏ Check his source list for clues
❏ Follow link on FamilySearch to get to her FS profile & check her sources
❏ Look for name misspellings

Help me! I'm still stuck!!

More tips for the tough ones …

- ❏ Gedcom-created profiles
  - ➤ Check original Profile Manager's contribution feed for profiles created about the same time
  - ➤ Search WikiTree for the name of the GEDCOM file
- ❏ Use G2G to ask for help
  - ➤ Share everything you know about the person – dates, locations, family members, etc
  - ➤ Use tags to attract the attention of members who might be able to help

Hallelujah! I found a name!

- ❏ Is the profile orphaned?
    - ➢ Adopt it
    - ➢ Change the name.
    - ➢ Click the Privacy Tab > Trusted List and use the "Remove Yourself" button to orphan it again.
- ❏ Does it have a profile manager?
    - ➢ Leave a friendly comment with sources & information and ask the Profile Manager to change it. Follow up on this in a couple of weeks.
    - ➢ Or … use the "**Request to join this profile's Trusted List**" link to request permission to edit the profile.
    - ➢ Remove yourself from the Trusted List when you're done.

Dead Ends

If after all your efforts, you have not been able to identify the surname, write a very descriptive **Research Notes** on the profile …

- ❏ Where did you search?
- ❏ What did you search for?
- ❏ When did you search?

== Research Notes ==
- I checked FamilySearch, Find-a-Grave, and Ancestry and couldn't find anything. – ~~~~

Hold on … what is "~~~~" ??

That little notation will leave a timestamp when you save your changes. It will include a link to your profile so that anyone stopping by later will know who left the note and when.

Other Improvements to Consider

❏ Did you add sources containing information about children or other relatives who don't have profiles?
  ➢ Add **[[Category: *Location*, Needs Profiles Created]]** (location can be a state, county or country – whichever one you have)

❏ If the race of the person represented by the profile is Black, please add the **{{African-American sticker}}**. The US Black Heritage Project can then follow up with additional research.

❏ Add as many categories as you can for locations. Someone researching those locations might have more information about the family for your Unknown.

Other Improvements to Consider, cont'd

If you haven't found much information, estimate a date using the following rules of thumb:

- ❏ For men
  - ❏ Wife's birth date - 5 years
  - ❏ Oldest child's birth date - 25 years
- ❏ For women
  - ❏ Husband's birth date + 5 years
  - ❏ Oldest child's birth date - 20 years
- ❏ Make sure to include the **{{Estimated Date}}** template & a Research Note

Want to get involved?

Get in touch with Pam at

https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Anderson-20093

She'll help you get started!