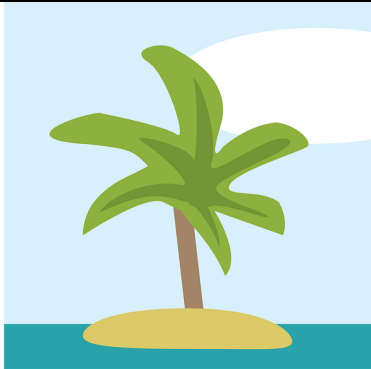


When It Takes A Village:

Applying Cluster Research Techniques

Emily H. Garber

Abstract: Sometimes tracking one's immigrant ancestors tests all one's research acumen. Identifying a subject ancestor, his/her origins, and parentage; tracking that subject through time; and constructing biographies to place that person in his/her social context is best approached by broadening one's research to include other family members, associates and neighbors. This presentation will outline a program for solving genealogical research problems via cluster and collateral research techniques. Topics will include: appropriate application, research planning, commonly used resources and documents, and case studies successfully tracking individuals from Europe to the United States, overcoming name and residential changes and using DNA evidence.



What is Cluster Research?

It is the technique of broadening the search to include relatives beyond direct line ancestors. One researches and includes ancestor's siblings, aunts and uncles, cousins, spouses and other family members, friends and neighbors.

Why Cluster research?

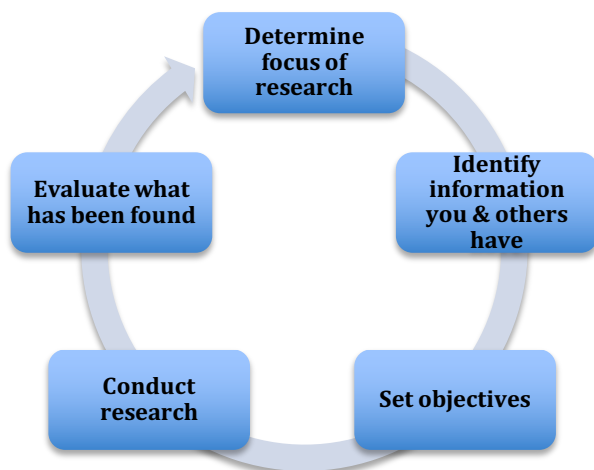
- Identify the correct individuals in records;
- Provide records and information perhaps not left by one's ancestor;
- Additional support for accurate research conclusions;
- Understand the context of our ancestors' lives.

Additional Benefits of Cluster Research

- Neighbors may actually be relatives;
- Help with brick wall problems;
- Broadening one's perspective on our ancestors' lives;
- Understand geographical origins and migration patterns;
- May be the most effective and efficient method of following your ancestors.



Research Process



- Document what you know with a time line and/or family group sheet
- Document the FAN club (Family, Associates and Neighbors)
- Ask who, what when, where and how questions
- Correlate evidence
- Challenge assumptions

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