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NO DEAD ENDS: Finding Your Way Through Family Road Blocks

Thinking like a professional genealogist involves changing your focus on an individual person and looking at where, when an ancestor was in an area, and what was going on in this time and place. Occupations, businesses, weather conditions, and more influence the creation of records.

1. Record Hints:

- Look at what you already have!
- Have someone new look at your information – fresh, new eyes on your research is important.
- Put everything in a spreadsheet – look to see if the information is consistent, reasonable.
- Check everyone's ages – Could this "mother" really have a baby at 12?
- Create a Timeline – to help reflect on what you know, where the gaps are

2. Checklists:

There are SO many record groups – it's easy to forget something!

- Genealogy Research Checklist
- <https://rootsofkinship.com/resources/genealogy-research-checklist/>
- Midwest Genealogy Center, Mid-Continent Public Library
<https://www.mymcpl.org/blogs/mgcs-research-checklist>
- A wide variety of forms, checklists, research logs, timelines, and records checklists are available here: <https://www.cyndislist.com/charts/research/>
- Thomas MacEntee's "Genealogy Bargains" site: Look for "Did I Get Everything? Genealogy Research Checklists"
<https://genealogybargains.com/free-genealogy-cheat-sheets/>
- Family Tree Magazine: Download their checklist here -
<https://familytreemagazine.com/freebie/free-genealogy-records-checklist/>
- Google "genealogy research checklists" – SOOOO many come up that are free, downloadable.

3. Books, Magazine Articles, Journals & Interlibrary Loan:

Librarians are your friend in research! Talk with the adult reference librarian in the library both locally and in the regions where your ancestor lived. They are a rich resource of knowledge, understanding of their region and the collections that they or other nearby libraries hold.

Interlibrary loan – Use your own local library to obtain books, articles and journals that are circulated from other libraries. For instance, the Midwest Genealogy Center of the Midcontinent Public Library (Kansas City, Missouri area), Library of Michigan, university libraries, and community public libraries may have the published family genealogy you are looking for.

- Local library catalog or the public library in your ancestors' region
- PERSI – PERiodical Source Index: Use for key word searches, on your location, surname and more. Utilize through the Allen County Public Library or free on FindMyPast (although you won't be able to see some of the content without paying a fee).
- Hathi Trust – Digital library where searches can be done via subject, grouping, and more. Search by surname, city or state, or use the catalog to browse subjects and categories.
<https://www.hathitrust.org/>
- WorldCat – the world's largest library catalog
<https://www.worldcat.org/>
- Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, Indiana
<https://www.genealogycenter.org/Home.aspx>
- The Library of Michigan/Archives of Michigan
<https://www.michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan/>
<https://www.michigan.gov/mhc/0,4726,7-282-61083---,00.html>
- Michigan eLibraries:
<https://mel.org/welcome>
- Library of Congress: Think about all of the things our government has tracked, measured, researched and collected over the years. AND there are genealogies!
<https://www.loc.gov/>
- Congressional Record: Territorial records, reports to Congress (any Native Americans in the family – they might be here in records!).
<https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record>
- Google Books (<https://books.google.com/>)
- Internet Archive (<https://archive.org/index.php>)
- Genealogy journals and articles – All have indexes to surnames, locations, subjects and ethnic groups. Utilize your librarian for help with locating these if you aren't finding them through the sources above.

4. Online resources and tips:

"Google" your surname, locations and maps – there are entire classes and webinars in the use of Google in genealogical research.

"Genealogy on Facebook List," *Katherine R. Willson* NOW ON CYNDI's LIST (since 2021 – under construction): <https://cyndislist.com/facebook> while still appearing here: (<https://socialmediagenealogy.com/genealogy-on-facebook-list/>).

Michigan State University *G. Robert Vincent Voice Library*

Oral histories, recordings of famous people talking about events in their lives, presidential speeches, etc. Everyday people are recorded – this could give your family history real context, and what if YOUR ancestor made a recording?!

<https://lib.msu.edu/vvl/>

OnlineNewspapers.com: Michigan Newspapers Online

<http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/usstate/usmichig.htm>

Newspapers.com – Regular offers of "7 day free access"

<https://www.newspapers.com/>

"Ohio's Digitized Newspapers," *Ohio Memory*

(<http://www.ohiohistoryhost.org/ohiomemory/newspapers>).

"Oral Histories," *Minnesota History Center* (<http://sites.mnhs.org/library/content/oral-history>).

5. Reaching Out For Help:

The possibilities for help from people and genealogical societies are very real. Have you worked with and consulted on your genealogy with:

- Local, regional and state genealogical and historical societies: Michigan Genealogical Council, county genealogical societies, as well as local historical societies and genealogy clubs or groups. Many are online and have newsletters/e-zines that are shared.
- Ethnic groups, heritage societies and lineage organizations: Polish Genealogical Society of Michigan, French Canadian Heritage Society of Michigan, etc. all have "help nights" or seminars to assist members (and newcomers!) to obtain information and even connect those with the same or similar surnames.

- Reenactment or study groups: Focused on a particular culture and time, these groups work to recreate the lifestyles, clothing, work and every day skills needed to survive in community. The Society for Creative Anachronism, Civil War or Revolutionary War reenactment groups, etc.
- Universities and colleges – especially the history, anthropology, sociology and English departments. Professors are specialists in certain areas and are expected to publish about their topics. Look into who in your local area (or the areas where your ancestors lived) specializes in the timeframe, culture or history of your ancestors' region. What books have they published, or are they in edited compilations?
- Specialists in a region, ethnic group, locale or immigration group: Palatines to America, the Huguenot Society, and the rich resources of the African-American genealogical societies working to document the slave trade and where people originated; Jewish American genealogy societies researching the Holocaust; indigenous peoples documenting tribal origins and families.
- Find a genealogy “partner” – share your research with them, they share their research with you: both of you benefit from new eyes on what has been done, with the potential for new insight, ideas for other areas to research and more!

NOTES: