

## One Place Study

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#### What is a One Place Study?

A One Place Study is a comprehensive research approach focusing on a specific location. This method can lead to understanding the broader historical, social, and economic contexts of your ancestors' lives. It can potentially break through genealogical "brick walls." A One Place Study has no fixed guidelines. It is flexible to include whatever you feel is important, whatever records are extant, or whatever information will meet your research goals. It is a deep dive into any and all aspects of life in a place. It will also consider the physical environment—built and natural—and how it impacted the residents.

#### How to Start Your One Place Study

- **Select a Place:** Choose a location that intrigues you or is relevant to your genealogical research. This could be any physical location, from a small village to a broader area. Keep in mind that the larger the physical place or the longer the time frame you want to study, the larger the amount of data you will need to gather. Start smaller, if possible, to keep it manageable. Places to consider:
  - A City
  - A Town
  - A Village
  - A Hamlet
  - A Neighborhood
  - A Street
  - A Cemetery
  - A Building
  - A Business
  - A Church
  - A School
  - A House
  - A Civic Organization

#### Key Information Sources

Any information typically used in genealogical research is valuable for a One Place Study. You will also want to add information on the history of your place. County histories may help give you an historical overview of your place. Creating a locality guide on your place is a good first step. It will help you discover all the repositories that hold records of interest for your place. Determine what records exist for your place during the time period of your study.

- **Census Records:** Essential for understanding the demographic makeup of your place. Pre-1850 records focus on basic demographic information, while later records provide detailed individual data.
- **Vital and Religious Records:** Offer insights into population growth, origins, and religious affiliations, helping to piece together family groups and community ties.
- **Land and Tax Records:** Connect people to places and reveal patterns of land ownership, inheritance, and economic status.

- **Maps and Pictorial Records:** Use maps, including cadastral maps, to understand how people interacted with their environment and each other. Postcards and illustrations can give a visual impression of the natural and built environment.
- **Wills and Probate Records:** Illuminate familial and community relationships through land transactions and inventories.
- **Cemeteries:** As "neighborhoods of the dead," cemeteries provide vital data and reflect community relationships and changes over time.
- **Newspapers, Business Records, Diaries, and Memoirs:** Add depth to your study with personal stories, business activities, and social dynamics.

### Analyzing and Sharing Your Findings

Utilize spreadsheets, genealogy software, and databases to organize, analyze, and visualize your data. Remember to cite your sources.

- **Spreadsheets:** Excel, Google Sheets, and Airtable can help record your data and allow for analysis.
- **Family Tree Programs:** Can help in connecting families and illustrating community networks. RootsMagic allows for assigning roles to your people beyond familial associations. Name & Place is purpose built to support One Place Studies. WikiTree supports One Place Studies through a shared collaborative tree.

### Sharing and Collaboration

Publish your findings, engage with online communities, and collaborate with others interested in your study area.

- **WikiTree:** supports one place studies by hosting webpages for free where study leaders can collect and publish their findings on their place. You may find others who want to work on the same place with you or studies you can join. See [https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Category:One\\_Place\\_Studies](https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Category:One_Place_Studies)
- **The Society for One Place Studies:** maintains a registry of One Place Studies. The Society publishes an information packed quarterly journal. See <https://www.one-place-studies.org/studies/>

### Resources and Further Learning

- **One Place Study Communities:** Platforms like WikiTree offer support and collaboration opportunities for One Place Studies.
- **Education:** Consider courses from Pharos Tutors or the International Institute of Genealogical Studies, read *Ten Steps to a One-Place Study* by Janet Few, or attend the online conference *All About That Place* next September 2024.
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