

Using Research Logs



Research Logs are very helpful to keep you organized, efficient, and "on track". There is so much information available to review that it is easy to get "lost". Research Logs remind you **what** you have searched for, **where** your searches took place, and **when** you last searched for information. There are many examples of Research Logs out there to explore.

Basic elements of a Research Log:

❖ **WHAT** are you looking for specifically?

*Think, **WHAT** specific question am I looking for? Some examples might include:

- When was he/she born?
- Where were they married?
- Where was he/she buried?
- What did he/she do in community activities?
- How many children did this couple have?
- The example below is a clipping of a Research Log where the focus on finding information was for **birth record information**.

Birth Record Research		
Research Date:	Record Location/URL	Comments/Findings
11/15/14	California Death Index	Lists birth date, location "Other Country"; death date & location; father's name McAninch, mother's name Mc-Curdy
11/15/14	Find-A-Grave Index	Death Index from Find-A-Grave shows his birth & death dates, Burial in the Old Auburn Cemetery, Auburn, Placer, CA, USA

*Work on **ONE** question at a time. Don't try to answer all your questions at once.

❖ **WHERE** did you look?

*Record **WHERE** you have been, regardless whether there was information there or NOT.

*This will keep you from wasting time at a future date, going back to a site you have already researched.

*If you find information online, copy the URL (the information in the browser search bar) and paste into your Research Log. This creates clickable links to take you back to the site. There are two ways of doing this.

- Open up your Research Log document, and type something like Google Book Photograph (as below), and then **highlight** those words and from the document menu look for the option to Insert a Link. This opens a dialog box and allows you to paste in the link that you copied from the browser.
- The other way is to just paste the URL information into the table.
- The example below shows a screen clipping of a part of the Research Log for "Other Records" found during searching. The links are both clickable and will open the browser window and take you to that source. URL (or Universal Record Locator) information can possibly change. Typically big corporations like Ancestry, State or

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Federal Government records, FamilySearch, Google, etc will not change the location of the records. However, smaller sites may do so. It is probably always beneficial to copy the record (screen clips work great), and note where you found it, then save to your hard drive (with backups!!)

Other Records Research ¹

Research Date:	Record Location/URL	Comments/Findings
6/12/2015	Google Book Photograph	On Page 12 of this Google Book, Mining Camps of Placer County, there is a photo of John standing by his stagecoach. Text lists the names of his horses, that he immigrated in 1875 from Antrim County, Ireland to California (age 15), that he partnered with a William Rea in 1878, running a stage line between Auburn and Foresthill, and Michigan Bluff. He added a 2nd line in 1879 to Colfax.
OR		
6/12/2015	https://books.google.com/books?id=7Efxroo6JHEC&printsec=front-cover&source=gbs_ge_summa-ry_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false	On Page 12 of this Google Book, Mining Camps of Placer County, there is a photo of John standing by his stagecoach. Text lists the names of his horses, that he immigrated in 1875 from Antrim County, Ireland to California (age 15), that he partnered with a William Rea in 1878, running a stage line between Auburn and Foresthill, and Michigan Bluff. He added a 2nd line in 1879 to Colfax.

❖WHEN did you research?

*Record WHEN you find each piece of information for the question that you are working on.

❖Findings/Comments:

*This is the "meat & potatoes" section of your log. Record as much of the information as you can into the table boxes so that you don't have to keep opening up the reference information.

*For example, the following table shows Census information, with all the extracted information from the census page. Remember that ages, where a person was from, even the spellings of the names can vary depending on many different factors when the information was given to the enumerator.

Census Information Research		
Research Date:	Census Year / Location	Comments/Findings
11/15/14	1880-Sacramento, CA	Single, 23 y/o, Laborer, born Ireland. Father Ireland, Mother Ireland
11/15/14	1900-Placer, CA	Name Spelled " Mcquinch ". John - Head, 40 y/o, Married, "Feb 1860", Born Ireland, as were mother/father, immigrated 1873, Occupation-StageLine, Owned home & Free Years Married - 14 Wife - Christina (age 39, "July 1861" born Canada, English, mother/father from Scotland) Daughter - Isabel, Sep 1888, 11yrs, born California Daughter - Jane E, Dec 1891, 8 yrs, born California Son - Archibald, July 1893, 6 yrs, born California

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11/15/14	1920-Oakland, CA	John- Head, Married, Lived at 2443 13th Street, Oakland, CA; 57 y/o, Immigrated 1876, Naturalized 1885born ~1863 Ireland, father born in Scotland, mother in Ireland; Occupation-Blacksmith, "Barber State"(?) WIFE- Anna T, 53 y/o, Immigrated 1897, Naturalized 1885, Born Canada, father born in England, mother in Canada. Son- Arch J, Single, 26 y/o, Born in California, Occupation-Engineer, Civil
11/15/14	1930-Oakland, CA	John- Head, 66 y/o, home 2603 13th Street, Oakland, CA, worth \$31,000, owned. Marriage Age-24 y/o, Born North Ireland, father in Scotland, mother in North Ireland; Immigrated 1876; Occupation-Retired Wife- Anna T, 65 y/o, Marriage Age-42 y/o; Born in Canada, father in England, mother in Canada
11/15/14	1940-Oakland, CA	John- Head, 80 y/o, 2443 13th Street, Oakland, CA, Married, Born Ireland; Occupation-Retired Wife- Anna T, Married, 77 y/o; Born in Canada

To summarize, as your Research Log grows with lots of additional information, the context of that person's life begins to make sense. A STORY is developing about that person. You are literally distilling little bits of "puzzle pieces" and putting them all together into a much larger puzzle picture.

You need to have the information gathered into a readily open and visible format so that you can see all the pieces at the same time.

The Research Log will help you remember WHAT question or goal you had in mind to search, WHEN you last looked for information, WHERE you searched for information, what FINDINGS you found at the reference site. It's hard to get into the habit of writing everything down, but as you begin to really research, it will save you countless hours, and decrease your frustration at finding a site with information, but then not remembering where you accessed it.