

# Tips for Genealogical Research

Fritz Juengling PhD, AG®

In this class, you will learn various tips that will increase the quality of your research and efficiency of work. These are a few of the tips that the presenter has gathered in nearly 30 of his own research and as a Research Consultant at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. You should keep this list of tips handy and review them periodically as you grow as a family history researcher.

Although there probably is not much material available on the ideas presented here, as they are the result of experience, you can find a lot of information on various aspects of research on the FamilySearch Wiki: [https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Main\\_Page](https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Main_Page)

## 1. Source your material

Label each document, whether on paper or electronic versions.

Surname, given names, event, repository, format, film/call number, place, church/civil registry, volume number, page number, entry number

For example:

McDermond, Martha death FHL US film 1379044 United States, Minnesota, Stearns death register year 1899 p. 133

Barkhofen, Anna Christina death FHL Intl film 1336690 Germany, Prussia, Rheinland, Duisburg, Liebfrauen Church vol. 22 pp. 47-48 Nr. 138

2. Write your name and contact info on your flash drive. Use a permanent marker or an address label. Put a piece of tape over it to keep it from wearing off.
3. Do not trust the index
  - a. Index within record
  - b. Index outside record
4. Keep a log of what you have looked at, giving both positive and negative results.

## Log for: Hoefnagel, Christina Catharina

Date	Repository and Call #	Source	Goal and Results:
4 Apr 2012	Rijksarchiefdienst, Netherlands. Family History Library, Utah, USA. Family Search: Historical Records, Online.	Netherlands. Civil Registration 1811-1950. Rijksarchiefdienst, Netherlands. Registers van der Burgerlijke Stand. deaths	To find Christina Catharina Hoefnagel's death: Found
4 Apr.	Netherlands, Gelderland, Afferden Catholic church records	FHL Intl film 108644 vol. 541 year 1796 no page	To find Christina Catharina Hoefnagel's baptism: Found
10 May	Family Search Online collections	Netherlands, Gelderland P...Church Records, 1552-1903 Nederlands Hervormd Nijmegen Dopen 1802	To find Wilhelmus Huijbers' baptismal record: not found.

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5. Do not trust information from the internet, e.g. death date of Edouard Potjes is often given as 12 Jan. 1931, when he died 4 Jan. 1931. The place of origin of the Traphagen family is given as Leunichor, France, when it's really Lemgo, Germany.
6. Research instead of just collect. Do not believe without checking facts. If it's a tree or list, do not accept it. Verify independently.
7. Do not trust secondary sources, or sources far removed from event, even if primary person is allegedly giving info. Potjes gives wrong birth country, but with correct town. Frederika Wilson gave wrong marriage date.
8. When you make a copy of a record, copy the entire page, so that you will know what the headings are. You might need info, such as a date, that is given elsewhere on the page.
9. If you cannot find someone in an online index, try different search parameters, e.g.
  - a. different spellings
  - b. wildcards \* = more than one letter, ? = only one letter
  - c. enter less or more information to return different results
10. Digitize your documents: better resolution, can share more easily with others, and can put photo right into your genealogy program.
11. Do not believe that a name has always been spelled the same way throughout time. Look for various spellings.
12. Read and note everything on a document. Even that one bit of information that seemed so unimportant might unlock a mystery later on.
13. Back up your info in case you lose it—your flash drive or your hard drive crashes.
14. If you are going to the FHL:
  - a. label all your belongings with your name and contact info—esp. your flash drive.
  - b. look up as much as you can before you go there. Go to your local FHC and look up the film numbers that you want to look at while there. This will save you time and allow you to spend more time researching.
  - c. request a "Vault Film" before visiting
15. Look up information on more than one database and on more than one format.
16. Be suspicious of information on a record. Maria Spuria.

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