

Genealogy Do-Over Week 3; How to Track your research.

With my One-Name Study I'm very good at tracking my research. I record where I've looked, what I've looked for and if it's been a successful search or not. I found '**Genealogy: Essential Research Methods**' by Helen Osborn* to be extremely useful. She has a section dedicated to why it is important to track both positive (successful) and negative (unsuccessful) search results.

When tracking searches I will include the following;

Date search conducted

This is important, especially when searching online databases as they are often updated.

Name searched

Noting variant spellings, use of wildcards etc.

Name of database

Recording this here makes it easy to create citations.

Location of database

Be this the url (usually to the launch page of the database as this contains information about the data contained with the collection as opposed to simply www.ancestry.co.uk etc.), the name of the library or repository if offline.

Dates searched

Timespan covered.

Results

Self explanatory (I hope!)

But I'd never done this for my personal history! And this is one of the main reasons I wanted to start over.

I also want to track the certificates that I've bought so I don't waste any more money! The use of the research log is part of this, and it is vital part of my new 'Golden Rules' as set out in Week 1.

Thomas's research log which he has kindly shared here looks complex and a little bit scary to begin with, but if you look at the 'Sample Log' tab you can see it's quite simple logical. You note down what you're looking for and then you separate the search into manageable bits. I'll be adapting his log to include what I've stated above.

Thomas also includes his 'To-Do' list here. I'll be separating mine out, because this works better for me. I don't always think of things to do whilst I'm researching, I'll often have a random thought on the way to or from work when I only have my phone with me. Having to open the entire spreadsheet in GoogleDocs on my phone doesn't work for me. I'll be setting up a separate list with something that can sync across devices. For now I'm using Google Tasks, but there's probably something better out there.

** Note: I have not provided a link for Helen's book as I don't want you thinking I'm affiliated to any sales or whatnot. I'm sure you can all use Google or your favourite online book retailer to find a copy if you want to. I just think it's a great book.*