Start with one question

Choose one question, a time period and a place. Separate a family story from a record you have checked.

1. Person reference or nickname; time/place boundary

2. Question and why it matters

3. What is reported or documented; source reference and limits

4. Possibility to test; what would contradict it

5. One source to seek; search terms and date range

6. Next action, review date and unresolved limit

Short notes: 120 characters per blank field. For longer answers, label a continuation with worksheet ID and field number. Download, save, reopen and inspect entries in your viewer. Keep completed records private.

Map people without merging them

Use person references, not sensitive details. A shared name alone does not establish identity or a family relationship.

1. P1: chosen label, approximate dates/places, source

2. P2: chosen label, approximate dates/places, source

3. Additional person/candidate reference; keep uncertain identities separate

4. Relationship: from reference -> to reference; relationship description

5. Evidence for the relationship and uncertainty

6. Possible same-name collision or conflicting relationship; next check

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Ask permission, then listen

An interview is optional. Agree on purpose, recording and audience before starting. These notes are not a legal release.

1. Purpose and topics the participant is comfortable discussing

2. Agreed choices: notes, recording, transcription service, audience

3. Open prompt: what do you remember, and how do you know?

4. Record the words faithfully; distinguish quote from paraphrase

5. Dates/names uncertain; follow-up without leading the answer

6. Review with participant; restrictions and private record location

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Leave a trail someone can follow

Keep enough detail to find each record again. An unsuccessful search is a result, not proof that an event never happened.

1. Search: question, date, collection/repository, terms and limits

2. Source ID; creator/title, record date, locator/page and access date

3. What the source explicitly says; claim supported and identity limits

4. Unsuccessful search or missing information; what it does NOT prove

5. Compare possible matches and conflicts; do not combine too soon

6. Conclusion label: supported / tentative / unresolved; next action

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Compare candidates and record origins

Keep each candidate and source distinct. Matching details support a comparison; they do not automatically establish identity.

1. Research person and candidate references; source IDs

2. Details that agree; preserve dates, places and exact scope

3. Details that differ or are missing; no invented explanation

4. Record creator/origin and possible copying; what is unknown

5. What would distinguish candidates; next evidence to seek

6. Current match decision and limit; keep the original references

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Revise a conclusion and review sharing

Separate a changed interpretation from new evidence. Check the intended audience against actual participation and sharing choices.

1. Question and earlier conclusion; version/date reference

2. New source, corrected reading or no new evidence; cite the change

3. Current conclusion: what is supported, tentative and unresolved

4. Exact material and intended audience; existing choice reference

5. Sharing decision or unresolved permission; do not infer approval

6. Next action, private master location and review trigger

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