

SEARCH & RESCUE: HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR SEARCH & ANALYSIS

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STEP 1: ANALYZE

- Become an ACTIVE researcher
- Start with what you know.
- Look for holes.
- Look for missing pieces.

STEP 2: SET GOALS

- What record will answer the question?
- Use the information you have.
- Be specific!
- Keep track of all your goals in one place!

STEP 3: SURVEY

Research Ancestor's Place of Residence:

- Study Country, State, County, and City History
- Learn record types and availability for each jurisdiction
- Keep binders of information for each state you frequently work in

Helps:

- *Ancestry's Redbook*
- *The Handybook for Genealogists*
- *The Source: A Guidebook to American Genealogy*
- FamilySearch Wiki

STEP 4: RESEARCH

Terms & Definitions:

- Original Record vs. Compiled Record
- Primary Evidence vs. Secondary Evidence
- Direct Evidence vs. Circumstantial Evidence

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Tips:

- Know the records in your area.
- Revisit sources over & over.
- Complete whole families

Searching General Search Engines:

- Use keywords
 - Surname
 - Whole name
 - Genealogy
 - Family History
 - Place of Residence
 - Use “ ”
 - Use “AND”
 - Examples “James M Frazer” AND Genealogy
 - Example: Messeege & Seattle
- Search for sites and resources in your place of research

Searching Genealogy Websites:

- Search the specific database you
 - Want
- Specific → Broad
- Search for other family members
- Use wildcard *
- Try name variations

Searching Newspapers with General Search Engines:

- Use keywords
- Use “ ”
- Use date dates
- Searching actual text
- Consider how it would have been written at the time
- Try name variations
 - “James M Frazer”
 - “James Frazer”
 - “J M Frazer”
 - “Capt Frazer”
 - James AND Frazer AND McGovern

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STEP 5: RECORD

Research Logs:

- Keep a log of your research
- Excel
- Evernote
- ResearchTies

How to Source your Records:

- *Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace* by Elizabeth Shown Mills
- Family Tree Software or Online Family Tree source templates