

Building Your Genealogical Skills

Research 1: Planning

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THE BRUE FAMILY LEARNING CENTER



American Ancestors®
by NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Course Overview

Part 1 - Basics

B1: Principles of
Genealogical
Research

B2: Learning About
Records

Part 2 - Researching

R1: Planning for
Research

R2: How to
Research

R3: Organizing for
Family Historians

Part 3 - Analyzing

A1: Citations

A2: Critically
evaluating your
findings

Module Roadmap

Crafting Research Questions

A light green downward-pointing arrow indicating the flow from the first step to the second.

Planning Research

A light teal downward-pointing arrow indicating the flow from the second step to the third.

Where to Research

A Focus on Step Four

Step 1

- Identify what you know

Step 2

- Decide what you want to learn (Research goal)

Step 3

- Identify and locate your sources

Step 4

- Research!

Step 5

- Analyze

Step 4: Research!

- Is more than “searching”
- **What:** Make a plan to begin answering your questions
- **Where:** Online and other repositories
- **How:** General principles
 - Consult multiple sources
 - Gather as many records as possible about a family or individual that you can find
 - Track your work! (Research log)

What: Researching Planning

Make a Plan

- What do you want to learn? (Goal)

Step 1



- What do you already know?

Step 2



- Do your background homework

Step 3



- Create your plan

Step 4



- Execute and fine tune your plan

Step 5



Step 1: Creating Good Research Questions

- Make the question specific, answerable, realistic, timely
- Include name, place and date in the question
- Focus on genealogical questions, e.g.:
 - Identity
 - Kinship
 - Events
- Focus on a person



Sample Question

- Who are the parents of Elizabeth Harris who married Martin Powell in Manchester Vermont in 1778?
- Name (s)
- Place
- Date

Research Plan Template

- Research subject
- ✓ Research question
- What is known about the question (and how it is known)
- Record dates – for reference
- Working hypotheses
- Which records will I need
- Search strategy

Research Plan Template

Research Subject:									
Name:	Birth and place:	Marriage and place: Name of spouse:	Death and place:						
Names and birthdates of children:									
Additional Information									
Research Question:									
What Is Known About the Question?									
Fact		Source of Fact:							
Record Dates ¹									
Place	Formed	Birth	Marriage	Death	Court	Land	Probate	Census	Record Loss
What is the Working Hypothesis?									
1.									
2.									
3.									
Which Records Will I Need?									
Record	Purpose		Source/Repository						
Search Strategy:									

¹ Use Family Search Research Wiki to copy and paste dates for County record dates

Step 2: What Do You Already Know?

- About Subject
 - Identify the *Where* and the *When* for your subject
 - Helpful to list vital events – with *place*
 - Name of spouse(s)
 - Names and dob(s) for children
- About the Question
 - Not just what you know, but HOW you know it
 - Focus on what is relevant to the Research Question



What is Known About Subject?

Research Subject:			
Name:	Birth and place:	Marriage and place: Name of spouse:	Death and place:
Elizabeth Harris	Ca 1738, place unknown	1 Mar 1778, Manchester, Vermont Martin Powell	Unknown
Names and birthdates of children: Silas b. ca 1779 – Manchester, VT Electa b. ca 1781 – Manchester, VT Sarah b. ca 1782 – Manchester, VT			
Additional Information			

What is Known About the Question?

Research Question:

Who are the parents of Elizabeth Harris?

What Is Known About the Question?

Fact	Source of Fact:
Her husband, Martin Powell was born in Amenia, NY	Find a Grave
Martin's first wife was Rhoda Thompson who died in 1777 in Manchester, VT	Vermont Vital Records
Rhoda may have married Martin in Amenia, NY	Ancestry tree

Research Plan Template

- ✓ Research subject
- Research question
- ✓ What is known about the question (and how it is known)
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Research Plan Template

Research Subject:									
Name:	Birth and place:	Marriage and place: Name of spouse:	Death and place:						
Names and birthdates of children:									
Additional Information									
Research Question:									
What Is Known About the Question?									
Fact	Source of Fact:								
Record Dates ¹									
Place	Year	Birth	Marriage	Death	Court	Land	Probate	Census	Record Loss
What is the Working Hypothesis?									
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Which Records Will I Need?									
Record	Purpose		Source/Repository						
Search Strategy:									

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Step 3: Background Homework



- Learn about the place and time
- Learn about the geography (get a map)
- What do we think happened? (Hypothesis)
- Which records are most likely to have the answer?
- Where are those records? Which repositories?



Learning About a Place

- Date community was founded
- Dates of earliest records
- Any record loss issues

FamilySearch Research Wiki

A Genealogy Resource Guide

100,176 articles

Find the birth, death, marriage, census records, and other genealogy resources for your ancestor by selecting the region and country below.

- Dutchess County**, New York Genealogy
- Dutchess County**, New York Courthouse
- Dutchess County** New York Public Libraries
- Category:Dutchess County, New York
- containing...
- Dutchess County*

[Find Search Tips](#)

[List of all Localities](#)



Finding Records Dates

Page **Talk**

Read View source View history More Search by place or topic

Dutchess County, New York Genealogy

[United States Genealogy](#) → [New York](#) → [Dutchess County](#)

Guide to **Dutchess County, New York ancestry, family history, and genealogy** birth records, marriage records, death records, census records, and military records.

This page describes sources of genealogical data about Dutchess County, New York Genealogy families, including links to smaller localities at the bottom of this page. [New York](#), [United States Genealogy](#)-related pages show useful statewide sources. [United States Genealogy](#) pages explain the terminology and contents of genealogical records.

[New York Online Genealogy Records](#)

Contents [hide]

- 1 Dutchess County New York Historical Facts
 - 1.1 Description
 - 1.2 Dutchess County, New York Record Dates
 - 1.3 Parent County
 - 1.4 Neighboring Counties
 - 1.5 Boundary Changes
 - 1.6 Record Loss
 - 1.7 Populated Places
- 2 Dutchess County New York Genealogy Resources
 - 2.1 Bible Records
 - 2.2 Biography
 - 2.3 Business Records and Commerce
 - 2.4 Cemeteries
 - 2.5 Census
 - 2.5.1 Federal
 - 2.5.2 State
 - 2.6 Church Records
 - 2.6.1 Dutch Reformed
 - 2.6.2 Presbyterian
 - 2.6.3 Quaker
 - 2.7 Court Records
 - 2.8 Crime and Criminals
 - 2.9 Directories
 - 2.10 Emigration and Immigration

Dutchess County, New York

Map

Location in the state of New York, [United States Genealogy](#)

Location of New York in the U.S.

Facts

Founded	1683
County Seat	Poughkeepsie

Dutchess County, NY Wiki

Bennington County, Vermont Record Dates [\[edit | edit source \]](#)

Known Beginning Dates for Major County Records ^[2]						
Birth*	Marriage	Death*	Court	Land	Probate	Census
at town creation	at town creation	at town creation	1861	1782	1778	1790
*Statewide registration for births and deaths began in 1857. General compliance year is unknown.						

Contents [\[hide\]](#)

- 1 Description
- 2 Bennington County, Vermont Record Dates
- 3 County Courthouse
- 4 Quick Facts
 - 4.1 Parent County
 - 4.2 Boundary Changes
 - 4.3 Record Loss

Record Loss [\[edit | edit source \]](#)

There is no known history of courthouse disasters in this county.

Bennington County, Vermont

Map



Location in the state of Vermont,
[United States Genealogy](#)

Facts

Founded	February 11, 1779
County Seat	Bennington

Bennington County, VT

Dutchess County New York Historical Facts [\[edit | edit source \]](#)

Description [\[edit | edit source \]](#)

The County was named for Mary of Modena, Duchess of York - the term Dutchess is an archaic form of the word duchess. The

Dutchess County, New York Record Dates [\[edit | edit source \]](#)

Known Beginning Dates for Major County Records ^[2]						
Birth*	Marriage	Death*	Court	Land	Probate	Census
1880	1908	1880	1730	1718	1752	1663

*Statewide registration for births and deaths started in 1880. General compliance for bi

[Contents](#) [\[hide\]](#)

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 - 1.7 Populated Places

Record Loss [\[edit | edit source \]](#)

The county courthouse in Poughkeepsie was burned in an 1806 fire. No public records were destroyed.^[4]

Populated Places [\[edit | edit source \]](#)

Dutchess County, New York

Map



Location in the state of New York,
[United States Genealogy](#)



Location of New York in the U.S.

Facts

Founded	1683
County Seat	Poughkeepsie

Dutchess County, NY

Record Dates

Place	Formed	Birth	Marriage	Death	Court	Land	Probate	Census	Record Loss
Bennington, VT	1779	at town creation	at town creation	at town creation	1861	1782	1778	1790	None
Dutchess, NY	1663	1880	1908	1880	1730	1718	1752	1663	None

Dates in template

Hypothesis Example

What is the Working Hypothesis?

1. Elizabeth Harris was a widow in Manchester, Vermont, when she married Martin Powell in 1778
2. Elizabeth Harris was a spinster when she married Martin Powell

Research Plan Template

- Research subject
- Research question
- What is known about the question (and how it is known)
- ✓ Record dates – for reference
- ✓ Working hypotheses
- Which records will I need
- Search strategy

Research Plan Template

Research Subject:									
Name:	Birth and place:	Marriage and place: Name of spouse:		Death and place:					
Names and birthdates of children:									
Additional Information									
Research Question:									
What Is Known About the Question?									
Fact					Source of Fact:				
Record Dates ¹									
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What is the Working Hypothesis?									
1.									
2.									
3.									
Which Records Will I Need?									
Record		Purpose			Source/Repository				
Search Strategy:									

¹ Use Family Search Research Wiki to copy and paste dates for County record dates

Which Records (Basic)

Which Records Will I Need?

Record	Purpose	Source/Repository
Marriage records of Manchester Vermont	First marriage of Elizabeth Harris	FamilySearch.org, AmericanAncestors.org or Ancestry.com
Vital records of Amenia, NY	First marriage or any mention of Harris family	FamilySearch.org, AmericanAncestors.org or Ancestry.com
Town history of Manchester, VT	Any mention of the Harris family	HathiTrust.org or local historical society

Which Records (Advanced)

Which Records Will I Need?

Record	Purpose	Source/Repository
Card index to vital statistics in the early land and town records books, Manchester Vermont	First marriage of Elizabeth Harris	https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/664510?availability=Family%20History%20Library
Vital records, 1749-1786 of Amenia, NY	First marriage or any mention of Harris family	https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/380341?availability=Family%20History%20Library
John S. Pettibone, "Early History of Manchester," Proceedings of the Vermont Historical Society 1930 Vol 1 (4), page 158	Any mention of the Harris family	https://vermonthistory.org/journal/misc/EarlyHistoryOfManchester.pdf

Research Plan Template

- Research subject
- Research question
- What is known about the question (and how it is known)
- Record dates – for reference
- Working hypotheses
- ✓ Which records will I need
- ✓ Search strategy

Research Plan Template

Research Subject:

Name:	Birth and place:	Marriage and place: Name of spouse:	Death and place:

Names and birthdates of children:

Additional Information

Research Question:

What Is Known About the Question?

Fact	Source of Fact:

Record Dates¹

Place	Formed	Birth	Marriage	Death	Court	Land	Probate	Census	Record Loss

What is the Working Hypothesis?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Which Records Will I Need?

Record	Purpose	Source/Repository

Search Strategy:

Use the Family Search Research Wiki to copy and paste dates for County record dates.

Put it Together

- ✓ Research subject
- ✓ Research question
- ✓ What is known about the question (and how it is known)
- ✓ Record dates – for reference
- ✓ Working hypotheses
- ✓ Which records will I need
- ✓ Search strategy

Research Plan Template

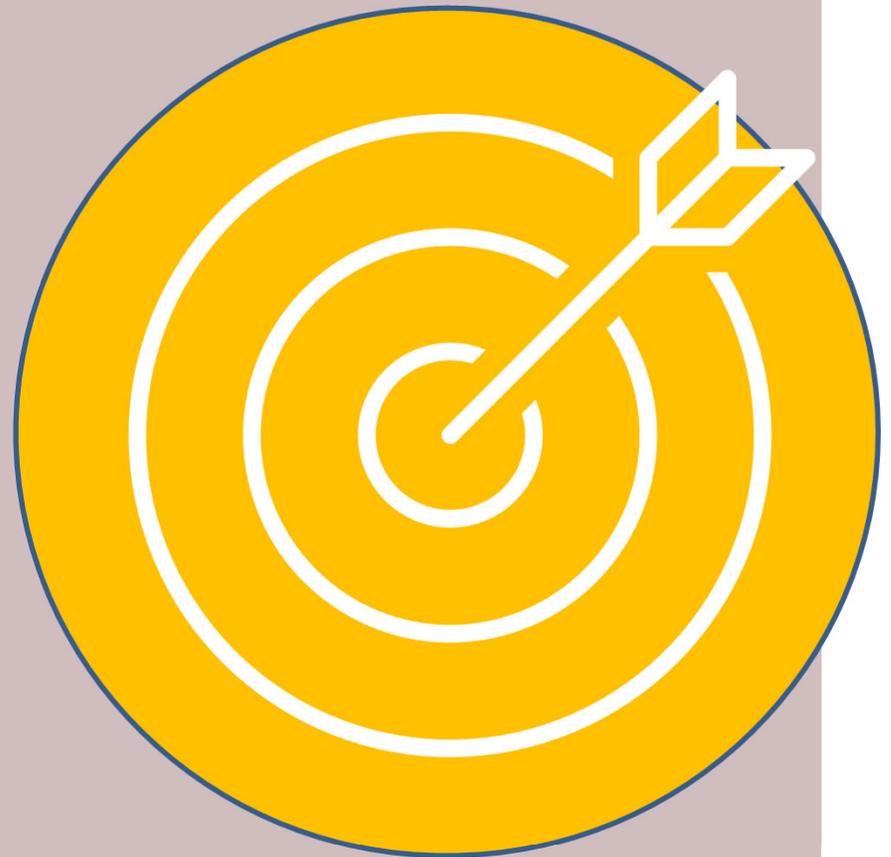
Research Subject:									
Name:	Birth and place:	Marriage and place: Name of spouse:	Death and place:						
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Research Question:									
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Keep a Research Log

- Keeps track of what you have searched and what you have found
 - Write down search strings
- Prevents rework
- Record negative findings
- Cites sources
- Can be a roadmap for the research process



What to Fill In Before Viewing a Record

- Person/Place/Event focus of search
- Date
- **Source/Repository** – e.g. Ancestry: 1870 census – New Albany, Indiana
- Call Number (if any)
- **Objective** - write the person or event you seek for **each** search so you will later know whether you need to search the same source again for a different person or event.

Person

Research Log

Repository: Elizabeth Harris

Date:

Source Information (title, author, publisher, publication date, etc.)	Call Number (film number, URL, etc.)	Objective	Results
Card index to vital statistics in the early land and town records books, Manchester, Vermont	https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/664510?availability=Family%20History%20Library	First marriage of Elizabeth Harris	Null
Vital records, 1749-1786 of Amenia, NY	https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/380341?availability=Family%20History%20Library	First marriage or any mention of Harris family	Null
John S. Pettibone, "Early History of Manchester," Proceedings of the Vermont Historical Society 1930 Vol 1 (4), page 158	https://vermonthistory.org/journal/miso/EarlyHistoryOfManchester.pdf	Any mention of the Harris family	Bingo - Elizabeth Harris was sister of Esquire Powel's second wife was the widow of Joseph Harris and sister to Isaac Whelpley. Captain Isaac BURTON married her daughter, Rachel Harris.

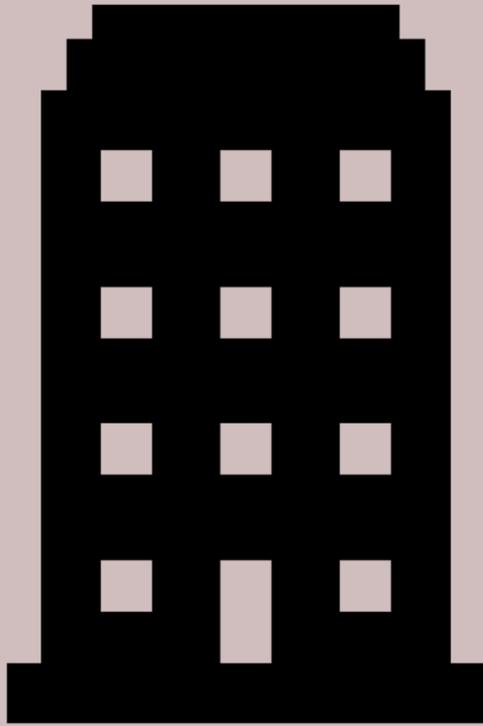
Bingo - "Esquire Powel's second wife was the widow of Joseph Harris and sister to Isaac Whelpley. Captain Isaac Burton married her daughter, Rachel Harris."

Research Log in Process

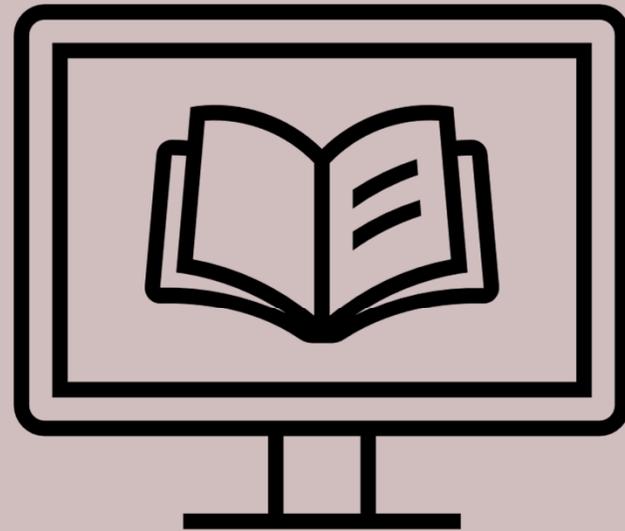
Where: Repositories

Types of Repositories

Brick and Mortar



Online

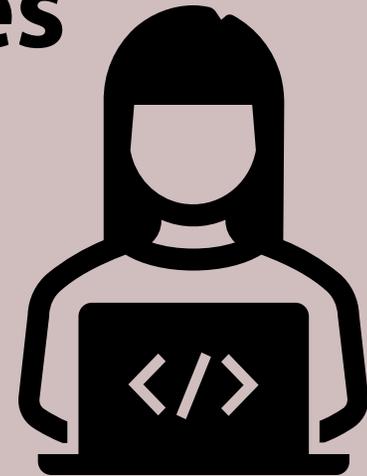


Selected Types of Brick-and-Mortar Repositories

- Your house!
- Federal and State Archives
- Town or City Halls
- Local Historical Societies
- Public or Private
- Libraries
- College or University Archives
- Lineage Societies
- Genealogical Societies
- Regional Museums

Online Repositories

- “Big 3” general genealogy websites
 - *Ancestry.com* (\$)
 - *FamilySearch.org* (free)
 - *AmericanAncestors.org* (\$, guest option)
- Location-specific websites
 - Archives of a particular state, county, or city, e.g., Washington State Digital Archives, Missouri Digital Heritage, Baton Rouge Digital Archive
 - Also applies to other countries, e.g., *IrishGenealogy.ie*
- Record-specific websites
 - *Fold3.com* (military records)



**Coming Up Next –
Module 4
How to Research**



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