



See the Research Method in Action

A Completed Fictional Example

A free sample from the Kings of Virginia Genealogy Research Kit

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR EVERY STAGE OF YOUR RESEARCH.

Whether you are beginning your first family-history search or bringing years of research into a more effective system, the kit helps you know where to begin, what to look for in records, how to organize evidence, and how to pick up exactly where you left off.

This completed sample is read-only. All names, places, records, and citations are fictional.

A RESEARCH METHOD THAT GOES WHERE YOU GO

Use the same practical method on your computer, with printed pages, from a USB drive, at home, or wherever your research takes you - including libraries, courthouses, archives, cemeteries, historical societies, and family visits.

WHAT YOU RECEIVE

A 29-page step-by-step Training Manual; a 10-page fillable Person Research Workbook; a continuation form for longer searches; and a three-page Research Trip & Field Notes companion.

STOP WHEN LIFE GETS BUSY. START AGAIN WITHOUT STARTING OVER.

Preserve where you stopped, what matters most, and the very next action.

Free to view and share unchanged for personal, classroom, library, and historical-society education.

See the complete kit: kingsofvirginia.org/family-research-kit/

The TRACK Method

A natural, repeatable way to move research forward and return without starting over

FIVE STEPS THAT KEEP RESEARCH MOVING

T**Target what you want to learn**

Choose the person, mystery, or research problem you want to investigate.

R**Review what you already know**

Gather the records, family stories, names, dates, places, and clues already available.

A**Arrange the clues**

Place events and locations in a timeline so patterns, gaps, and conflicts become easier to see.

C**Check the evidence and record your searches**

Note what each source supports, what remains uncertain, and what you already searched - including Not Found results.

K**Keep your place**

Before stopping, record where you stopped, what you do not want to forget, and the very next action.

TWO HABITS THAT PROTECT YOUR RESEARCH

A citation is the return address for your evidence.

Preserve enough information that you - or another researcher - can find the exact source again.

A family story is a clue, not automatically a fact.

Record who shared it, then look for evidence that supports, corrects, or challenges the memory.



Person & Research Focus

Fictional teaching example - not a real person, place, record, or citation

PERSON OVERVIEW

Full name *Include maiden names, nicknames, or spelling variants below.*

Samuel Carter (fictional example)

Other names / spellings

Sam Carter; S. Carter; possible 'Carty' spelling - not proved

Birth - date and place

About 1832, Pine Creek County, Virginia

Death - date and place

After 1880; exact date and place unknown

QUICK STATUS

☐ Not started

☒ In progress

☐ Waiting

☐ Needs review

☐ Paused

FOCUS THE RESEARCH

Current research focus *Describe what you want to learn or resolve.*

Was the Samuel Carter in the 1860 and 1870 census the same man named as a witness in the 1878 deed?

What I already know *Separate memory and assumptions from documented information.*

A Samuel Carter appears with wife Eliza and two children in 1860. A man of the same name, similar age, and occupation appears nearby in 1870. No single record connects all three appearances, so the identification remains a working hypothesis.

Names, places, dates, relatives, or associates that may help

Eliza Carter; children William and Mary; farmer; Pine Creek; neighbor Thomas Green; deed witness James Bell.



Short Life Timeline

Fictional teaching example - dated events reveal gaps, conflicts, and next steps

TIMELINE AND RESIDENCE

Use records, family-held materials, and clearly labeled memories. Do not force uncertain dates into false precision.

Date	Event	Place	Evidence / source	Notes
Abt. 1832	Estimated birth	Virginia	1870 census example	Age-based estimate
1854	Marriage to Eliza Green	Pine Creek Co., VA	Marriage register example	Obtain original image
1860	Farmer; household of four	Cedar District	1860 census example	Near Thomas Green
1870	Farmer; household of four	Cedar District	1870 census example	Age and family align
1878	Possible deed witness	Pine Creek Co., VA	Deed index lead	Full deed not obtained
1880	Last located in census	Cedar District	1880 census example	Death remains unknown
After 1880	Search needed	County and nearby areas	No source yet	Check probate and tax



Evidence Check

Fictional teaching example - one important source at a time

SOURCE IDENTITY

Evidence / saved filename *Example: 1850_Census_King_William_VA_John_Doe.jpg*

1870_Census_Pine_Creek_VA_Samuel_Carter.pdf (fictional)

Where did it come from? *Collection, repository, book/page, URL, owner, and access date as relevant.*

Fictional teaching citation: 1870 U.S. census, Pine Creek County, Virginia, Cedar District, Samuel Carter household, p. 14, dwelling 88; sample image 27; accessed 3 Sept. 2026.

REASONING IN PLAIN LANGUAGE

What does this source tell me?

The household contains Samuel, age 38, farmer; Eliza, age 35; William, age 12; and Mary, age 9. It places them in Cedar District in 1870.

Why do I think it belongs to this person?

The age, occupation, spouse, children, and location resemble the 1860 household. These clues support a possible match but should be compared with additional records.

What does it NOT prove? *Record the limits instead of turning a clue into a fact.*

It does not prove Samuel's parents, exact birthplace, death date, or that he is the deed witness named in 1878.

Conflict, uncertainty, or follow-up needed

Compare the 1860 household, locate the complete 1878 deed, search tax lists, and identify neighbors who appear in both records.



Research Log & Stop/Resume

Fictional example - record successful and unsuccessful searches

RESEARCH LOG

Date	What / where searched	Result	Source / file	Next step
9/1/26	1860 census - Carter	Found likely household	Saved PDF	Compare 1870
9/1/26	1870 census - Carter	Found possible match	Saved PDF	Compare neighbors
9/2/26	Online death index	Not found	Search log	Try probate/tax
9/2/26	Deed index, Carter	1878 witness lead	Index note	Obtain full deed
9/3/26	1880 census - Carter	Found	Saved PDF	Search after 1880

END-OF-SESSION CHECKPOINT

Where I stopped

Compared the 1860 and 1870 households. I have not yet obtained the complete 1878 deed.

Important discovery / Do not forget

Thomas Green appears near the Carter household in both census examples and may be related to Eliza.

Very next action

Make this specific enough that you can begin immediately.

Request the complete 1878 deed and record the grantor, grantee, witnesses, land description, book, and page.

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