

# The Paternal Ten: Searching for Missing Heirs

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## Taming the Beast

- Do thorough research to ensure everyone is accounted for:

### Musts

- Marriage records- were the bride and groom married previously?
- Divorce records- what children did a couple have? Important to get as messy divorces could mean children are left out of other records.
- Obituaries- provide information about who survived the decedent but are not always accurate.
- Probate records- more authoritative than obituaries.
- Census records- help to corroborate the information from other records.
- Interviews- help to highlight unusual situations like illegitimate or black sheep relatives.

### Really Like

- Birth records- prove who the parents of someone were. May show the number of children of the mother. These records may not be accessible to non-relatives.
  - Death records- to confirm place of residence for probate searches. But obituaries, SSDI and probate records can be used as proof of death.
  - Supportive miscellaneous
- In order to meet the GPS as much as possible, write a source cited report, unless an affidavit is required.
  - If thorough research is not possible due to the budget or record access issues, make sure to state this in your report and include a Suggestions For Further Research Section.
  - Do not make assumptions (Standard 45<sup>1</sup>). Assumptions can lead to mistakes.
  - Do not rely on only one source. Correlate information (Standard 47<sup>2</sup>).

### Protect Yourself

- Write a non-discovery clause into your contract, placing risk on the client, not yourself.
- Obtain error and omissions insurance:
  - Hiscox: [www.hiscox.com](http://www.hiscox.com)
  - RLI: [www.rlicorp.com](http://www.rlicorp.com)
- Become an LLC

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<sup>1</sup> Board for Certification of Genealogists, *Genealogy Standards*, second edition (Nashville, TN: Ancestry, 2019), pp. 26-27.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 27.

# Sample Source-Cited Report

## DECEDENT

**RICHARD BLANK, the decedent**, was born in Farmington, Hartford County, Connecticut on April 5, 1942, son of Francis Blank and Joanna Secret.<sup>3</sup> He died in Farmington, Hartford County, Connecticut on January 5, 2008, a resident of the same.<sup>4</sup>

Family indicate that the decedent was never married and had no children.<sup>5</sup> No marriage record was found in the Connecticut marriage index.<sup>6</sup>

## PARENTS

**FRANCIS BLANK, the decedent's father**, was born in Farmington, Hartford County, Connecticut on December 18, 1910, the son of Albert Blank and Rebecca Hush.<sup>7</sup> He died in Farmington, Hartford County, Connecticut on September 2, 1990, a resident of the same.<sup>8</sup> In Farmington, Hartford County, Connecticut on May 23, 1940, he married Joanna Secret.<sup>9</sup>

**JOANNA SECRET, the decedent's mother**, was born in Enfield, Hartford County, Connecticut on March 5, 1915, daughter of Samuel Secret and Margaret Private.<sup>10</sup> She died in Farmington, Hartford County, Connecticut on February 10, 2004, a resident of the same.<sup>11</sup>

Francis and Joanna's marriage record indicates it was the first marriage for both.<sup>12</sup>

Francis's obituary indicates he was the son of the late Albert Blank and Rebecca Hush. He was survived by his wife, Joanna, son Richard, and siblings: Ron, Ben and Evelyn.<sup>13</sup>

Francis's probate record gives his heirs as wife, Joanna and son, Richard.<sup>14</sup>

Joanna's obituary indicates she was the daughter of the late Samuel Secret and Margaret Private. She was preceded in death by her husband, Francis and survived by a son, Richard.<sup>15</sup>

Joanna's intestate estate was probated after Richard's but went entirely into his.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Connecticut Department of Public Health, Certificate of Birth #15213(1942), Richard Blank; State Vital Records Office, Hartford.

<sup>4</sup> Connecticut Department of Public Health, Certificate of Death #2008-0101, Richard Blank; State Vital Records Office, Hartford.

<sup>5</sup> Interviews with half aunts, Sarah and Victoria.

<sup>6</sup> Source

<sup>7</sup> Source

<sup>8</sup> Source

<sup>9</sup> Source

<sup>10</sup> Source

<sup>11</sup> Source

<sup>12</sup> Marriage source

<sup>13</sup> "Francis Blank," obituary, *The Hartford (CT) Courant*, 5 September 1990, p. 5, col. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Farmington, CT, Probate Records, 104: 160-162, Francis Blank (1990), Petition for Administration, 9 November 1990; Farmington Regional Probate Court, Farmington.

<sup>15</sup> Obituary source

<sup>16</sup> Farmington, CT, Probate File #345, Joanna Blank (2009), Petition for Administration, 10 November 2009; Farmington Regional Probate Court, Farmington.

Family indicate that Francis and Joanna only had one child.<sup>17</sup>

The evidence suggests that Francis and Joanna (Secret) Blank had one child, namely;

- 1) Richard Blank, the decedent

#### **PATERNAL FAMILY**

**ALBERT BLANK, the decedent's paternal grandfather**, was born,....He died....

In [place] on [date], he married Rebecca Hush. He married second in [place] on [date], Charlotte Mist. He married third in [place] on [date],.... **REBECCA HUSH, the decedent's paternal grandmother**, ....

[State all evidence and what it says as it relates to children of the couple]

Charlotte's obituary states,....Her will supports this. Although Charlotte's probate petition suggests she married Albert in 1922, this is inaccurate and it was found the couple actually married in 1934, after Albert's first wife had passed.<sup>18</sup>

Family corroborates the notion that Albert had two families simultaneously. They said that when Rebecca passed, Albert moved in with Charlotte, taking some of his children from his first marriage with him.<sup>19</sup>

This evidence suggests that Albert and Rebecca (Hush) Blank had seven children, namely;

- 1)
- 2) ....

Furthermore, this evidence suggests, Albert and Charlotte (Mist) Blank had five children, namely;

- 1) ....

Attached hereto are:

Exhibit #5: Obituary of Albert Blank

Exhibit #6: .....

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<sup>17</sup> Family interviews were conducted with Richards's half aunts Sarah and Victoria.

<sup>18</sup> Source

<sup>19</sup> Family interviews were conducted with Richards's half aunts Sarah and Victoria.

**PATERNAL  
AUNTS / UNCLES**

**EVELYN BLANK, the decedent's paternal aunt**, was born in [place] on [date], daughter of Albert Blank and Rebecca Hush.<sup>20</sup> She died in [place] on [date], a resident of [place].<sup>21</sup> She married **MR. X**.<sup>22</sup>

[Mention obituary here]

....

**PATERNAL  
HALF AUNTS / UNCLES**

**WALTER BLANK, the decedent's paternal half uncle**, was born in [place] on [date], son of Albert Blank and Charlotte Mist.<sup>23</sup> He died in [place] on [date], a resident of [place].<sup>24</sup>

**REUBEN BLANK, the decedent's paternal half uncle**, was born in [place] on [date], son of Albert Blank and Charlotte Mist.<sup>25</sup> He died in [place] on [date], a resident of [place].<sup>26</sup> As such, he **post-deceased the decedent**.

An estate is being probated for Reuben in Farmington, Connecticut, case #385. His wife, Elizabeth, is the Executrix. Her contact information is,...

**DOROTHY BLANK, the decedent's paternal half aunt**, was born in [place] on [date], daughter of Albert Blank and Charlotte Mist.<sup>27</sup> She married **MR. X**. **Dorothy survived the decedent**.

Dorothy's contact details are,...

....

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

[Often the budget is not sufficient to complete the research. Further research suggestions might include obtaining more records, interviewing family more,...]

[Include family tree and documents]

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<sup>20</sup> Source

<sup>21</sup> Source

<sup>22</sup> Source

<sup>23</sup> Source

<sup>24</sup> Source

<sup>25</sup> Source

<sup>26</sup> Source

<sup>27</sup> Source

# Sample Affidavit

I, Claire Ammon, with a mailing address of XXXX, being first duly sworn on oath, depose and say:

1. I am a Board-Certified genealogist, holding certificate no. X from the Board for Certification of Genealogists, valid until [date]. [May then state extent of experience in the forensic genealogy field].
2. On [date], I was asked by Attorney X, with a mailing address of X, on an hourly fee plus expenses basis, to identify and document the closest heirs-at-law of Richard Blank (the decedent). [If given instructions not to start research with decedent, make note here]. I have no interest in the outcome of this case.
3. I have inspected obituaries, probate records, census records, vital records,.....[list whatever else] and interviewed family.
4. Based on information and belief, I conclude that Richard Blank, the decedent, had no surviving children, siblings, nieces or nephews. His parents and grandparents predeceased. No maternal aunts or uncles survived him. However, he was survived by two paternal half aunts and a paternal half uncle.
5. **RICHARD BLANK, the decedent**, was born in Farmington, Hartford County, Connecticut on April 5, 1942, son of Francis Blank and Joanna Secret. He died in Farmington, Hartford County, Connecticut on January 5, 2008, a resident of the same. Attorney X, who knew Richard for over 30 years, indicated Richard was never married and had no children.

Attached hereto are:

- Exhibit #1 Birth Certificate of Richard Blank
- Exhibit #2 Death Certificate of Richard Blank

6. **FRANCIS BLANK, the decedent's father**, was born in Farmington, Hartford County, Connecticut on December 18, 1910, the son of Albert Blank and Rebecca Hush. He died in Farmington, Hartford County, Connecticut on September 2, 1990, a resident of the same. In Farmington, Hartford County, Connecticut on May 23, 1940, he married Joanna Secret. **JOANNA SECRET, the decedent's mother**, was born in Enfield, Hartford County, Connecticut on March 5, 1915, daughter of Samuel Secret and Margaret Private. She died in Farmington, Hartford County, Connecticut on February 10, 2004, a resident of the same.

They had one child, namely;

- 1) Richard Blank, the decedent

Attached hereto are:

- Exhibit #3 Marriage Record of Francis Blank and Joanna Secret, showing no prior unions.
- Exhibit #4 Obituary of Francis Blank, showing one child.

**PATERNAL FAMILY**

7. **ALBERT BLANK, the decedent’s paternal grandfather**, was born,....He died.... In [place] on [date], he married Rebecca Hush. He married second in [place] on [date], Charlotte Mist. He married third in [place] on [date],.... **REBECCA HUSH, the decedent’s paternal grandmother**, ....I reviewed the 1910, 1920 and 1930 censuses, obituaries, Charlotte’s probate record and interviewed family. No estate was filed for Albert in Farmington.

Albert and Rebecca had seven children, namely;  
 1) ...  
 2) ...

Albert and Charlotte had five children, namely;  
 1) ...

- Attached hereto are:
- Exhibit #8 Marriage record of Albert Blank and Rebecca Hush, showing no prior unions
  - Exhibit #9 Obituary of Albert Blank, naming 11 children
  - Exhibit #10
  - ....

8. **EVELYN BLANK, the decedent’s paternal aunt**,...  
 ....

**VERIFICATION**

The undersigned verifies that she is the affiant in the foregoing affidavit and states that the statements made therein are true and correct to the best of her knowledge, information and belief.

By \_\_\_\_\_  
 Claire Ammon, CG

Dated:

[suitable notarial statement]

\_\_\_\_\_  
 NOTARY PUBLIC