The Process of Research

Research Question - The process of research is focused. You will start with a Research Question. What is it that you want to know about next? Who is it, where is it, and what is it you want to know?

Research Plan – After you have created a Research Question, you will create a Research Plan. This is where you methodically figure out, what records or sources might provide the answer the Research Question and, where might be records. This is your Research Plan.

You may not have the answers or knowledge of what records are available and where they are found in the beginning. This is where you will need to do a little research to find out.

When you don't know where to look, start on the [FamilySearch Wiki](#) or [Cyndi's List](#). There are a host of other places to look, but these are a couple great places every genealogist should have bookmarked.

Search by location and by subject. For example, if part of your Research Plan is to look for a marriage record for your ancestor… You would search for "where to find marriage records in Johnson County, Kansas?" You can even Google this question.

On the FamilySearch Wiki and on Cyndi's List, drill down by location, then by subject.

You will also be looking on the service you're using. For example, at Ancestry.com you would go to Search, Card Catalog, and research there by location first (in the left side column) or by subject or keyword. Search all three ways (individually) to find the most record results.

Research - This is where you execute your research plan. Look for the people and or records in your plan and be sure to search with several different spellings.

Once you have an idea of what you are looking for you can start the research.

Document Your Findings - After the research, collect, analyze, and file what you've found, add your findings to your Research Notes.

Conflict Resolutions - Resolve conflicting data. This is another course in itself, but in short, you're looking for logical explanations or other primary documentation that proves one fact over another, or to prove a hypothesis.

Written Conclusions - Write your conclusions in a case study resolving the conflict or simply add your resolution to your Research Notes for that ancestor.

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