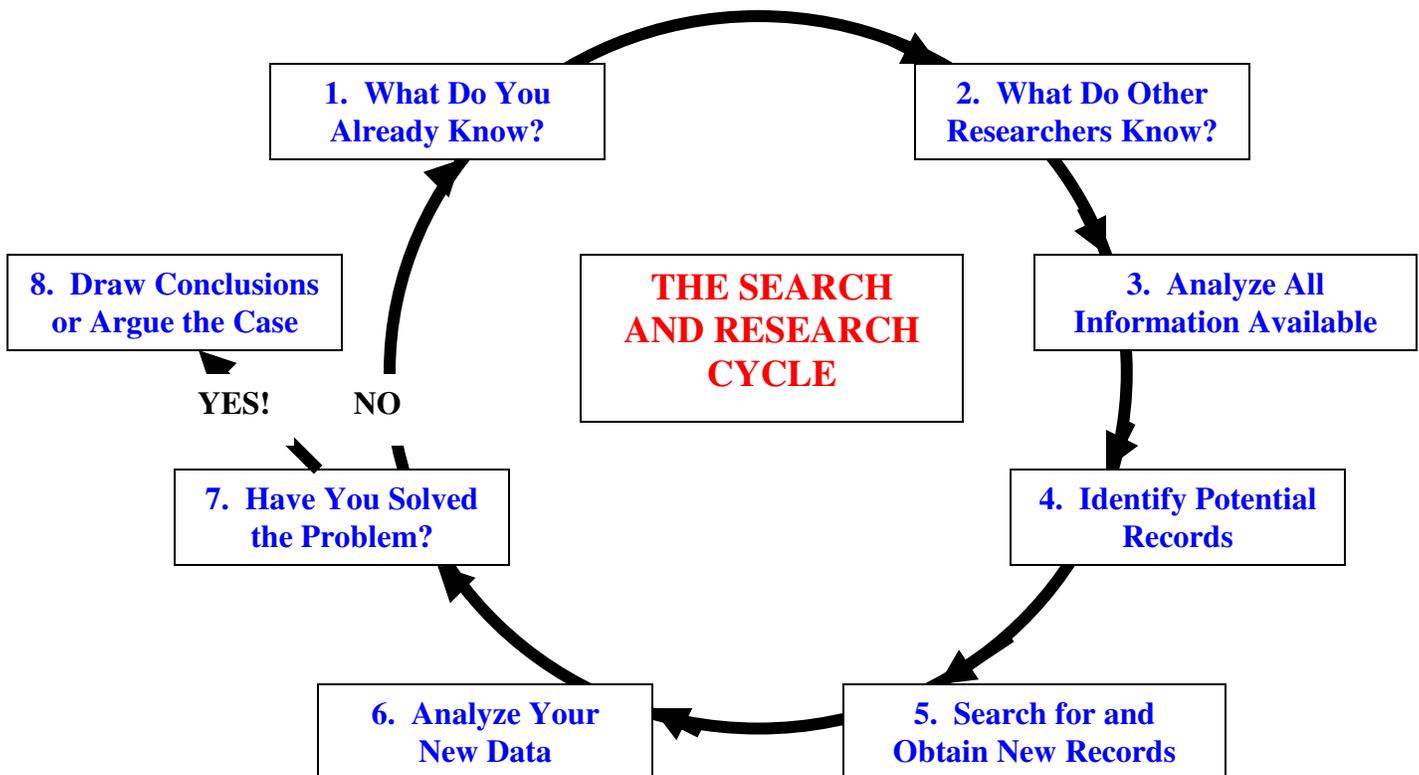


THE SEARCH AND RESEARCH CYCLE

By Randy Seaver

All successful genealogists use a combination of Search and Research as they pursue their ancestry. A general strategy for searching and researching can be summarized in the Search and Research Cycle depicted below:



SEARCH – dig for information in many places:

- **Library Catalogs** (e.g., FHL, LOC, society, state, local), **Periodical Source Index (PERSI)** and **NUCMC** – find published books, articles and manuscripts for surnames and/or locations
- **Census Indices** – CDROM and online (e.g., Ancestry, HeritageQuestOnline)
- **Online Databases** (e.g., LDS IGI, LDS Ancestral File, Rootsweb.com, WorldConnect, Genealogy User Pages, USGenWeb, Ancestry.com, HeritageQuestOnline, Genealogy.com, etc)
- **Online Search Engines** (e.g., Google, Dogpile, etc) – find web pages with surnames and locations
- **Search for queries** on Message Boards (Ancestry, Genforum) and Mailing Lists (Rootsweb)

RESEARCH – analyze and build the case:

- **Define your problem** – what do you want to know?
- **Analyze the information** you have on hand – is it reliable, credible, verified?
- **Identify records** that might solve your problem – are they available? If so, where can you find them?
- **Use local repository, distant repository and/or online resources** to find the records you need – or satisfy yourself that they are not available. If unavailable – what records would substitute for them?
- **Analyze the new information** obtained – does it add to what you already know? Does it support or contradict previous information?
- **Is your problem solved?** If YES, then move on to the next problem. If NO, then continue on the research cycle – back to # 1.

RESEARCH TIPS: Use forms to summarize your search results – positive and negative. Write a narrative to summarize your research. Expand your search to include relatives and neighbors. Share your problem.