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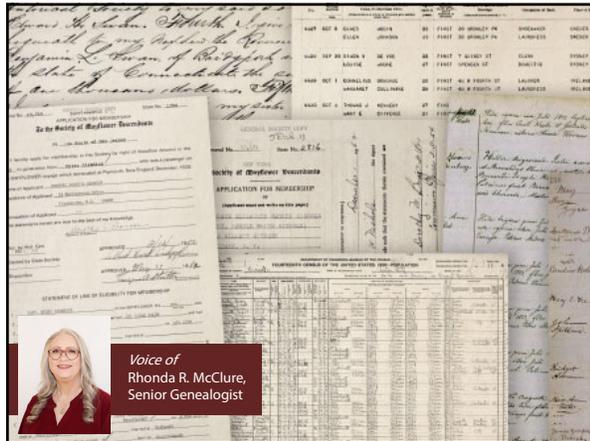
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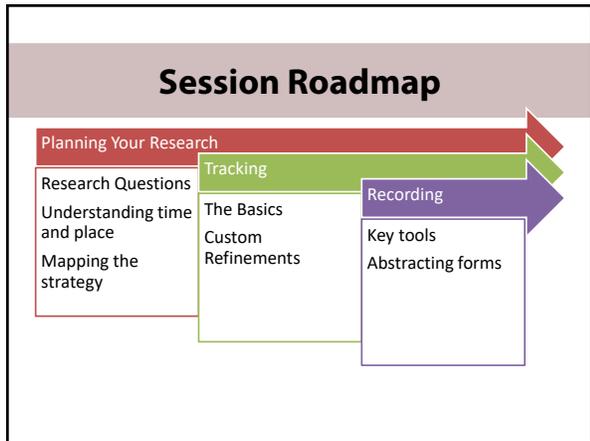
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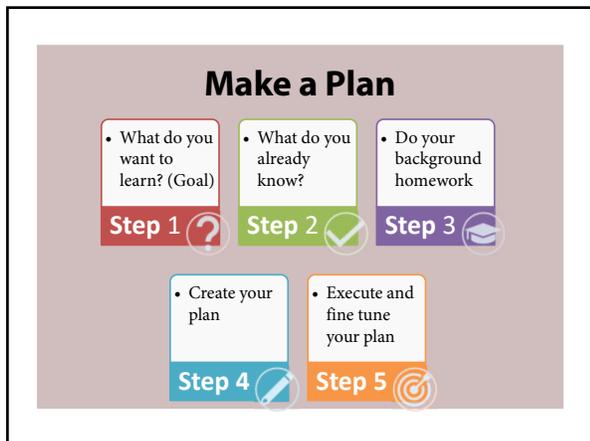
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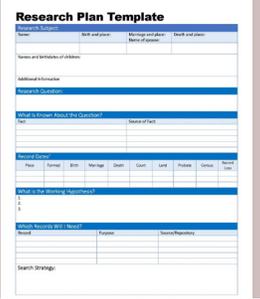
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## Research Plan Template

- 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



The Family Search Research Wiki is open and your data for Family Search dates.

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## Step 1: Creating Good Research Questions

- Choose a person!
- Make the question specific, answerable, realistic, timely
- Spend some time thinking about your question before plunging in




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## Choosing a Focus Person

- Anchors your research to a time and place
- May naturally expand to other individuals, but provides initial structure for your inquiry
- Example:
  - Elizabeth Harris, wife of Martin Powell

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### Research Plan Template

The image shows a 'Research Plan Template' form. A red circle highlights the 'Name' field, which contains the text 'Elizabeth Harris'. Other fields include 'Birth and place', 'Marriage and place', and 'Death and place'. The form also has sections for 'Research Subject', 'Search Strategy', and 'Research Plan'.

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### Creating a Good Questions

- Includes a name, place and date
- Question about:
  - Identity – what makes a person unique, e.g. name, age, occupation, maiden name
  - Events – usually birth, marriage, death, could be date of arrival into country, or military service
  - Relationships – parents, children, wife

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### Question of Kinship

- William George Riley Hampton – Question of Kinship
  - *OK*: Who are the ancestors of William George Riley (WGR) Hampton of Arkansas (b. ca 1855)?
    - Requires multiple iterations
  - *Better*: Who are the parents of William George Riley (WGR) Hampton of Arkansas County, Arkansas (b. ca 1855)?
    - Better initial specificity

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**Question of Identity**

- Anna Deady Hance - Question of Identity
  - *Fair*: Which **Thomas Deady** of **Chicago** was the father of Anna Deady Hance?
    - What time period?
  - *Better*: Which **Thomas Deady** of **Chicago** was the father of Anna Deady Hance, who was born **1876**?
    - Better specificity

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**Question of Identity and Kinship**

- Elizabeth Harris Powell
  - *Poor*: Who was **Elizabeth Harris**, the 2<sup>nd</sup> wife of Martin Powell?
  - *Fair*: Who are the parents of **Elizabeth Harris**, the 2<sup>nd</sup> wife of Martin Powell?
    - Where? When?
  - *Better*: Who are the parents of **Elizabeth Harris** who married Martin Powell in **Manchester Vermont** in **1778**?
    - Better specificity

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**Sample Question**

- Who are the parents of Elizabeth Harris who married Martin Powell in Manchester Vermont in 1778?
- Question elements:
  - Name (s)
  - Place
  - Date
  - Focus on relationships - parents

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## Research Plan Template

**Research-Question:** Who are the parents of Elizabeth Harris who married Martin Powell in Manchester Vermont in 1778?

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## 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

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## What is Known About 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			

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## What is Known About the Question?

**Research Question:**  
Who are the parents of Elizabeth Harris who married Martin Powell in Manchester Vermont in 1778?

**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

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## Research Plan Template

Research Subject			
Name	Birth and place	Marriage and place	Death and place
Elizabeth Harris	Ca 1738, place unknown	1 Mar 1778, Manchester, Vermont	Unknown
Names and birthdates of children:			
Silar b. ca 1779			
Electa b. ca 1781			
Sarah b. ca 1782			
Additional Information			
Research Question			
Who are the parents of Elizabeth Harris who married Martin Powell in Manchester Vermont in 1778?			
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. She had nine children with Martin		Vermont Vital Records	
Rhoda may have been born in Bellingham, MA		Massachusetts Vital Records	
Rhoda may have married Martin in Amenia, NY		Ancestry trees	

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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?



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**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 dutchess. The

**Dutchess County, New York Record Dates** [ edit | edit source ]

Known Beginning Dates for Major County Records <sup>[1]</sup>						
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

**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**

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**Record Dates<sup>#</sup>**

Place <sup>#</sup>	Formed <sup>#</sup>	Birth <sup>#</sup>	Marriage <sup>#</sup>	Death <sup>#</sup>	Court <sup>#</sup>	Land <sup>#</sup>	Probate <sup>#</sup>	Census <sup>#</sup>	Record Loss <sup>#</sup>
Bennington, VT <sup>#</sup>	1779 <sup>#</sup>	At town-creation <sup>#</sup>	at town-creation <sup>#</sup>	at town-creation <sup>#</sup>	1861 <sup>#</sup>	1782 <sup>#</sup>	1778 <sup>#</sup>	1790 <sup>#</sup>	None <sup>#</sup>
Dutchess, NY <sup>#</sup>	1663 <sup>#</sup>	1880 <sup>#</sup>	1908 <sup>#</sup>	1880 <sup>#</sup>	1730 <sup>#</sup>	1718 <sup>#</sup>	1752 <sup>#</sup>	1663 <sup>#</sup>	None <sup>#</sup>
Manchester, VT <sup>#</sup>	1766 (org) <sup>#</sup>	<sup>#</sup>	<sup>#</sup>	<sup>#</sup>	<sup>#</sup>	<sup>#</sup>	<sup>#</sup>	<sup>#</sup>	Unk <sup>#</sup>

**Dates in template**

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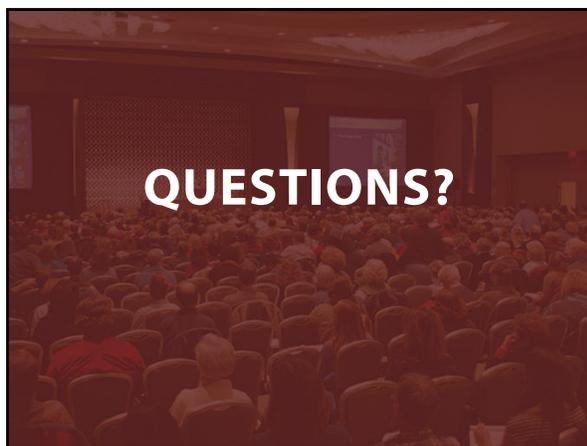
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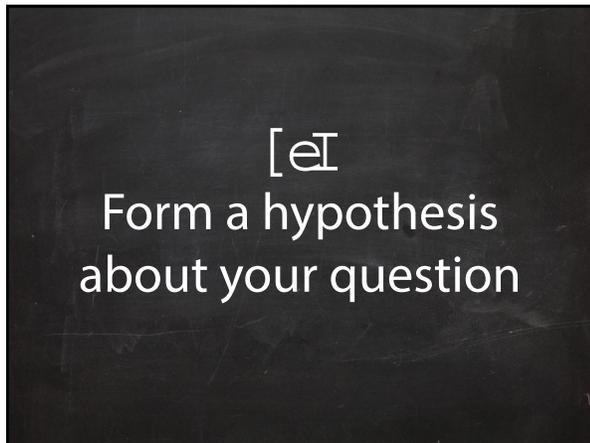
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**Creating a Hypothesis**

- Hypothesis = theory
  - About where you will find the records
  - What is going on in your situation
  - Possible answer to your questions
- Example
  - Looking for a death? Hypothesis is your ancestor died at the last town or county where they were known to have lived
  - Looking for a maiden name? Hypothesis is the children's records provide the answer

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**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

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### Another Hypothesis Example

- Question: Who are the parents of William George Riley Hampton, born about 1855 in Arkansas or South Carolina
- Known:
  - All censuses give Arkansas as place of birth
  - Married Martha Crockett 1873 in Arkansas
  - Lived most of life in Arkansas County, Arkansas

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### Is this Our WH? LaGrue, Arkansas County, Arkansas 1860?

Post Off	3	4	5	6	7
	W. H. Hagler	29 m			Merchant
	Caroline C.	28 f			Housewife
	Martha	24 f			Domestic
	Robert L.	17 m			Black in Store
	Lucy Hampton	29 f			Domestic
	William H.	8 m			
	Felix A.	11 m			
	Martha G.	4 f			

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### Template – Working Hypotheses

**What are the Working Hypotheses?**

1. Lucy Hampton of 1860 census was Lucy Hagler before her marriage.
2. Lucy Hagler and ??? married about 1853 in Arkansas.
3. Although the Haglers, Martha, W.H. and Lucy, were from Tennessee, they lived in Arkansas by 1850.
4. William's siblings, Felix and Martha, have records that name the parents
5. There may be a published genealogy about the family
6. County histories may mention both families

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Make a list of needed records first, then match to availability for time and location

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**Hierarchy of Records for the Maiden Name**

- Marriage record
  - License
  - Intentions
  - Banns
  - Bond
- Woman's death record (especially in the 20th century)
- Children's birth, marriage, and death records




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**Hierarchy for Parent's Names**

- Birth and Death Records (ancestor and siblings)
- Census
- Probate
- Land
- Newspapers
- County histories




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## Birth Location

- Vital Records
- Census
- Migration Patterns
- FAN Club
- County Histories

FORM 2010-2008-12-23 COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

1. PLACE OF DEATH: Allegheny		2. USUAL RES.	
(a) County	(b) Township	(c) State	(d) City or Loc.
(c) Borough		(d) Street No.	
(d) City		(e) If citizen	
(e) Name of hospital or institution: SCHENCK APARTMENTS			
(f) Length of stay: In hospital or inst.		(g) In this community	
3. (a) FULL NAME: NAUDE REIL FLOWMAN			
(b) If U.S. Veteran, complete reverse side of certificate		(c) Social Security No.	
1. Color or race	2. Sex	3. Marital Status	4. Date of Birth
5. (a) Name of husband or wife: GEORGE ENZO FLOWMAN	6. (c) Age of husband or wife if alive: 18 7/8 years	7. (b) Date of deceased: MAY 20 1974	
8. AGE: Years Months Days		9. Time of day	
72	8	5	hr min
10. Usual occupation: Retired			
11. Industry or business: Turkey			
12. Cause of death: (See back of certificate for foreign cause)			
13. Signature of Registrar: [Signature]			

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## Which Records Will I Need?

Information Needed	Search These Records First	Then Search These Records
Age	Census, Vital Records, Church Records, Cemeteries	Military Records, Taxation, Bible Records, Town Records, Emigration and Immigration
Birth date and place	Vital Records, Church Records, Census (for place), Town Records	Cemeteries, Bible Records, Newspapers
Marriage date and place	Vital Records, Church Records, Census, Newspapers, Bible Records	Military Records, Probate Records, Naturalization
Death date and place	Vital Records, Church Records, Cemeteries, Probate Records	Newspapers, Bible Records, Military Records, City Directories
Parents' names	Vital Records, Census, Probate Records, Newspapers, Published Genealogies, Local Histories	Emigration and Immigration, Bible Records
Maiden name	Vital Records, Church Records, Newspapers, Bible Records	Cemeteries, Military Records, Probate Records, Town Records

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## More Records

Information Needed	Search These Records First	Then Search These Records
Immigration date	Census (year only), Immigration, Naturalization	Newspapers, Biographies
Country of foreign birth	Naturalization Records, Census, Church Records, Vital Records, Emigration and Immigration	Cemeteries, Military Records, Newspapers, Local Histories
Foreign birth location	Vital Records, Emigration and Immigration, Census, Published Genealogies, Local Histories, Naturalization	Newspapers, Church Records, Military Records
Places family has lived	Census, Land, Local Histories, City Directories, Vital Records	Newspapers, Taxation, Military Records, Probate Records

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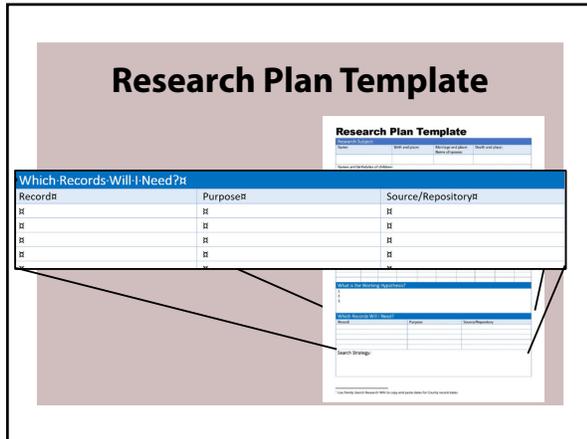
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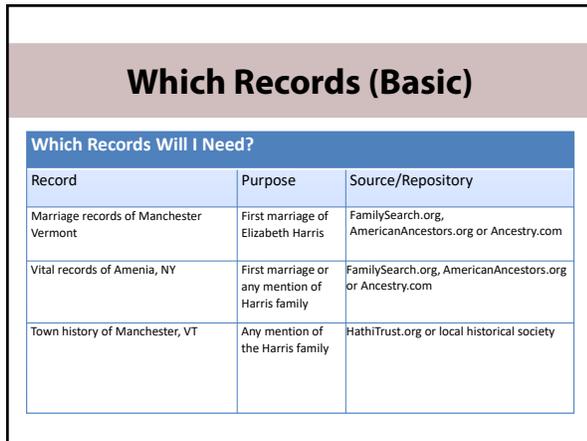
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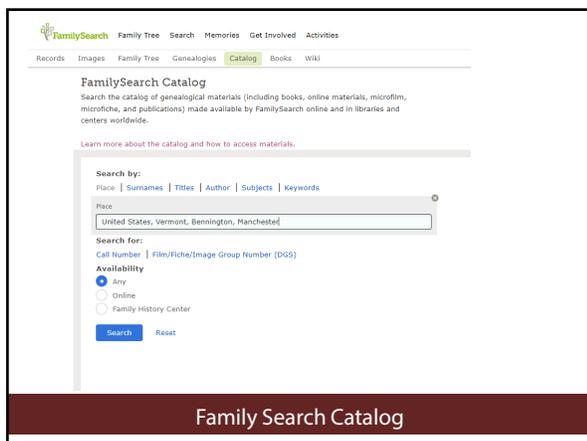
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▼ United States, Vermont, Bennington, Manchester - Vital records ( 3 )

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[Land records, 1761-1901; general index to land records, 1761-1950](#)  
 Author: Manchester (Vermont). Town Clerk

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[Records of births, marriages, deaths, 1857-1995](#)  
 Author: Manchester (Vermont). Town Clerk; Manchester (Vermont). Town Clerk

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[Town records, v. 1, 1831-1919](#)  
 Author: Manchester (Vermont). Town Clerk; Manchester (Vermont). Town Clerk

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▼ United States, Vermont, Bennington, Manchester - Vital records - Indexes ( 1 )

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 [Card index to vital statistics in the early land and town records books](#)  
 Author: Manchester (Vermont). Town Clerk

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Family Search Catalog – Manchester, Vermont

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## 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	<a href="https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/664510?availability=Family%20History%20Library">https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/664510?availability=Family%20History%20Library</a>
Vital records, 1749-1786 of Amenia, NY	First marriage or any mention of Harris family	<a href="https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/380341?availability=Family%20History%20Library">https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/380341?availability=Family%20History%20Library</a>
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	<a href="https://vermonthistory.org/journal/misc/EarlyHistoryOfManchester.pdf">https://vermonthistory.org/journal/misc/EarlyHistoryOfManchester.pdf</a>

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# Search Strategy

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**Order Your Search**

- By repository
  - Online first
  - Brick and mortar second
- By likelihood of success
  - Marriage records before children's records when looking for a maiden name
  - Census before probate when looking for 19<sup>th</sup> century parent names
- By ease of searching
  - County histories and compiled genealogies first
  - Land records last

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**Online Repositories**

- Americanancestors.org
- Ancestry.com
- Familysearch.org
- 19th Cent. US Newspapers (available through your American Ancestors membership)
- Irish Newspaper Archive (available through your American Ancestors membership)
- <https://www.hathitrust.org/>
- <https://books.google.com/>
- <https://archive.org/index.php>
- <https://openlibrary.org/>
- <https://books.familysearch.org>
- <http://library.si.edu/digital-library>

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**Brick and Mortar Repositories**

- American Ancestors – 97 Newbury Street, Boston
- Local County Clerks Offices
- Local Historical Societies
- Cemeteries
- Vital Records Offices
- NARA
- College or University Archives
- Lineage Societies
- Genealogical Societies
- Regional Museums

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### 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**

Project	Objective	Method	Timeline	Resources	Notes
Project 1	Objective 1	Method 1	Timeline 1	Resources 1	Notes 1
Project 2	Objective 2	Method 2	Timeline 2	Resources 2	Notes 2



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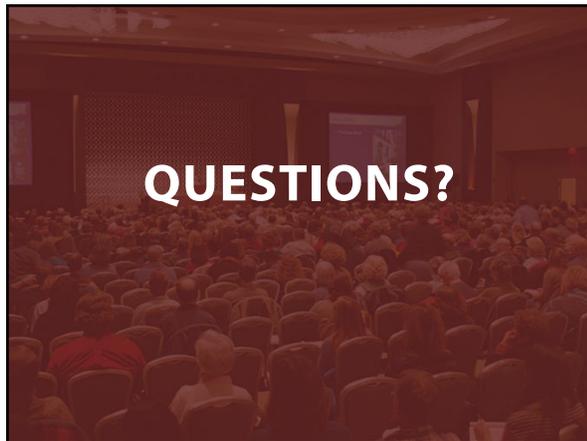
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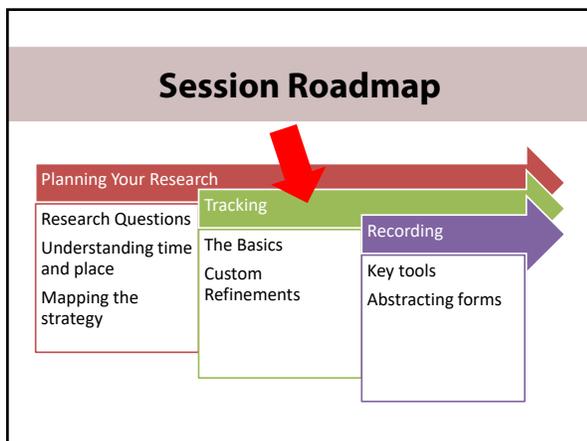
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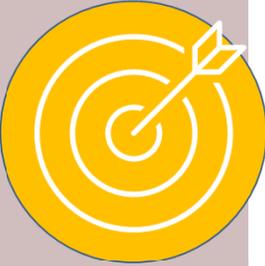
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### Keep a Research Log

- 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




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**AmericanAncestors.**  
A National Center for Family History Research & Culture

**Research Log**

Repository: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Source Information <small>(URL, author, publisher, publication date, etc.)</small>	Call Number <small>(file number, ID#, etc.)</small>	Objective	Results

www.AmericanAncestors.org

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### 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.

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### Rows are Types of Records

- Vital Records
- Deeds and Land Records
- Census Records
- Military Records
- Cemetery Records
- Immigration Records
- Probate/Wills
- Local and Regional Histories
- Newspapers
- Genealogical Journals
- Published Genealogies
- Manuscripts
- City Directories
- Other
- Court Records

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### Columns are the Research Log

- Date of search
- Dates examined \*
- Source \*
- Place/Location \*
- Repository
- Relevant Record/Event \*
- Objective – what you were looking for in the source \*
- Notes \*
- Name and spelling variants searched \*
- Citation \*

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### Annotated Research Log

Source	Repository	Objective	Time Period	Location	Type of Record	Finding	Notes	Citation
<b>Full Research</b>								
<b>Genealogy Research</b>								
1801 U.S. Federal Census	111	County Family	1800	Eastchester		Jones, Elizabeth, Marcella, John, James, Jane, Thomas		1800 U.S. Federal Census - Eastchester, Westchester, New York population schedule, ED 95, page 25, family 231, household of James County center images viewed at Ancestry (ancestry.com) - viewed 1 Feb 2026, citing NARA microfilm 79, roll 965
1801 U.S. Federal Census	111	James County	1800	New York		Jones, Eliza, Eliza	Eliza is recorded as 40	1800 U.S. Federal Census - New York (W and 17), New York, Population Schedules, Page 76, household of James County center image viewed at Ancestry (ancestry.com) - viewed 4 Feb 2026, citing NARA microfilm 79, roll 965
1801 U.S. Federal Census	111	James County	1800	Eastchester		James Eliza, Ellen, John, James, Jane, Mary, Eliza	Ellen the older is 70 years old, born in Ireland	1800 U.S. Federal Census - Eastchester, Westchester, New York, Population Schedules, Page 76, household of James County center image viewed at Ancestry (ancestry.com) - viewed 4 Feb 2026, citing NARA microfilm 79, roll 965
1801 U.S. Federal Census	111	James County	1800	Eastchester		Jones, Eliza, Marcella, John, James, Jane, Thomas	May appear to have died	1800 U.S. Federal Census - Eastchester, Westchester, New York, Population Schedules, Page 76, household of James County center image viewed at Ancestry (ancestry.com) - viewed 4 Feb 2026, citing NARA microfilm 79, roll 965
<b>City Directories</b>								
<b>Newspapers</b>								
<b>Published Genealogies</b>								
<b>City Directories</b>								

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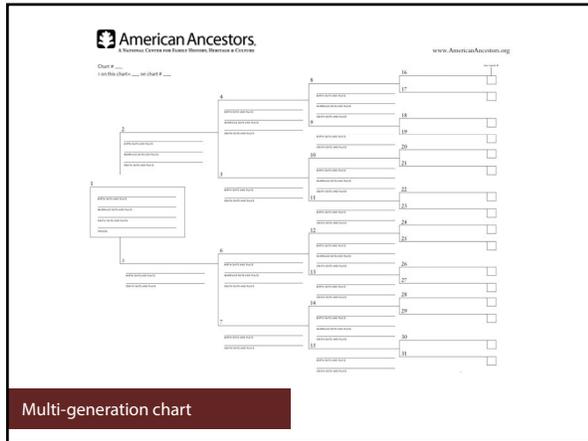
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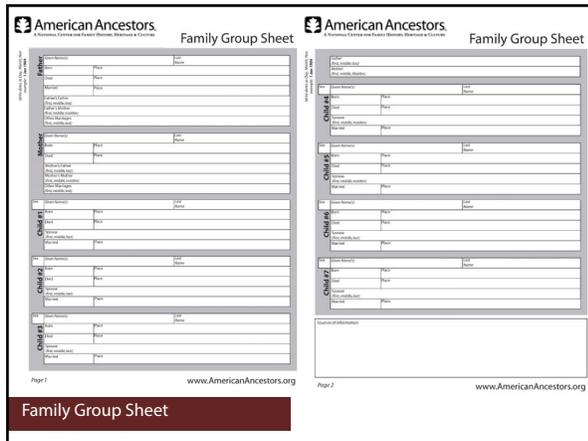
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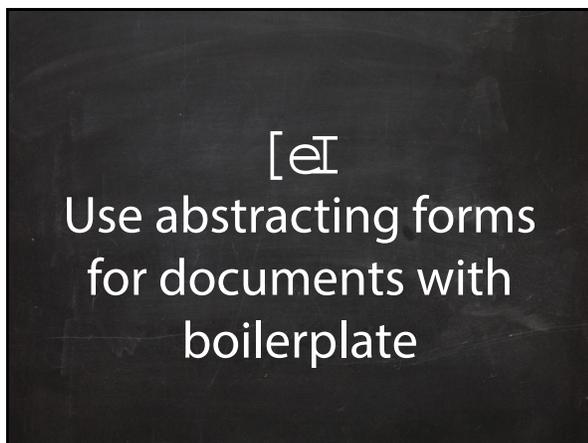
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**Probate Abstract Form**

File Number No. 63389-1793709	Item # / Image # Item 3 / Image 438
County and State Suffolk Co., Massachusetts	Book and Page # Vol. 86, pp. 84-85
Type of Probate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Testate (Will) <input type="checkbox"/> Intestate (No Will)	Executor: Wife Sarah Pulling & Joshua Ome, Esq. Administrator:
Decedent: John Pulling	Occupation/Late of: Gentleman (Boston, Suffolk Co., Mass.
Date of Will: 13 March 1783	Date Estate Proved: 13 Feb 1787

**Notes (with Relationships)**

- Will, Sarah Pulling: one-half of my real estate & one-third of my
- John Pulling: the great Bible bequeathed to me by my father
- Children: remaining four parts of estate
  - o Anna
  - o Sarah
  - o Martha
  - o Richard

Witnesses:  
Stephen Lewis, Robert Hitchborn, Benjamin Lincoln, Jr.

*Give and bequeath as follows one-fourth part thereof to my son John and the other four parts to my children...*

John Pulling, Will, 1787, v. 86, pp.84-85

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**QUESTIONS?**

**Schedule a consultation**  
[consultations@americanancestors.org](mailto:consultations@americanancestors.org)

**Hire Research Services**  
[research@americanancestors.org](mailto:research@americanancestors.org)

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**Consultations**

Book a one-on-one consultation with a genealogist and receive help with your family history research!

AmericanAncestors.org/  
Expert-Help/Consultations



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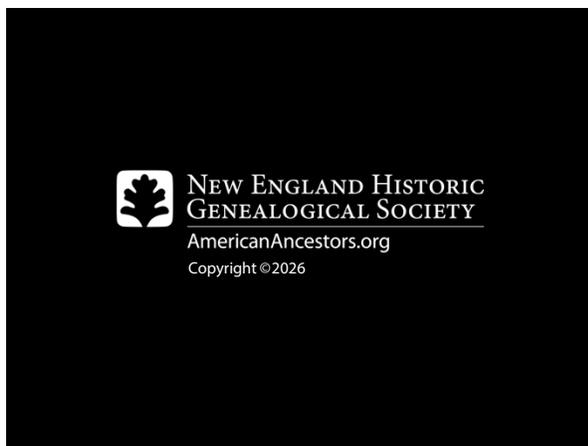
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