



Diana Elder AG® AGL™
<https://familylocket.com>

Fruitful research begins with a plan. Harness the power of thought before action and make progress toward any research challenge.



Create a Research Objective & Analyze your Sources

Research Objectives

- All research starts with a question. Developing that question into a focused objective will allow you to save time and be more productive by staying on track throughout the research project.
- A research objective generally falls under one of the following categories.
 - Identify an individual.
 - Prove or discover a family relationship.
 - Discover ancestor actions or situations.
- First, analyze your pedigree and select a research question.
- Create a clear research objective from the research question.

- Extensive brick wall questions may require several phases of research.
- Each phase will have a specific objective.
- Include enough information in the objective to identify the research subject clearly from other individuals of the same name. Good key identifiers include:
 - Birth, marriage, and death dates and places
 - Known relationships such as a spouse or parents

Analyze your Sources

Arranging records in a timeline and careful evidence analysis of each document can separate identities and lead to new research opportunities. Timelines are an excellent starting point for the research project.

Why Use Timelines in Genealogy Research

- Separate men of the same name
- Track migrations of individuals or families
- Discover holes or discrepancies in the research
- Find new locations to research
- Evaluate an online tree or published genealogy
- Compare ancestor life events to historical context
- Prepare to write an ancestor's history

Whether using a database or a document, the crucial question the researcher must ask is not “What does this say?” but “What does this mean?”

~ GeLee Corley Hendrix

(NGSQ June 1998)

Creating a Timeline

- Online trees and genealogy programs can generate a beginning timeline.
- A bulleted list can be a simple timeline.
- A table in a word processing program works well for a simple timeline.
- A spreadsheet allows for the sorting of columns and adding unlimited data.
- A chart or mind map created in a computer program can allow for creative additions like shapes.
- A computer program like Airtable is part spreadsheet and part database and can link between pages.

What to Include in the Timeline

- The research questions or objective
- Dates and localities
- Event description
- Names of individuals
- Source citations
- Links to records
- Comments and questions
- Ideas for future research
- Evidence analysis
- Fan club members
- Color coding for various events

Analyzing Records with the Timeline

- Check the Dates for inconsistencies – Are there children born after the father's death? Were the parents of appropriate age to marry?
- Analyze the Evidence
 - **Source:** material or a person that contains genealogical information. A source can be an artifact like a sampler or photograph. Certificates, censuses, books, deeds, DNA, newspapers, and church records are commonly used sources.
 - Sources are divided into three types.
 - Original source – the actual document or image of it created close to the time of the event: censuses, certificates, ships passenger list, etc.
 - Derivative source – indexed or abstracted information created from an original record: indexed marriage collection on FamilySearch, a book listing all the gravesites in a cemetery, an abstract of a will on an online family tree.
 - Authored source – an online family tree, a family story, a biographical sketch, a research report, etc.
 - **Information:** The facts found in the source. These include dates, places, names, occupations, religions, land descriptions, etc. An important detail when looking at the information is to determine who gave that information. This person is called the informant. Information comes in three types.
 - Primary information: Given by a person who witnessed the event firsthand. A mother reporting the birth of her child in a family bible would be considered primary information.
 - Secondary information: Given by a person who first obtained the information somewhere else, then reported it. That same child recording his birth on his draft registration would be secondary information. Although he was present at his birth, his mother told him his birthday.
 - Indeterminable information: Sometimes, it's unclear who the informant is, such as in a census record.
 - **Evidence:** What you pull from the source information to answer your research question.
 - Direct evidence: The information clearly states the answer to a research question, such as the date on a marriage certificate answering when a couple married.
 - Indirect evidence: The answer to your research question has to be deduced by combining two or more facts. A woman listed as the mother-in-law of the head of household in a census record could be inferred to be his wife's mother.
 - Negative evidence occurs in the absence of an expected situation. A man is not present on the tax list, signaling possible death or a move.

Sample Timeline

Research Objective: Document the family of Dora Algie Royston and William Huston Shults.

Research Question: Where did the Shults family live from 1890-1920?

Event	Date	Place	Source	Type of Source	Information	Evidence
Marriage of Dora Algie Royston and William Huston Shults	11 Dec 1898	Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory	Marriage License and Certificate	Derivative	Primary	Direct
Residence	1898	Elmore, Indian Territory	Personal History	Original	Secondary	Direct
Residence	1900	Township 15 Ranges 5-6 W Indian Territory	1900 U.S. Census	Original	Primary	Direct
Move	1900	Maxwell, Indian Territory	Personal History of Lorain Shults	Original	Secondary	Direct
Birth of son, Robert Cisnie Shults	12 Jul 1900	Indian Territory	Personal History of Lorain Shults	Original	Primary	Direct
Birth of son, Charles Leslie Shults	11 May 1904	Ada, Pontotoc County, Oklahoma	Delayed Certificate of Birth	Original	Secondary	Direct
Death of son, Robert Cisnie Shults	10 Mar 1905	McGee Cemetery, Garvin County, Oklahoma	Letter describing headstone	Derivative	Secondary	Direct
Residence	1910	Jefferson County, Oklahoma	1910 U.S. Census	Original	Primary	Direct
Land Record	1917	Pushmataha County, Oklahoma	Grantor Deed Index	Derivative	Primary	Direct
Residence	1920	Okfuskee County, Oklahoma	1920 Census	Original	Primary	Direct

Additional Resources

- Dyer, Nicole. "Airtable Research Logs." *Family Locket*. <https://familylocket.com/airtable-research-logs/>.
- Dyer, Nicole and Diana Elder. "Genealogy Evidence Analysis – Free Template and Lucinda Keaton Sample." *FamilyLocket*. <https://familylocket.com/genealogy-evidence-analysis-free-template-and-sample/>
- Dyer, Nicole and Diana Elder. "RLP 3: Analyze your Sources." *FamilyLocket*. Podcast posted 30 July 2018. <https://familylocket.com/rlp-3-analyze-your-sources/>
- Dyer, Nicole and Diana Elder. "RLP 114: Revisiting Timelines and Analysis." *FamilyLocket*. Podcast posted 14 September 2020. <https://familylocket.com/rlp-114-revisiting-timelines-and-analysis/>
- Elder, Diana. "Put it in a Table: Understanding and Organizing Research Findings." *Family Locket*. <https://familylocket.com/put-it-in-a-table-understanding-and-organizing-research-findings/>
- Elder, Diana, and Nicole Dyer. *Research Like a Pro: A Genealogist's Guide*. Highland, Utah: Family Locket Books, 2018.
- Elder, Diana. "Research Like a Pro, Part 2: Analyze Your Sources." *Family Locket*. <https://familylocket.com/research-like-a-pro-part-2-analyze-your-sources/>
- Elder, Diana. "Track Your Family with a Timeline." *Family Locket*. Blog Post 9 June 2016. <https://familylocket.com/track-your-family-with-a-timeline/>
- Elder, Diana. "Original or Derivative Sources: What's the Big Deal?" *Family Locket*. Blog Posted 7 July 2016. <https://familylocket.com/original-or-derivative-sources-whats-the-big-deal/>
- Mills, Elizabeth Shown. *Evidence? Citation & Analysis for the Family Historian*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing co., 2011.

Learn about the Location, Geography and History of your Research



Locality Research

Researching the locations where your ancestors worked, played, and lived out their lives has many benefits for your family history and genealogy research.

- Break down brick walls in your research by knowing where to look for records.
- Make connections in your ancestor's community and discover new relatives.
- Gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for your ancestors.

By asking yourself three questions, you can discover why your ancestor moved to a community and what impact that community had on their lives.

1. Ask: "What is Happening?"

- **Review what you already know about your ancestor.**
 - When and where did his marriage take place?
 - What children are being born and where?
 - Where is he living in each possible census record of his life?
 - Where and when did he die?
 - Are there church, land, court, military, or probate records for him?
- **Look for clues in each record** that you might have previously missed - witnesses, neighbors, the minister, emigration, military service, etc.
- **Make a timeline or table of family events** with columns for:
 - Dates, places, events, sources of information
 - Names of individuals, as spelled in the records

- FAN club (friends, associates, neighbors)
- Other information from the records: occupation, military service, social or financial status, religion, etc.

2. Ask: "Where is it Happening?"

- **Choose a location** from your timeline or table.
- **Learn more about the location with maps.** Several internet resources are available to help you map the site, view it topographically, or pinpoint a specific landform. Some helpful websites are listed below.
 - Atlas of the Historical Geography of the United States - historical, cultural, and geographic information from 1492-1931. <https://dsl.richmond.edu/historicalatlas/>
 - Cyndi's List is a website of genealogical links. Use the search box to locate links to maps for your location. <https://www.cyndislist.com/us/>
 - The David Rumsey Map Collection has thousands of maps for numerous periods and locations worldwide, all available to view from the website. <https://www.davidrumsey.com/>
 - Google Maps shows streets, schools, lakes, rivers, cemeteries, and more in a traditional map format. <https://www.google.com/maps>
 - Google Earth allows you to view any area topographically as it looks today. Discover the mountains, valleys, and rivers that influenced your ancestor's movements. <https://www.google.com/earth/>
 - Library of Congress Maps database has thousands of United states historical maps, many of which are online. Some are only available to view on-site. <https://www.loc.gov/maps/>
 - Maps.familysearch.org shows counties of England with parish and civil jurisdictions. <https://www.familysearch.org/mapp/>
 - Vision of Britain through Time contains topographic, boundary, historical maps, and more for the British Isles. <https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/>
- **Use Gazetteers to find historical place names.** They describe everything from towns and villages to rivers and mountains.

- The FamilySearch Wiki lists gazetteers for countries and U.S. states. Enter "gazetteer" and location into the search box or look for the heading "Gazetteers" on the right-hand side of the locality's wiki page under "Background." Many of these have been digitized and are available to view from your home.
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page
- Geographic Names Information System_(GNIS) allows you to search for names of trails, reservoirs, post offices, parks, islands, lakes, forests, and much more. https://geonames.usgs.gov/apex/f?p=138:1:::NO:1:P1_SHOW_ADV,P1_SHOW_FI_PS55:
- **Discover the migration routes** leading to the area. The FamilySearch Wiki contains excellent links and information on migration routes worldwide. Enter "migration" and your location into the search box to see what you can discover. https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page
 - How did the settlement grow?
 - Where did the settlers originate?
 - Why did your ancestor leave his previous home?
- **Learn the jurisdictions of the location** to search for the records in the right places. Jurisdiction is the government or religious body that keeps the records for the area. Generally, the records were kept on the following levels:
 - **National records:** Federal Census, federal land, military, pensions
 - **State records:** State census, tax lists, land record, pensions, vital, military
 - **County Records:** court, land, probate, vital
 - **City/township records:** directories, vital
 - **Church records:** vital, membership
- **Boundary changes**
 - European countries changed boundaries repeatedly.
 - U.S. territory and state boundaries changed as the country grew.
 - United States counties typically divided as the population grew.
 - Know the parent county as the records could be kept at that courthouse.
 - Atlas of Historical County Boundaries, by the Newberry Library, is an interactive website showing United States county border changes.
<https://publications.newberry.org/ahcbp/index.html>

- A useful reference book that shows county boundaries for each year of the census is: Thorndale, William, and William Dollarhide. *Map Guide to the U.S. Federal Censuses*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1987.

3. Ask: "Why is it Happening?"

- **Research the area's history** when your ancestor was living there, local and regional.
 - Search Wikipedia for the history, current population, and other information. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page
 - Ancestry's Red Book: American State, County, and Town Sources is available online and has good information on the history of an area. <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/3249/>
 - The FamilySearch Wiki has timelines, book lists, and links to other websites for each country and U.S. state. https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page
 - Regional libraries, museums, historical societies, and archives in your location can have valuable resources. Find them at ArchiveGrid, a remarkable website that shows these repositories in a given location, lists collections, and gives you contact information. <https://researchworks.oclc.org/archivegrid/>
- **County histories can help you learn about early settlers** and give you valuable clues about where to search for records: churches, schools, businesses, etc.
 - A simple Google Books search can often give you good results. <https://books.google.com/>
 - In the FamilySearch Catalog, do a keyword search, entering the name of your location and "history." Check the bottom left of the screen for "availability" to see if the book has been digitized. You might be able to read it from your computer! <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog>
 - View the book in WorldCat to locate possible copies near you. You might also be able to order the book through an interlibrary loan. <https://www.worldcat.org/>
- **Biographical sketches** of the influential people of the area may give clues about your ancestor. Learning about the community helps put your ancestor in his time and place.

- Search for these in the FamilySearch Catalog. Enter your location in the "place" search box, then select "biography" to see titles for your city, county, or state.
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog>
- Histories, Memories & Biographies on MyHeritage is a collection of thousands of records that might give you insight into your ancestor.
<https://www.myheritage.com/research/category-12000/histories-memories-biographies>
- **Periodicals published by genealogical societies** in your research locality can be a gold mine of information. To locate articles, use the Periodical Source Index (PERSI), now located on the Allen County Public Library website. <https://www.genealogycenter.info/persi/>
- **Church histories** are another avenue to investigate. If you know your ancestor's religion, you can add another dimension to his life. Follow the same steps for locating county histories in the FamilySearch Catalog; only use "church history" in the keyword search.
- **Newspapers** give great details about the community. Many websites are devoted to providing digitized newspapers. Some of the free sites:
 - Chronicling America - Historic American Newspapers on the Library of Congress website has newspapers from 1789-1924. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>
 - The Ancestor Hunt website keeps an up-to-date list of links, organized by state, of online historical newspapers; valuable because newspapers are often digitized by universities or societies. <https://www.theancestorhunt.com/newspaper-research-links.html>
 - Veridian has over 3 million digitized newspapers from libraries and universities across the country. The database is continually growing, so check back often to see if your location has been digitized yet. <https://veridiansoftware.com/collections/>

Additional Resources

Articles

- Elder, Diana. "5 Reasons To Buy a Local Family History Book – Even When Your Ancestor Isn't Included." *FamilyLocket*. Posted 4 May 2016.
<https://familylocket.com/5-reasons-to-buy-a-local-family-history-book-even-when-your-ancestor-isnt-included/>
- Elder, Diana. "Back to the Basics: Migration Trails and Roads." *FamilyLocket*. Posted 16 November 2019. <https://familylocket.com/back-to-the-basics-migration-trails-and-roads/>
- Elder, Diana. "Location, Location, Location: Putting Your Ancestors in Their Place." *FamilyLocket*. posted 9 March 2016. <https://familylocket.com/location-location-location-putting-your-ancestors-in-their-place/> :
- Elder, Diana. "Your Family with a Timeline." *FamilyLocket* posted 9 June 2016 .
<https://familylocket.com/track-your-family-with-a-timeline/>

Podcasts

- Dyer, Nicole and Diana Elder. "RLP 4: Locality Research Part 1." *FamilyLocket*. Posted 6 August 2018 <https://familylocket.com/rlp-4-locality-research-part-1/>
- Dyer, Nicole and Diana Elder "RLP 5: Locality Research Part 2." *FamilyLocket*. Posted 13 August 2018. <https://familylocket.com/rlp-5-locality-research-part-2/>
- Dyer, Nicole and Diana Elder "RLP 115: Revisiting Locality Research." *FamilyLocket*. Posted 21 September 2020. <https://familylocket.com/rlp-115-revisiting-locality-research/>

Make a Research Plan and Create Source Citations



Research Planning

- List the research objective.
- Summarize the known facts.
 - Create a table, bulleted list, or narrative from the timeline.
 - Choose the most pertinent information.
 - Review the starting point so you know where to go next.
 - Gather every clue from the documents.
- Create a working hypothesis.
 - A hypothesis is not a wild guess, an exact statement of fact, or the actual answer to the research question.
 - A hypothesis is an educated guess about what might have happened using clues from the known facts such as the following:
 - Associates named in the documents.
 - Neighbors with the same surname.
 - Estimated vital facts, residences, and migrations.
 - Discuss what methodology you could use to test your hypothesis: studying the friends, associates, and neighbors (FAN club), a census study, land records, etc.
 - Note what you think the research might reveal.
 - See the tables from the FamilySearch Wiki for ideas for kinds of records to search for specific information.
 - familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page
 - Search for country + record finder
- Identify sources and methods for that location and time
 - Use the locality guide to brainstorm ideas.

- Look for sources from the time and place covered in the research objective.
- Link to specific record collections.
- Emphasize original records with primary information
- Consider boundary changes, migration routes, and paths.
- Think of economic, ethnic, genetic, governmental, historical, legal, religious, etc., factors that could affect the research.
- Consider all sources, including databases, finding aids, authored sources, abstracts, and family trees.
- Expand the focus to include the "FANs," Friends and Family, Associates, and Neighbors of the research subject.
- Prioritize sources based on the information they contain and their ease of access.
 - Check online records first.
 - Consider the time required to search the record set or use the tool.
 - Start with the record most likely to answer the research question.
 - Plan searches in specific databases.
 - Consider the starting point information.
 - Focus on the next logical steps.
 - Keep the prioritized strategy brief – about five sources or less.
 - Be flexible in the research and allow what you find to guide the next steps.
 - Choose the next steps for the research from the identified sources list.

Research Planning Tips

- The goal is to get closer to the solution – this project is just ONE phase.
- Put any parts of the research plan not covered in this phase into the future research suggestions of the report.
- Study journal articles to see what sources other genealogists use in their research for a similar locality and time.
- Don't over plan knowing that the research may take you in a different direction.

Additional Resources

- Board for Certification of Genealogists. "Planning Research." *Genealogy Standards, Second Edition*. Nashville: Ancestry.com, 2019.
- DeGrazia, Laura Murphy. "Problem Analyses & Research Plans." Elizabeth Shown Mills, ed. *Professional Genealogy: Preparation, Practice, and Standards*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2018.
- Dyer, Nicole and Diana Elder. Research Like a Pro Genealogy Podcast and Blog. Search FamilyLocket.com for "Research Planning." familylocket.com/?s=research+plan
- Elder, Diana. *Research Like a Pro: A Genealogist's Guide*. Highland, Ut: Family Locket Books, 2018.

Source Citations

When is a source citation needed?

- Creating a new source on an online tree
- Entering a source into a personal database
- Sharing a document with another researcher
- Writing a family history book
- Writing a proof statement or proof argument
- Writing an article for publication

Why should you cite your sources?

- To evaluate and analyze each source found
- Prove the research findings and analysis
- Relocate the source and enable others to locate the source
- Show the reliability of the source
- Demonstrate the research steps and show the scope of the research
- Give proper credit to work not your own

Steps to Citing a Source

A good source citation will include details that allow you or anyone else to locate the source.

- **Step One: Understand the source**
- **Step Two: Create the citation by determining each component of a citation**

Components of a Citation

- **Author:** This refers to either the source's author, the creator (often a religious or government entity), or the informant.
- **Title or Description of the source:** If this is a published work such as a book, include the full title in italics. If it is not published, such as a personal history, use quotes around the title. If there is no title, describe the record
- **Publication Information**
 - Typically cite the year a book or microfilm was published; add the month or season for a journal or magazine.
 - For a website, add the access date. Because URLs change, the date could help to relocate the source.
 - If the source is unpublished, use the date it was created or the date of the event it reports. In some cases, it might be necessary to include both.
- **Location within the Source**
 - In a published source, this could be a volume or page number.
 - In an online database, cite the image number, waypoints, or any other way to explain to others how to find the source again.
- **Location where the source can be viewed**

SOURCE: A document, book, article, microfilm, photograph, website, etc. that gives information, which becomes evidence in proving a conclusion.

CITATION: A statement identifying the specific location of a source and details about that source.

- If the source is published, such as a book, this would be the publication location.
- If an unpublished source, such as a manuscript, letter, or document, name the location where the event took place and where the source is held.

Layered Citations¹

What about a source that is now digitized and accessed through a website such as *FamilySearch* or *Ancestry*? Include both the physical source citation, then all the digital source citation information, **separating the two sections with a semicolon**. A third section might be necessary if referencing the original microfilm reproduction of the source.

Mason County, Kentucky, "Marriage Bonds, Book 4, 1855-1857," Scott–Frank bond (2 September 1857); database and digital images, "Kentucky Marriages, 1797-1954," *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org> : accessed 24 Jun 2012), IGN 4705551, image 305.

Different Citation Formats are used depending on the project.

- **Reference notes** are used to prove a fact, such as a date or place of an event, and are attached to this event in an online tree, a research report, a genealogy database, or a publication. Reference notes in a report can appear in two places.
 - **Footnotes:** inserted throughout the article, referenced by number and appearing at the bottom of the page; the preferred method for research reports
 - **Endnotes:** listed at the end of a chapter, article, or book
 - **Shortened reference notes** are used after the first full citation in a report.
- **Source List Entry:** Often called a bibliography, this is the master list of books, microfilm, or other sources consulted for the research. This is usually used at the end of a book or an article. No specific mention is made of page numbers or other details. Authors are listed alphabetically by last name.

¹ Layer Citations is the term coined by Elizabeth Shown Mills in "Fundamentals of Citation," *Evidence Explained*, 3rd ed. (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 2015), 58.

Keep a Research Log & Write Conclusions

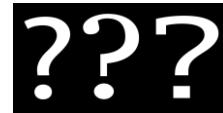


Research Logs

Why use a research log?

- Track positive and negative searches.
- Note the date a database was searched.
- Create source citations to be used in other places.
- Show at a glance what has been found.
- Evaluate information and evidence.
- Be more productive and efficient in research.
- Avoid duplication of effort.
- Break through brick walls with better record keeping.

All research begins with a question. Focus that question by formulating a research objective. Place this objective at the top of the research log to guide your searches.



What are the different types of research logs?

- The research notebook
- The electronic research log
- The handwritten research log form

The Research Notebook

- Use it for working on the collaborative *FamilySearch* FamilyTree or your *Ancestry* tree.
- Note ID numbers and names of individuals to explore in the future.
- Source citations are automatically created when attaching hints or records from these websites.
- Track research done for the day and what to do next.

The Electronic Research Log

- Can be created in a table format in a word processing document or the spreadsheet/database hybrid *Airtable*.
- Using a spreadsheet format allows you to have multiple pages for different generations or family members in a single spreadsheet.
- Sort and group by columns/fields to view specific searches.
- The ability to copy and paste information from websites makes it simple to fill out
- Add links to online records to quickly re-access them.

The Handwritten Research Log Form

- Download a template from *FamilySearch* or design your own.
- Print several copies to fill out by hand.
- Use in archives where only paper is allowed.
- Keep copies in binders or file folders.

Categories to Use for a Research Log

- **Date**
 - List the date the search was performed.
 - Some databases are updated periodically and need to be rechecked.
- **Repository**
 - Record the website, library, archive, or other physical location that holds the source.
 - The repository could be your own files if it is an inherited letter or document.
- **URL/Call#/Microfilm#**
 - In this column copy and paste the URL from the website.
 - If researching at a library or archive, record the unique call # or microfilm #.
- **Searching for**
 - List the specific search – record type, name, and date if applicable.
 - Sort the data by this column to organize the research log by record type.
- **Locality**
 - List the specific location: city, county, state, or country.
 - Sort the data by this column to organize the research log by locality.
- **Source Citation**
 - Create a source citation the first time you view the source.
 - If the search is negative, there won't be any specifics of an event to list, so name the database, where it is located, and the date it was checked.
- **Results/Comments**
 - If nothing was found, use NIL which is short for "not in location."
 - Add comments about why it might not have been there.
 - If a record was located, detail all the information.
 - Copy names exactly as they appear in the record.
 - Use the copy-and-paste function to add information from a website abstract.
- **Document numbers for all documents located.**

Additional Resources

- Dyer, Nicole. *Airtable Research Log Templates*. *Airtable*.
<https://airtable.com/universe/search?q=dyer>
- Elder, Diana, and Nicole Dyer. *Research Like a Pro: A Genealogist's Guide*. FamilyLocket Genealogists. 2018.

- Elder, Diana, and Nicole Dyer. "Research Like a Pro: A Genealogist's Guide - Templates." *FamilyLocket*. <http://familylocket.com/rlp/>
- Elder, Diana. "Source Citations: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly." *Family Locket*. <http://familylocket.com/source-citations-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly/>.
- Elder, Diana. "Research Logs: The Key to Organizing Your Family History." *Family Locket*. <http://familylocket.com/research-logs-the-key-to-organizing-your-family-history/>
- "Research Logs." *FamilySearch Wiki*. https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Research_Logs

Sample Research Log

DATE	REPOSITORY URL, Call # Film #	SEARCHING FOR	LOCALITY	SOURCE CITATION	RESULTS
7 Jun 2017	<i>Ancestry</i> http://ancestry.me/2rVSNJ	1820 Census George W. Dillard	Georgia, Greene County	1820 U.S. Census, Greene County, Georgia, Capt. E Woodhams District, population schedule, p. 202, line 2, George W. Dillard household; digital image, Ancestry (http://www.ancestry.com : accessed 7 June 2017); citing NARA microfilm publication M33, roll 8.	Free White Persons Males 0/10 2 Males 10/15 1 Males 16/25 1 Males 26/44 1 Females 0/10 1 Females 0/15 1 Females 26/ 44 1
11 Feb 2018	<i>General Land Office Records</i> http://bit.ly/2HhYW5R	Land Patents for George W. Dillard	Alabama, Chambers County	George W Dillard,(Chambers County, Alabama), 1837, cash entry patents no. 3733, 3768, 3770, 3771, "Land Patent Search," images, General Land Office Records (www.glorerecords.blm.gov : accessed 17 March 2018).	State Volume Patents, dated 10 April 1837, St Stephens Meridian, Section 29, Chambers County, Alabama: # 3733, 3768, 3770, 3771.
7 Jun 2017	<i>FamilySearch</i> https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33SQ-GPP6-94XQ	Marriage record for George W Dillard and Margaret Armour	Georgia, Greene County	Greene County, Georgia, "Marriage Licenses 1786 To 1810," p. 9, Dallard-Armour marriage, 9 November 1801; "Georgia, County Marriages, 1785-1950," image 21 of 659, <i>FamilySearch</i> (https://familysearch.org : accessed 7 June 2017); citing "Marriage Records 1786-1849," FHL microfilm # 159,052.	Nov. 9th 1801 George W. Dallard to Peggy Armour; self & Nicholson [vouchers]
19 Jun 2017	Family History Library Salt Lake City, UT 978.8473/C1 B3k v.1	Newspaper mention of George W. Dillard	Georgia, Muscogee County	Elizabeth Evans Kilbourne, <i>Columbus, Georgia, Newspaper Clippings (Columbus Enquirer Volume I, 1832-1834)</i> , (Savannah, Georgia: E. Evans Kilbourne, 1997-2009), 4.	Saturday, March 26, 1831: "Candidates for Office: We are authorized to announce George W. Dillard as a candidate for Clerk of the superior Court of the county of Muscogee. . ."

Write Conclusions

- Why write your conclusions?
 - Make connections in your research and prove conclusions.
 - Demonstrate the breadth and excellence of your research.
 - Preserve and share your research
- Where to write your conclusions
 - Personal family tree software has features such as notes or reports that allow you to write a conclusion.
 - A research report allows for citing each genealogical fact, and you can easily share it with others.
- Elements of a research report
 - Research Objective
 - Clearly state the focus of the research project
 - Use key identifiers with the primary individual's names, dates, and places.
 - Background Information
 - Begin with some background on the individual or family.
 - Include what had previously been known, including any family myths.
 - Information about the time or location might be helpful.
 - Include whatever you feel sets the stage for your findings.
 - Body of the Report
 - Outline the information by headings
 - Chronological
 - Geographical
 - Individual or family group
 - Record type
 - Explain the reasoning behind searching a record type
 - Include negative as well as positive searches
 - Use consistent quality source citations for each genealogical statement.
 - Use bullet points, tables, abstracts, or transcriptions to clearly show the source's information.
 - Conclusion
 - Write a clear, concise paragraph or paragraphs summarizing the findings.
 - No citations are necessary.
 - Frame the research positively.
 - Explain the value of negative findings.
 - Future Research Suggestions
 - A research report should always include ideas for the following research session.
 - Suggest further research on extended family members found during the project.

- Include at the end of the report in a bullet point format for ease of use.

Tips for excellent writing

- Proofread for content, grammar, punctuation
- Set aside the writing for a few days
- Use good grammar and punctuation
- Eliminate trite phrases
- Take out excess words
- Develop your own style

Research Project Document Template

Our template for using the Research Like a Pro process for a project helps you follow each step.

- Link to Google Doc: [Research Project Document \(google docs file\)](#) - clicking this link will ask you if you want to create a copy of the template in your own Google Drive. A Gmail/Google Account is required.
- Docx File Download: [Research Project Document \(download docx file\)](#)

RESEARCH PROJECT TEMPLATE

OBJECTIVE

[Complete name and key identifiers: birth dates, places, or residence]

[Does this question ask for: relationship, identity, or activity]

SUMMARY OF KNOWN FACTS

[chronological table of known facts and analysis of sources]

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

[Create a quick reference guide for the locality or check the FamilySearch Wiki for information on available records, maps, gazetteer, historical facts, etc.]

WORKING HYPOTHESIS

[methodology, clues from the known facts]

Additional Resources

- Dyer, Nicole and Diana Elder. "RLP 9: Report Writing." *FamilyLocket*. Podcast posted 10 September 2018. <https://familylocket.com/rlp-9-report-writing/>
- Dyer, Nicole and Diana Elder. "RLP 59 – Writing As You Research." *FamilyLocket*. Podcast posted 26 August 2019. <https://familylocket.com/rlp-59-writing-as-you-research/>
- Dyer, Nicole and Diana Elder. "RLP 85: Adding Context to Genealogical Writing." *FamilyLocket*. Podcast posted 24 February 2020. <https://familylocket.com/rlp-85-adding-context-to-genealogical-writing/>
- Dyer, Nicole and Diana Elder. "RLP 119: Revisiting Report Writing." *FamilyLocket*. Podcast posted 19 October 2020. <https://familylocket.com/rlp-119-revisiting-report-writing/>
- Elder, Diana. "Research Like a Pro Part 6: Write it Up." *FamilyLocket*. Blog posted 21 September 2017. <https://familylocket.com/research-like-a-pro-part-6-write-it-up/>
- Elder, Diana. "Six Tips for Excellent Writing." *FamilyLocket*. Blog posted 22 July 2022. <https://familylocket.com/six-tips-for-excellent-writing/>