

# Tips and Skills for Researching

**Focus: To help you gather and analyze your research**

**If you want to be a good genealogist,  
Read at least one article on "Genealogy Methodology" each week.  
Please be willing to learn and "Educate Yourself".**

## ***Basic Rules:***

- **Complete Names** - Capitalize entire surname; for women – use maiden names; married names
- **Complete Locations** - City, County, State, Country – do not abbreviate
- **Complete Dates** - Day – month – year; spell name of month; Use all four digits of a year
- **No small pieces of paper**
- **Spelling of your surname was most likely spelled differently** in previous generations.
- **Do not use pronouns** when writing – state each person by given and surnames
- **Review often your previous research – you will see additional facts and data**
- **Make a Time Line** – just one line with year and age and fact and source
- **Try to Read the Old Handwriting** – helps are on the internet
- **Complete Citation** so you or others can find the source again
- **Source will list what information is found** in each source

## ***SOURCES AND CITATIONS ARE DIFFERENT!***

**After Family Information** has been gathered –

- **First research compiled records** and then original documents
- **www.FamilySearch.org is wonderful!** More there than you ever imagined!

**WHAT do you do with the variety of documents available at a County Court House?**

**Many are microfilmed and indexed, on FamilySearch.org**

**Transcription** – type exact word for word

**Abstraction** – uses the "important stuff" of dates, names, places

**Extraction** –after transcription, uses ellipses – "dot dot dot" when something is left out;  
Example is in obituaries

**Maps & Censuses** – done by townships and counties and states.

Censuses are extremely valuable – find your family on every census they are living.

Plot your families by consecutive census with names and ages. What differences do you see?

### **Important Books at Mesa FamilySearch Library**

- **Map Guide to the U.S. Federal Censuses 1790-1920**

- **Township Atlas of the United States (6 inches thick and 1184 pages)**

### **Documents in Court Houses –**

**Wills, Estate Settlements,**

**Land - buying and selling,**

**Military Rosters and Censuses,**

**Coroner's inquest, great when death by accident or unexplained**

**Court records for trials, divorces, adoptions, name changes, etc.**

Look for - names of spouses, children, executors, handwritings, signatures, locations, etc.

**Use: Research Log and Abstract Information from a Document** – number your documents

**County Historical Societies** – family files, books, photographs, newspapers, obituaries, etc.

Support your counties by joining with membership.

**Church Records** – spellings of names, spouses, dates of baptisms, communion, marriages, etc. most are compiled records at libraries or historical societies.

**Cemeteries** – go and experience the sacred feelings. Take a photo of you by your ancestor.

Use FindaGrave.com

**Photographs** – gather and share, and help each other!

GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH OFTEN A LIFETIME PURSUIT IS A JOURNEY  
AND NOT A DESTINATION, SO ENJOY THE RIDE!

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