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## **Some Typical Genealogy Problems and Typical Solutions**

PROBLEMS	SOLUTIONS
1. Missing birth data; no record for parents	Civic records; church records; family records; internet postings; newspaper reports
2. Missing marriage data – no known records	Civic records; church records; family records; internet postings; newspaper reports
3. Missing death data – no known records	Same solutions as for #1 and #2, plus cemetery data and funeral home data
4. Earliest known data for your target people has been exhausted	Look for other records that were extant in the time period of your search
5. Key records that may have helped you find data for your target people was destroyed, as by a fire, by warfare, or by an accident	Look for alternate records that were developed in the same time period of your search

## **But What Do You Do When the Usual Solutions Don't Provide Any Help?**

### **Some Possible Strategies that May Be Useful**

STRATEGY	USING THIS STRATEGY
1. <u>Collaboration</u> with other genealogy researchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Post your data on the major sites</li><li>• Work the free message boards</li><li>• Use the various genealogy forums</li><li>• Set up your own genealogy website</li><li>• Get into the blogging business</li></ul>
2. Use large <u>search engines</u> to get key hits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spend time on Google, Yahoo, others</li><li>• Get into the large genealogy sites</li><li>• Get familiar with Mocavo, Linkpendium, Cyndislist.com</li></ul>
3. Thumbing through <u>the big family history books</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Get familiar with the large family history books pertinent to your search areas</li><li>• Check the indexes of these books</li></ul>
4. Work with <u>property records</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check into old records for property sales</li><li>• Check taxation records</li></ul>

STRATEGY	USING THIS STRATEGY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check wills, probates</li> </ul>
5. <u>Broaden your search</u> beyond your original geographic and time areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Search in places you never expected them to be</li> <li>• Search in document types and data sources that you don't normally access</li> </ul>
6. Check out <u>on-site hard copy records</u> in ancestral locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check the court houses, libraries, and churches of your ancestral towns</li> <li>• Check the old archives for old documents including old newspapers</li> </ul>
7. <u>DNA Testing</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider male line, Y testing</li> <li>• Consider female line, testing</li> <li>• Consider autosomal gender free testing</li> <li>• Work together with your new relatives</li> </ul>

## **Examples of Genealogy Successes Using the Various Strategies**

### **1. COLLABORATION**

Methods for Maximizing Success – What I Did	Some Good Results	Payoff
<p>Alerted the genealogy community of my research goals and interests by doing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posted my BMD database of about 20,000 names on ancestry.com, rootsweb.com, familysearch.com</li> <li>• Posted queries on the ancestry.com and genforum.com message boards for about 100 specific ancestors</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Many people have contacted me either to add data or to ask questions about my postings; some of these “collaborators” added a few names or other BMD data to my own database</li> <li>2. One woman whose ancestral lines intersected with mine provided me with data and a contact that added greatly to my database</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I was able to improve the quality of my database with better BMD data for my known ancestors</li> <li>2. Most collaboration improvements were small, just adding a few names here and there</li> <li>3. But, my most blockbuster collaboration resulted in an addition of over 2,000 new names</li> </ol>

## 2. SEARCH ENGINES

Methods for Finding New Data	Some Good Results	Payoff
<p>Methodically checked out the hard to find ancestor data using Google or Yahoo entries such as “Scriba + Goddlesheim”, or “Wessling + Gehrde + Genealogy”</p> <p>Used Linkpendium and Cyndislist.com to see what internet sites could be helpful to my specific surname or geographical needs, and then looked through those particular sites</p> <p>Used ancestry.com and familysearch.com in a search engine style to find data on specific people</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Found a number of useful hits that resulted in improved BMD data or, in a few cases, the addition of a few additional ancestors</li> <li>2. Found data posted by others that could have remained hidden because it wasn’t posted on a genealogy-specific site</li> <li>3. Found a bonanza of data by finding data on an outstanding family history organization</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Some of the hits resulted in getting solid data on some of the earliest or most challenging ancestors</li> <li>2. Finding the Scriba Family site was a true bonanza, because this family history organization has accumulated over 13,000 names of the descendants of one of my early ancestors</li> <li>3. A Dutch genealogist had posted family trees on his own site, which was unknown to ancestry, etal</li> </ol>

## 3. THE BIG FAMILY HISTORY BOOKS

Methods for Finding New Data	Some Good Results	Payoff
<p>Methodically look through the most pertinent over-size family history books, especially the surname genealogy books, emigration name books, and county histories</p> <p>Look in the online books such as Google Books. Many old historical books could provide data, such as the early county histories of the 1800s.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Found occasional references to ancestors in these various books, sometimes with detailed BMD data included</li> <li>2. Found certain detailed references to ancestors in some of these books that led to new insights on their origins</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In one notable case, found information in one of the emigration books that identified the previously unknown town of origin for an ancestor born in 1666</li> <li>2. This finding led to research in the town of origin, which eventually added numerous relatives to my database</li> </ol>

## **4. PROPERTY, PROBATE, WILLS, TAX RECORDS -- "Follow the Money"**

Methods for Finding New Data	Some Good Results	Payoff
When other records are in short supply, look into the various types of property records, such as: property purchases; taxation records; and will/probate records – note especially those cases that involve litigations with various relatives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Property records placed certain ancestors in identifying specific locations at certain time periods.</li> <li>2. Tax records also were used to place ancestors in a time and place.</li> <li>3. Probate data defined heirs and specified death dates and places.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Because I learned the name of an ancestor's town of residence via a property record, I was able to establish the fact that he lived in this town, I was able to find added data for him.</li> <li>2. Tax data helped to place several people in specific times and places.</li> <li>3. Probate data was helpful to identify family relationships.</li> </ol>

## **5. BROADENING THE SEARCH**

Methods for Finding New Data	Some Good Results	Payoff
<p>After an exhaustive search in the "most expected" geographic areas, extend the search to other areas such as states that are further away than expected</p> <p>Extend your search to include record sources not normally used, such as funeral homes.</p> <p>Extend your search to include a wider range of dates/years for finding births or deaths</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. By looking beyond the States where certain ancestors were known to have lived, I looked in other States where there was no previous record for them, but that's where key records were found</li> <li>2. By tracking funeral home data, death data was found for a relative who had vanished</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Finding a marriage record in an unexpected place was helpful in establishing more complete data for defining the timetable of an ancestor's life</li> <li>2. Finding an important death record was helpful in defining the last years of a relative's life</li> </ol>

## 6. ON-SITE HARD COPY DATA RECORDS

Methods for Finding New Data	Some Good Results	Payoff
<p>In the area where your ancestors lived, conduct an exhaustive search of all possible internet and digitized document sites. If, after checking all of these, check the various on-site hard copy records, including court house data, library data, and old local newspapers.</p> <p>Pay special attention to documents, such as obituaries, in the county seat</p> <p>Also, check for local genealogy buffs who may have done research in your area of interest</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A local library in an Illinois county seat had an old newspaper collection that included useful obituaries</li> <li>2. A local genealogist was found who had been researching the exact area where an out of town researcher could benefit</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Finding an old 1878 obit for an ancestor proved to be a gold mine of information for a genealogy researcher, giving detailed death information and even including parental data that was previously unknown</li> </ol>

## 7. DNA RESULTS

Type of DNA Test	Examples of Use	Payoff
Direct Male-Line Y Test	This was the kind of test used for the Jefferson-Hemmings series of research findings	This test provides solid data for confirming or denying direct family relationships of father to son to son
Direct Female Line Test	This was the kind of test that would have disproved the Anastasia deception	This test provides solid data for confirming mother to daughter to daughter type relationships
Autosomal Tests	These tests provide data about similarity of relationships across genders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This type of test is useful in defining relationships among cousins, notably “new” cousins previously unknown to the researcher</li> <li>2. Finding the new cousins may give the clue needed to add many people to your database</li> </ol>