

Squeezing Time for Research? Use 10-15 minute blocks

TIP: Set a 10-minute timer on your cell phone, computer, or on a mechanical timer, and when it dings, QUIT!

Busy? Never enough hours or minutes in the day? Those of us trying to search out details of our ancestors on our lunch hours at work or before bedtime, struggle with time. Here are a few pointers on how to make your minutes count.



First: You must be ORGANIZED – with a filing system that works for you (binders, cards, sheets) plus genealogy software to hold your data. You will quickly lose track of the relevant ancestor if you depend on post-it notes all over your desk!

Second: You need SUMMARY SHEET(S) of your research, organized by surname or by place (county, etc.). This can be as simple as: Surname, first/middle names, Birthdates and Birthplaces, Marriage . . . with notes of *Where* to search *What*.

Third: Make your BEST GUESS of SOURCES of data to research next. For example, you have an estimated birth date & place and want specific information: Search for birth registrations within 20 years of the date, also baptism records, marriage records may have the age listed, death records also may include a birth date, also a WW1 draft card with details of birth/place, and if married, or perhaps an obituary in the local paper – and where is that likely to be located now (universities, online databases), etc.

Fourth: DON'T GET SIDETRACKED! Write down the website that looks promising for that interesting someone else you need to look up; detail neighbouring counties that may have been where grandparents came from; write down variant spelling you noticed for two ancestors that may be yours. But stay focused on your specific one or two ancestors for 10 -15 minutes!

Fifth: You need to make notes on the ancestor WRONG NAMES/PLACES/DATES that you find along the way on specific documents. Otherwise you will find yourself looking up the same three people over and over again, on the same three documents!

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TIP: Write down the sources of your ancestor's details, every time!