

# Family Heritage Experience



## The Family Heritage Experience Origin and Purpose

### **Short Version:**

The Family Heritage Experience will bring the joy and rewards of family history to a wider audience than ever before, a significant milestone in American Ancestors' mission to advance the study of family history in America and beyond. This exciting new attraction was first conceived in 2012, when American Ancestors purchased the building next door to our headquarters on Newbury Street in Boston. Over the next several years, we developed a plan to expand our facilities, combining the two buildings to create a state-of-the-art exhibition on the first floor to engage a broader audience in family history. Construction commenced in 2023, and the new Family Heritage Experience will open to the public on April 25, 2025.

### **Full Version:**

American Ancestors is the nation's oldest organization dedicated to family history. Our mission is to advance the study of family history in America and beyond by educating, inspiring, and connecting people to their own unique family stories. The Family History Experience will allow American Ancestors to bring the power and benefits of family history to a wider audience than ever before.

The seeds for the Family History Experience were planted in 2012 when American Ancestors purchased the building at 97 Newbury Street in Boston, next door to our headquarters at 99-101 Newbury, with the goal of expanding our space. In 2013, our board approved a strategic plan that called for communicating "our compelling and clearly articulated purpose that places people first and explains why what we do is important."

Early plans were created for a new visitor center which would allow American Ancestors to reach a broader audience of New England residents, plus visitors to Boston from all over the world. In 2016, architectural plans were drafted for a new state-of-the-art facility at 97 Newbury. In 2020, it was decided that the two Newbury Street buildings would be restructured and combined into a single upgraded facility, with an expanded visitor center occupying the entire first floor. We began working with museum professionals to develop interactive exhibits to engage people of all backgrounds in exploring their family histories. Construction began in 2023, and the new Family Heritage Experience will open to visitors on April 25, 2025.