The Process of Research

Research Question	Research Plan	Research	Document Findings	Resolve Conflicts	Write Your Conclusions

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 when did this happen?

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 to the Research Question and where you might find the records. This is your Research Plan.

RESEARCH PLAN (Example)
- ❑ Census Records for 1860 in Randolph County
- ❑ Research F.A.N. Club in 1860 Census
- ❑ Death Records for Gus
- ❑ Death Records for Rebecca
- ❑ Newspapers during the time.
- ❑ Court Records (Bastardy Bonds)
- ❑ Tax Records (if Rebecca Owned Land)
- ❑ Rebecca's Father's Will?
- ❑ Close Family Top to Bottom (B. to D.)
- ❑ Land Records for Gus and Rebecca
- ❑ 1870-1940 Census for Gus
- ❑ 1830-1910 Census for Rebecca
- ❑ State Census?
- ❑ City Directories
- ❑ Quaker Records
- ❑ Cemetery

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.

GenealogyTV.org   **You Tube**   **YouTube.com/GenealogyTV**

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.

Plan Your Research
&
Research Your Plan

Once you have an idea of what you are looking for you can start the research. Remember, you're using the list you created during the research plan phase.

A Few Places to Look for the Records from the Plan

- ❑ Personal Archives/Records
- ❑ Online Platforms
  - ❑ Ancestry
  - ❑ FamilySearch
  - ❑ WikiTree
  - ❑ MyHeritage
  - ❑ Geni
- ❑ State Archives
- ❑ National Archives
- ❑ County Courthouse
  - ❑ Vital Records
  - ❑ Court Documents

- ❑ Newspapers
  - ❑ Newspapers.com
  - ❑ NewspaperArchives.com
  - ❑ GenealogyBank.com
  - ❑ Chronicling America (Loc.gov)
  - ❑ State Archives
  - ❑ Local Libraries
- ❑ Manuscripts/Family Histories/Local Histories
  - ❑ Libraries
  - ❑ Archives
  - ❑ Persi (https://www.genealogycenter.info/persi/)
  - ❑ Jstor (https://www.jstor.org/)
  - ❑ WorldCat (https://www.worldcat.org/)

Document Your Findings

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

This is where good skills about evidnce analysis comes in. See the lessons on Correlating Evidence and Evidnce Analysis in the Live Classroom course.

- Compare the Evidence
  - Across All Records for that Ancestor
  - Across Family & FAN Club
- Weigh the Evidence
  - What has more street-cred?
  - See Evidence Evaluation Lessons in Live Sessions Course

Conflict Resolutions

Resolve conflicting data. 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.

- Simple or Complex
- Outline
  - Problem
    - Restate the Research Question in Detail.
  - Findings
    - List Only Relevant Evidence with Details of Each.
  - Reasoning for Your Conclusion
- Add to Your Research Notes!

Follow the Evidence