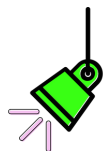


THE SEARCH PARTY METHOD



Are you ready to finally get started on learning more about your family and connecting with your heritage? It's time to try out The Search Party Method! This simple 5-step method will help you stay on track and make real progress in your research. Learn more about the 5-steps below.

SPOTLIGHT

When you start any genealogy project, it's vital to select a spotlight question that will guide your research. Start by asking yourself, "What do I want to know?"

For example: Who were the parents of Samuel Johnson?
When was Eliza Campbell born?

As you select your spotlight question, focus on your subject, time, and place. Take time to refine as needed and then get ready to search for clues!

CLUES

Now that you've selected a Spotlight question, it's time to look at your clues to determine what information you already have.

First, determine where you want to gather your clues. You could use a person's notes section on your Ancestry.com tree, a Word document, or even a simple piece of paper. Just make sure you keep all the information in one place.

Next, ask "what do I already know about this person or situation?"

Once you've considered what you already know, think about where you may have put this information. Perhaps your clues are in a box of family papers in the attic, email correspondence with a cousin, or notes compiled into a written document.

SIFT

Sifting is arguably the most important step in the method. It will either trip you up and send you off on a wild goose chase, or it can be the step that answers your question.

There are 4 steps in the sifting process:

1. Did you get it all? Make sure you check each record for every single detail.
2. Create a timeline. Put your clues in chronological order. It will help you make sense of the information.
3. Says who? Who is the source of the information? Was it your ancestor themselves, other or unknown?
4. Identify the nuggets. Find the important part of the clue.

The sifting process takes time, but it is so worth it! It's a step you will return to again & again!

MAP

This step is CRUCIAL! It will help you stay organized and save time as you make real progress on your family history research.

It will help you know what you have, what you don't have, and where you need to look for answers.

As you consider your Spotlight question and plan your map, consider the following:

- What gaps of information do I see on my timeline and among my clues?
- Location! Where was my ancestor when different events took place? This will help you where your ancestor may have appeared in records.
- What was the time period?

Mapping out the next steps of your research is worth it!

DIG

It's finally time to dig and start searching for your ancestors! You'll use your spotlight question as the focus of your research session and your map as a guide.

As you prepare to dig, ask yourself two questions.

1. What information exists in the record I am searching for?
2. How many different ways could this information be recorded?

Take time to fully analyze the records and the information they include. Don't hesitate to review a record multiple times to ensure you find every nugget of information!