



Researching Your Roots

Instructor:

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What do you already know?

- Names
- Dates
- Places
- Ask relatives for any papers, photographs, etc.

Consult Documents

- Bibles/Diaries
- School report cards/autograph books/funeral books, memorial cards, etc.
- Early correspondence (especially from the Old Country)
- Photographs/Family heirlooms (jewelry, clothing, etc.)

Start a Family Tree

- Build a family tree
- Read reviews of family tree building programs and websites at:
<https://www.gensoftreviews.com>
- **GEDCOM** - acronym for Genealogical Data Communication (for use with genealogical programs such as Family Tree software)
- Family Tree Maker, Roots Magic, Legacy Family Tree, Reunion (popular)


Genealogical Research

- Consult public records.
- Obtain copies of important documents.
- Look in “unlikely” places for information.
- Organize as you go.
- Create a research log.
 - Text file or table
 - Spreadsheet
 - Portable and accessible.
- Keep notes of missing information .
or unusual occurrences.

Sample Research Log

Jan Alzo
File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Help All changes saved in One

Jan Alzo



SAMPLE ONLY

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
		Research Task or Objective	Repository Name or Web site Visited	Repository address or Website URL	Location or call number	Source Information/Citation	Document No.	Date Task Accomplished or Date Record Received	Positive or Negative Research Result	Comments
6		1940 US Census Record 2010-09-27	Ancestry.com	https://www.ancestry.com	Online	Year: 1940, Census Place: Duquesne, Allegheny, Pennsylvania, Roll: T327_1402, Page: 10A, Enumeration District: 2-108	6	2010-09-27	Positive-Record obtained	
7		Portrait for Naturalization 2011-02-24	FBI.com	https://www.fbi.com	NARA M1517 Roll 406	https://www.fbi.com/photos/glen_xam... SEE DETAILED NOTE	3	2011-02-24	Positive-Record obtained	
8		Civil Birth Registration 2009-06-29	Nagy Hatvan Archives	Mindenho Vnute Slovensky Republik, Staty w/Mo's Prezent, 800 05, Prezent, Nizna Detastna, Statarka d.c. 31, Slovakia	Moodlin	SEE DETAILED NOTE	4	2009-06-29	Positive-Record obtained	Record obtained in person, by my cousin, Renata. Call-site is mailed to me
9		1920 US Census Record 2009-10-01	Ancestry.com	https://www.ancestry.com	Online	Year: 1920, Census Place: Duquesne, Allegheny, Pennsylvania, Roll: 1963, Page: 179, Enumeration District: 576, Image: 642, File number: 234187	3	2009-10-01	Positive-Record obtained	Also listed as "John Elza"
10		Passenger List (1910) 2009-10-01	Ellis Island Database	https://www.elliisland.org	Online	https://www.elliisland.org/search/passenger... idno=num=44073099&MD=17173490103 SEE DETAILED NOTE	1	2009-10-01	Positive-Record obtained	Listed as "Janis Alzo"
11		1920 US Census Record 2009-10-01	Ancestry.com	https://www.ancestry.com	Online	Year: 1920, Census Place: Duquesne Ward 2, Allegheny, Pennsylvania, Roll: T327_1511, Page: 8B, Enumeration District: 83, Image: 878	1	2009-10-01	Positive-Record obtained	Also listed as "John Elza" and "John Elza"

For a blank template, go to:

<https://www.lisaalzo.com/publications/other-writings>

Scroll down to "Blank Research Log Template" (Excel file)

Cite Your Sources



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Evidence Explained website. At the top right is a search bar with the word "Search" and a magnifying glass icon. Below the search bar is a navigation menu with links for Home, Reviews, Book Content, Sample Text Pages, Sample QuickCheck Models, FAQ, Forums, and QuickTips. The main content area features a large orange banner for "Quick Lesson 23: No. Records do not speak for themselves." with a sub-header "Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace" and a quote from a Library Journal review. To the right of the banner is a large image of a handwritten document. Below the banner are four small thumbnail images. On the right side of the page, there are three sections: "Book navigation" with a link to "Evidence Explained", "QuickLessons" with a link to "Articles", and "QuickTips" with a link to "Reasonably Extensive Research".

Search

Evidence Explained
Historical Analysis, Citation & Source Usage

Home · Reviews · Book Content · Sample Text Pages · Sample QuickCheck Models · FAQ · Forums · QuickTips

Quick Lesson 23: No. Records do not speak for themselves.

No. Historical records do not speak for themselves. They cannot explain themselves. They are inert objects created by individuals of a different time, a different culture, and who knows what mindset. If taken at face value, they can deceive, mislead, or confuse. The only voice that documents have is the voice we give them—either through the context we provide or the passive acceptance with which we report them. ... [David Blom](#) >>

Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace
A Library Journal "Best Reference"

History still waits to be discovered. In courthouses and warehouses, town halls and rectories, dusty attics and ancient trunks, old records survive in every form imaginable.

Technology delivers other treasures. Websites and DVDs offer documents and relics in many digital formats. Audio files, podcasts, and blogs stream other insights into history. Libraries house film and film, reprints and revisions, translations and transcripts, alongside digital access to books and journals published previously in print.

Book navigation

- Evidence Explained

QuickLessons

- Articles

QuickTips

- Reasonably Extensive Research

<https://www.evidenceexplained.com>

Information to Research

- Full name (including maiden names)
- Approximate dates for vital events (birth, death, marriage, residence, etc.)
- Locations for vital events (ask *where* things happened/understanding of "place")
- Ask about documentation for these events in home and family sources
- Don't overlook siblings or friends/neighbors
- Town/village of origin (for immigrants)

Key U.S. Sources

- U.S. Federal Census records (1790 – 1940) and Mortality Schedules
- State Censuses (years, availability varies according to state)
- Immigration/Naturalization records & Emigration records where available
- Vital Records – Birth, Marriage, Death (Civil)

Big Four Websites

- Family Search (Free)
<https://familysearch.org>
- Ancestry.com (subscription)
<https://www.ancestry.com>
- MyHeritage.com (subscription)
<https://www.myheritage.com>
- FindMyPast (subscription)
<https://www.findmypast.com>

Other records

- Church records
- Civil/Criminal courts, jail records
- Cemetery/burial records/headstone inscription/obituaries/funeral home records
- Lodge or fraternal organization burial or insurance records
- Newspapers/Land/Probate Records

NOT ALL RECORDS ARE 100% ACCURATE!

State and County Search

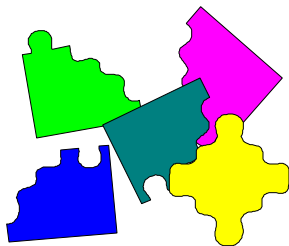
- Naturalization papers (*each state differs in where records are held*)
- Want Declaration of Intent (first papers)
- Pre-1906 county level; after 1906, could be county, state or federal)
- UCSIS Genealogy:
<https://www.uscis.gov/genealogy>
- Search county records (property, historical records, newspaper clippings, etc.).

FamilySearch (LDS) Library Search

- Family History Library Catalog
<https://familysearch.org>
- Microfilm ordering no longer an option as of 7 September 2017
- Digital collections; some may only be viewed at your local Family History Center (FHC); logging in to their computers.
- FamilySearch Wiki
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page

Research

- Takes time (results not always obtained right away).
- Sometimes you may **NOT** find exactly what you are looking for.
- Some information can be “lost” forever and unobtainable.



Like a puzzle - or a good mystery - comes together piece by piece.



Networking: Finding Others

- Genealogical and historical societies
- Queries in Genealogical publications
- Online Message Boards/Forums:
Ancestry.com
- Social Networking sites:
 - Blogs, Facebook, Twitter
- Genealogy on Facebook List

<https://socialmediagenealogy.com/genealogy-on-facebook-list>

Professional Researchers

- Association of Professional Genealogists
<https://www.apgen.org>
- Board for Certification of Genealogists
<https://www.bcgcertification.org>

Online Research

- Genealogical research on the computer via the Internet (World Wide Web) has greatly helped to streamline the process.
- More and more information is becoming accessible/available on-line (from the comfort of your home).
- Excellent tool for sending and obtaining information instantaneously; connecting with others doing similar research.
- Millions of genealogy-related websites.

“Eighth Step:” Online Research

Pros

- Information obtained from comfort of home (own computer)
- Quick and easy access
- Many different sites and searching options
- Networking: Can easily find others performing similar research (and sometimes even family connections!)

Cons

- Too many sites? - where to look?
- Need to know what you are looking for
- Free vs. “pay for access”
- Need to verify information (not “gospel”)
- At risk if putting too much personal information out on the Web

Traditional vs. Online Research

- Computers and the Internet have given genealogists powerful new tools for research.
- Creates new challenges.
- Genealogy in the 21st century no longer either/or but “both.”
- Using a combination of traditional and computer-based research most effective combination for finding the information you desire.

Genealogy on the Internet: Words of Caution...

- Using the Internet ***does not*** replace traditional research (most records not yet online).
- Helps you build the foundation to begin your search; supplement documents and other sources.
- Several key sources ***must*** be found in places other than the Internet.

You cannot complete your entire genealogy using only online resources

Research: Dynamic Process

- True genealogists recognize that it is a lifetime hobby (never really done).
- Utilizing *all* available resources. (traditional and computer-based) is the key to success.
- Keep going: the more you find the more you want to research!

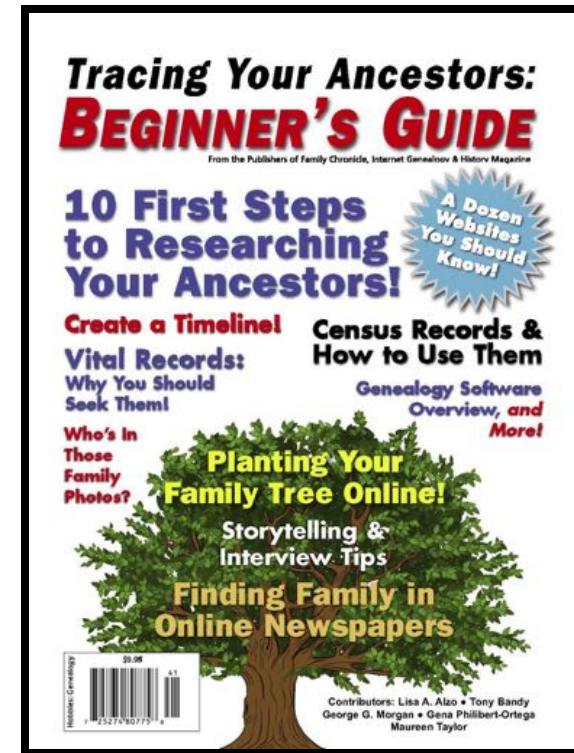
Summary

- Start with what you know.
- Talk to your relatives.
- Build a family tree.
- Have a plan.
- Record your results and sources.

Additional Resource

- *Tracing Your Ancestors Beginner's Guide:*
Internet Genealogy
Special issue, 2014.

<https://your-genealogy-history-store-usa.myshopify.com/collections/tracing-your-ancestors-series-pdf-editions>



Research. Write. Connect. (Online Education Site) Lisa A. Alzo



<https://www.researchwriteconnect.com>

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