Digital Research Guidance, Research Logs, and To Do Lists
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Research Guidance provides search strategies to help you find records that may contain information about your ancestors. Guidance has always been available in the form of guidebooks, lectures, or professional consultants. Technology has brought us two new guidance media: research guidance at FamilySearch's Research Wiki and Legacy Family Tree's research guidance system.

Research Guidance at http://wiki.familysearch.org
Developed initially by the staff at the Family History Library and further developed by researchers around the world, this tool assists the researcher in finding ancestors.

Some countries, like England and Ireland, have a step-by-step research strategy based on the time period and vital event you are trying to learn about.

Others, like Germany and the United States are best arranged by category. Want to learn about U.S. church records? Go to its category, and click on the links.

Select an event type and a time period

Birth	1066–1537
Birth	1538–1837
Birth	1837–Present
Marriage	1066–1537
Marriage	1538–1837
Marriage	1837–Present
Death	1066–1537
Death	1538–1837
Death	1837–Present

The old Research Outlines are still very helpful. They have been converted to PDFs and are now available at http://sites.lib.byu.edu/familyhistory/research_outlines/ (although the link doesn't seem to be working anymore)

Other research tools available include calendars, record selection tables, directories, letter writing guides, migration routes, and more.

The FamilySearch Wiki is the most comprehensive guidance system available, however, one advantage to using software like Legacy Family Tree is that it can automatically create a customized To Do List for your ancestor because they analyze the data you have already entered into your genealogy computer program.

Here's an example of the Canada Record Selection Guide:

1. If You Need	2. Look First In	3. Then Search
Age	Census, Vital Records, Church Records	Cemeteries, Military Records, Emigration and Immigration
Birth date	Vital Records, Church Records	Cemeteries, Newspapers, Census
Birthplace	Vital Records, Church Records	Census, Newspapers
City or parish of foreign birth	Church Records, Naturalization and Citizenship, Genealogy, Biography,	Vital Records, Newspapers, History, Emigration and Immigration
Country of foreign birth	Emigration and Immigration, Census, Naturalization and Citizenship	Church Records, Military Records, Vital Records, Newspapers
Death	Vital Records, Cemeteries, Probate Records, Church Records	Notarial Records, Newspapers, Military Records, Obituaries
Ethnic background	Minorities, Native Races, Societies, Church Records, Census	Emigration and Immigration, Naturalization and Citizenship
French terms	Language and Languages	Church Records, Vital Records, Notarial Records
Historical background	History, Historical Geography, Periodicals	Emigration and Immigration, Minorities
Immigration date	Emigration and Immigration, Naturalization and Citizenship	Census, Newspapers, Biography, Genealogy, Land and Property
Living relatives (and adoptions)	Genealogy, Directories, Court Records, Obituaries	Census, Biography, Societies, Church Records, Probate Records
Maiden name, alias names	Vital Records, Church Records, Newspapers	Cemeteries; Military Records; Probate Records; Names, Personal

Legacy Family Tree
Legacy includes a research guidance system. Designed by professional genealogists, this system suggests sources to help you accomplish your goal. It does this by walking you through four steps.

Step 1. Create Timeline - Legacy displays the current timeline for the selected individual, and suggests what type of records should be included. The timeline will estimate dates and places based on surrounding relationships.

Step 2. Preliminary Survey - Before beginning original research, a preliminary survey should be undertaken. Legacy divides this into five sections: lineage-linked Databases, surname message boards and mailing lists, locality message boards and mailing lists, genealogies, and local histories. Perform preliminary survey research before moving on to the suggested sources (step 3), as your questions may be answered in this step.

Step 3. Suggested Sources - First, select your goal: birth, death, marriage, parents, siblings, history, or maiden name. Once selected, the suggested sources will be arranged in rank order. The sources which most likely contain information about your goal are ranked at the top of the list. Each source may list the repository, call number, and helpful information about using the source.

Step 4. To Do List - This final step allows you to organize and plan the research. You can print the To Do List for a certain person or group of persons, by repository, or by locality.

Local Histories and Research Guidance
Local and county histories not only provide historical, geographical, religious, economic, and social information, but they are filled with extensive biographical information. Locating these local histories is usually not a major undertaking, as most major universities, and especially the Family History Library have good collections.

However, the Family History Library only has a small percentage of published local histories. Just *knowing* that other histories exist and where they are located brings hope and renewed determination for even the strongest brick wall researchers. Legacy' **Research Guidance** contains the most comprehensive directory of North American local histories in existence. In fact, of all the listings of local histories that Legacy contains, the complete collection of the Family History Library only accounts for about ten percent of those in existence.

To access the register, click on the *Research Guidance* tab, and click on the *Preliminary Survey* button. Then click on the *Local Histories* tab. Legacy displays a listing of all the local histories that are relevant to the current individual. Because the data (names/dates/places) about the person has already been entered, Legacy knows where the person lived, and then recommends only the local histories that would pertain to them. Many of these histories are being published online - clicking on the *Online* button takes you directly to the text.

Research Guidance also analyzes the known information, and provides suggestions based on the goal of birth, marriage, death, parents, siblings, maiden name, and history. These suggestions are prioritized in the order in which they should be searched to achieve the goal. Beginning researchers appreciate the 24/7 assistance; professionals benefit from the checklist-style approach. It is difficult, even for the seasoned professional, to remember all the different sources available, and to keep up with the new indexes being published online. Many professionals use Research Guidance as a checklist to ensure that they have covered everything

Legacy' Research Guidance is built-in, no additional software is required. Just click on the *Plan to Search* button, and the source is added to your To Do List.

Planning
Good research demands that you keep a log of research performed. The log reminds researchers what they have already looked at, contains bibliographical information about the sources searched, and records the results.
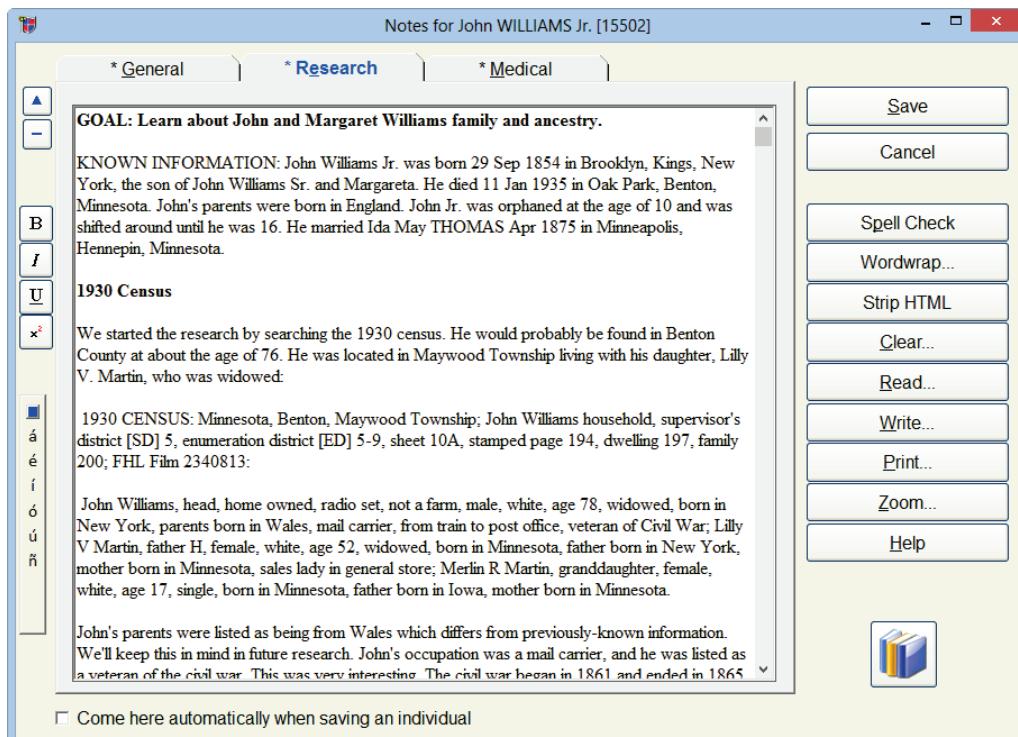
Legacy' **To Do List** acts as a Research Log *and* as a To Do List. The tasks, which can be linked to each individual or to the family in general, can be filtered by category, location, status (open/closed), type (research, correspondence, other), and priority. The log or To Do List can be printed at any time - before the trip to the FHL, or at the request of the client. They can be printed by individual, group of individuals, or by repository.

Research Notes (taken from the conclusion of Legacy Family Tree – Unlocked!

Years ago I began researching one of my ancestors, John Williams. He was born in Brooklyn, New York, the son of John Williams, and was orphaned at the age of ten. Needless to say, he has been a difficult ancestor to locate. I gave up on him and moved on. Evan though it has been years since I last looked at his records, I can pick up right where I left off because I:

- Kept a detailed log of the research I had performed. No sense repeating it all over again.
- Added all of my ideas for future research to his To Do List.
- Summarized in narrative form my entire research process with his family.

This summary is most important. Although I do not do it for every ancestor I research, I especially do this for my direct line. It all goes into that person's Research Notes. Here's a quick look into John's:

In bold I type my goal or the question I am trying to answer. Then I write about how I went about accomplishing my goal. This will help me when:

- Someone questions or asks about how I came to a conclusion
- Leave my research for a while and want to easily remember where I left off
- I need to ask someone else for some research advice