

Sharpen Your Research Skills - 20 Ways

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Turning on more search lights--clues and tools--may reveal your ancestors are not really illusive.

1- Re-examine your records

RE-search previously read sources for updates
Watch for various spellings and advanced search capabilities

2- Maximize use of the FH Library Catalog (FHLC)

Understand topics, jurisdictions, locality browse, keyword, related places & time periods
Print and Prioritize (paste descriptions, author, call #s, publ., etc. to Research Calendar)

3- Use Research Outlines, Guidance and FamilySearch Wiki to learn more resources

Contribute information you have acquired

4- Check FamilySearch.org often

Watch for clues in IGI data of extracted documents (be cautious with submitters data)
* Records Search Pilot (*new records are added frequently)
Census and Vital records

5- What additional records are possible

Use a resources checklist
Learn availability

6- Record all searches

Use Research Calendars with timelines, analytical, and discrepancy forms
Organize research and file documents

7- Books and documents are digitized and more readily available

lib.byu.edu (FS Historical Books)
BYU-Idaho, other libraries (WorldCat) and Societies
Google Books
HeritageQuest

8- Learn what is new on websites

FS websites list
Ancestry.com
Footnote.com
usgenweb.org
Allen County Public Library, universities and other libraries
World Vital Records
NARA and DAR
NUCMC (of Lib. of Congress), Mid-Continent Library, etc.
Progenealogists.com (see sleuth website list)

- 9- Google ancestors names, possibly with places or dates; local history, churches, cemeteries, etc.
- 10- Locate original documents
Examine thoroughly for additional clues
- 11- Watch for neighbors, associates and witnesses
Has the source been extracted?
Check IGI by Batch number search
- 12- Write a history or research report
Analysis and evaluating research is helpful
- 13- Consult county and local histories and biographies
Learn early boundary changes -- Do radial searches
Use an Area resources form
*for LDS – Overland Trails, Mormon Emigration, diaries, etc.
- 14- Refer to a state or county guide for archives and collections
Learn county courthouse, library, resources, churches, cemeteries, local census, etc.
Use land, probate, court, periodical (PERSI), newsletters, & lesser used sources
Map ancestral neighborhood
Study history of churches in the area
Learn migration routes -to and from
- 15- Become a member of the county historical and/or genealogical society
Read the societies periodical or newsletters
For business, funeral home and school records, family Bibles, diaries, letters, etc.
Often not microfilmed, publishes or posted online
- 16- Use Census clues and substitutes
City directories, WWI draft registrations, Tax & tithables
- 17- Attend classes, seminars and conferences
- 18- Subscribe to a FH magazine
- 19- Learn about living cousins with information, share with them
Is there a family bible, records or photos?
Do descendancy research
Obituaries list descendants - possibly online.
Add local historical events to ancestors **timelines**
- 20- Consult with an experienced researcher for review of your research and suggestions
Often talking out the problem reveals ideas or answers