

The steps to family history research

A brief overview that does not cover everything!

Research question

- ◆ What am I stuck with?
- ◆ Am I focused on the right thing?
- ◆ Do I have to do something else first?
- ◆ Focus tightly
- ◆ Ten words or less

What do I know?

- ◆ Do I already have what I need?
- ◆ Where is it?
- ◆ Gather all relevant information, online or paper
- ◆ Organise it

Evaluate and analyse

- ◆ The most important step
- ◆ Did I get everything from the record?
- ◆ Would a timeline help me understand what this means?
- ◆ Says who? Evaluate the person who provided the information
- ◆ Identify the nuggets – what applies to my research question
- ◆ Many forms of analysis depending on the complexity of the research and the information

Do I have enough to answer my question?

- ◆ Yes – go to record and explain
- ◆ No – go to planning

Plan my search

- ◆ What records exist to answer my question?
- ◆ Where will I find them?
- ◆ Plan out my steps to gather information

Search and gather information

- ◆ Use different search terms
- ◆ Put my search terms together differently
- ◆ Transcribe the records I find to make sure I capture everything
- ◆ Take screenshots, annotate my copies to highlight important clues

Evaluate and analyse (again)

- ◆ The most important step!

Record and explain

- ◆ Capture the answer to my question in writing
- ◆ In my family history software, or my journal, or my paper tree, or a formal research report, or my blog, or on facebook, or however I want to make sure this one small piece of evidence is recorded.
- ◆ Explain any inconsistencies with other information I have regarding the same question. Eg a different date or place or name.

