



Starting a One-Place Study:

1. Choosing a place

There are a number of factors you should consider when choosing a place to study:

Geographic location

Ideally you should have some connection with the place you are to study, but it isn't essential

Most people choose a place where either their ancestors have lived or where they themselves have lived

Those who have one-place studies already often take on neighbouring areas where former residents migrated to

Some people are happy to study a place where they have no connection just because they love doing it and want to give something back to the genealogical community

It's great if the place you are going to study is within easy reach, so that you can 'pace your place' taking photographs, interviewing long-term residents etc. and visit local archives

If the place you intend to study is far away, it needn't be a problem – many people study places from the other side of the world – online access to key records such as censuses and old maps plus social media such as facebook groups can help make up for the distance in between

Boundaries

The decision on boundaries is normally influenced by how available records are organised

For example, most Church of England records cover people living within the ecclesiastical *parish* – typically this is the *village* where the church is situated and a few small *hamlets* within the parish boundaries – the vast majority of studies in the UK are at parish level

A few people choose to study a *single street* but this can present difficulties the further back you go because most parish registers and some older censuses give the name of the village or hamlet only and not information by street

Some studies encompass a whole *town*, which can comprise a number of parishes, a whole *city* or, for studies in the United States, even a whole *county*

Size

Size does matter if you intend to research your place thoroughly – the higher its population the more work involved

Over half of all studies had an 1881 population of 600 people or less and over a quarter had an 1881 population of 300 or less

If you are particularly keen to take on a study with a population of more than 500 people, one option would be to limit your research initially to a set period, say 1841 to 1881, and then expand later once you've got to grips with the initial data

Solo or team effort

Most studies are undertaken by individuals but a number of groups have taken on studies, especially local history groups wanting to add the genealogical dimension

Some studies are collaborative efforts, for example most Wiltshire studies are 'owned' by the Wiltshire OPC project and 'online parish clerks' contribute material to them

Some collaborative studies have total 1881 populations well in excess of 100,000 people

Stake your claim

You need to check first that nobody else has already 'registered' your place as a One-Place Study by going to the worldwide [One-Place Study Register](#) – if nobody has, then register straightaway – it's totally free

If the place has already been registered, then you may wish to contact the study owner and offer to work collaboratively, or you may choose another place to study

What next?

See our other guides for even more helpful information on starting your study

Above all – enjoy your study!