



Are You Related to Royalty?

Millions of Americans have family ties to Prince William or Kate Middleton — you could be among them

by: Judi Hasson | from: [AARP](#) | April 14, 2011



Prince William and Kate Middleton share their first public kiss as man and wife. Her new title is Duchess of Cambridge. — Peter Macdiarmid/Getty Images

You probably were not lucky enough to snag an invitation to the royal wedding at Westminster Abbey, but you may be one of an estimated 5 million to 10 million Americans who are related to Prince William and Kate Middleton.

See also: [The Royal Wedding on TV](#)

The House of Windsor has a long reach in the United States: Lady Diana, the prince's mother, was one-eighth American. Her great-grandfather was born in Ohio. Former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin is a distant relative — a 10th cousin.

Kate Middleton, a commoner who wed Prince William and will be officially known as Catherine the Dutchess of Cambridge, can help you get into the "Related to Royals" club, too. Her ancestors can be traced to Virginia,

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Massachusetts and Maryland. Talk show host Ellen DeGeneres is a 14th cousin twice removed.

"If your ancestors were just poor, it diminishes the odds of making a royal connection," says Anastasia Harman, lead family historian for Ancestry.com. "You want to look for your wealthier ancestors."

Here are some tips to consider when you conduct your search:

Common surnames. Look for last names in your [family tree](#) that you share with William or Kate's family. For William: Windsor, Stuart, Spencer or Plantagenet. For Kate: Middleton, Goldsmith, Harrison, Temple or Webster.

Noble titles. Be on the lookout for titles such as "Sir," "Count" or "Duke" in your own family.

High society. Search for evidence of wealthy ancestors with land and business holdings. Check out their wills and probate records. It may require a trip to a county courthouse but [more records are being put online](#) every day. Keep an eye out for records of ancestors who traveled first class — another sign of money, status and possibly royal connections.



Try researching surnames such as Windsor or Stuart to see if you have a family connection to the British royal family —
Adrian Dennis/AFP/Getty Images

Royal websites. Check out the Royal Family Tree at <http://www.royal-family-tree.co.uk/> and the official website of the British monarch at <http://www.royal.gov.uk/>.

Reading list. These books may give you some clues: *The Ancestry of Catherine Middleton* by William A. Reitwiesner; *The Ancestry of Diana Princess of Wales* by Richard Evans; *The Royal Descents of 600 Immigrants to the American Colonies or the United States* by Gary Boyd Roberts.

You could strike gold or hit a dead end.

[Viewing Party. Read](#)

- [What's Your Family Story? Read](#)
- [Solving Family Mysteries with DNA. Read](#)

"For some people, it can happen in an instant. For others, it can take 20-30 years worth of work," says Joshua Taylor, director of education at the New England Historic Genealogical Society.

Either way, you might decide it's worth finding out.

Begin Searching Your Royal Roots

A few tips for tracing your lineage to the Royals:

Familysearch.org The Church of the Latter-Day Saints in Salt Lake City can help your search for free. It won't plug you directly into Kate's line, but you can track her American descendants and see if you are related to them. It has satellite offices across the country. See <https://familysearch.org/locations>.

Americanancestors.org This is the database of the New England Historic Genealogical Society. Some of its databases are free, and you can tap into Massachusetts' vital statistics from 1620, when royal ancestors started to appear on the counting rolls. Also see the society's www.notablekin.org site.

Ancestry.com The family search is free. There's a \$12.99 monthly subscription rate for ancestry searches. It will plow through historical records, including U.S. and British censuses. Look for family census records listing domestic servants, a sign of wealth and possible connection to the royals.