

## Course Objective

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Learn how to brainstorm using multiple methods which will create hypotheses to solve genealogical challenges. A case study will be utilized to highlight the methodology.

## Course Outline

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### *Stage 1 – Creative Hypotheses Development*

- Write a specific research question
- Avoid broad questions; ask small ones instead
- Risk of a single hypothesis
- Three methods for creating hypotheses:
  - Simplification
  - Mind mapping
  - Expository or descriptive writing

### *Stage 2 – Prioritize Hypotheses*

- Techniques:
  - Easiest first
  - Most logical, likely, first
  - Other ways?

### *Stage 3 – Refute or Support Hypotheses*

- Refute any and all hypotheses
- Support one, or more, hypothesis.
  - Further research may be necessary

## John Knox Case Study Holmes County, Ohio

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**Research Question:** *Why did John Knox sell ten parcels of 80 acres for \$3,500 apiece to each of his ten children just six days before he died intestate?*

- **08 Dec 1864.** John Knox sold ten parcels of land for \$3,500 apiece, one to each of his ten children.
  - This represented all of John's land holdings.
- Each deed included the following characteristics:
  - "Thirty-five hundred dollars in hand paid by...[each child]"
  - Premises were "...*free and clear from all encumbrances whatsoever...*"
  - Three witnesses: L. McMarrell, George B. Orner, and C. B. Ferrill.
  - An "X" for the mark of John Knox Sr., sealed.
  - Lawrence McMarrell, J.P., as the clerk confirming the identification of John Knox Sr.
- **14 Dec 1864.** John died (his wife died in 1857).
- **22 Dec 1864.** Obituary published: "*John Knox, Sr. a highly respected citizen of Washington Tp. Died of general debility at the advanced age of 68 years, 43 of which he has spent in the township of his late residence.*"
- **11 Jan 1865.** County probate journal recorded the Letters of Administration to Lawrence McMarrell.
- **11 Jan 1865.** Administrator's bond issued to Lawrence McMarrell, and 3 other men for \$2,000. A different version of administrator's bond issued to same four men for \$10,000.
- **11 Jan 1865 through 09 Feb 1865.** The ten children's deeds were presented for recording.
- **26 Jan 1865 through 16 Feb 1865.** Four Weekly notifications published in newspaper for probate.
- **08 Feb 1865.** County probate journal recorded the accepted resignation of administrator Lawrence McMarrell.
- No further probate records exist today (e.g. estate inventory, record of debtors and creditors, receipts).
- There appeared to be no further administrator appointed.

## Worksheet

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2020 Your hypotheses from Simplification and Sharing:

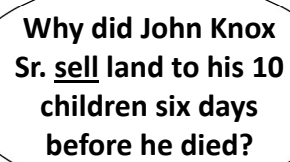
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Draw a Mind Map here:



**Why did John Knox  
Sr. sell land to his 10  
children six days  
before he died?**

## Resources

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- Harold Henderson, CG<sup>®</sup>, “Ten-Minute Methodology: How to Ask Good Research Questions,” *BCG SpringBoard Blog*, 28 January 2016, (<https://bcgcertification.org/ten-minute-methodology-how-to-ask-good-research-questions/> : accessed 13 January 2020).
- Birdie Monk Holsclaw, “From Hypothesis to Proof: Indirect Evidence for the Maiden Identity of Elizabeth, Wife of George Hagenberger,” *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* 92 (June 2004): 96.
- Thomas W. Jones, Ph.D., CG<sup>®</sup>, CGL<sup>(SM)</sup>, FASG, FNGS, FUGA, “Developing Research Questions and Hypotheses,” *Advanced Genealogical Methods*, 2016 Syllabus, Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy, (Salt Lake City: SLIG, 2016), Module 2, p 5-6.
- Thomas W. Jones, Ph.D., CG<sup>®</sup>, CGL<sup>(SM)</sup>, FASG, FNGS, FUGA, “Focused Versus Diffused Research,” *OnBoard*, 17, September 2011, (<https://bcgcertification.org/skillbuilding-focused-versus-diffuse-research/> : accessed 13 January 2020).
- Thomas W. Jones, Ph.D., CG<sup>®</sup>, CGL<sup>(SM)</sup>, FASG, FNGS, FUGA, *Mastering Genealogical Proof*, 2013, National Genealogical Society.
- Jan M. Joyce, DBA, CG<sup>®</sup>, “Developing Creative Hypotheses to Solve Genealogical Challenges,” *Association of Professional Genealogists Quarterly*, Vol XXXIII, No 4 (December 2018).
- Jan Joyce, DBA, “Hypothesis Development to Solve Genealogical Challenges: Conflicting Evidence for George Joyce and the 1800 Census,” *Crossroads*, 12 (Summer 2017).