Back to Basics:
A genealogy refresher
I. Where to start ???

At beginning and work back

★ At home....
★ Contact relatives....
★ Search for family artifacts....
Look at home...

Start with a pad of paper & a pencil

★ What do you know & how do you know it?
★ What documents do you already have?
★ What do you know about your parents, grandparents, etc.?
★ What stories do you remember hearing growing up?
Contact Relatives for....🎵

★ Arrange Personal interviews
★ Collect Family stories
★ Others doing family history research
Search for family artifacts....

★ Family Bible
★ Military records, awards & medals
★ Photo albums
★ Items passed down in the family
Identify your source ~

★ Primary vs. Secondary
★ Evidence vs. Opinion
★ Don’t forget to cite the source
Primary vs. Secondary Evidence

★ Primary = created with first hand knowledge, very near the actual event; eye-witness

★ Secondary = typically created after the fact or second-hand report; may be less reliable because of lapse of time, memory, or person not there
Original vs. Derivative

★ **Original evidence** = Material in its original form
★ **Derivative evidence** = Material produced by copying an original or manipulating its content
Consider the Source ~

★ Evaluate for bias, fraud, memory or time lapses, contradictory evidence, other factors
★ Is document self-serving?
★ What would cause the writer to misrepresent the facts?
★ Was there motive to delay / hasten reporting the event?
Evidence vs. Opinion

Information can be reasonably confirmed by collecting documents/data vs. Rumor or lore

★ Can confirm birth, marriage, death - records created at time of the event
★ “We’ve always spelled our name that way...” is likely opinion
★ Can confirm land owners - records generated at time of land transfer
★ “My family descends from royalty. My grandmother said so...” Opinion?
Cite your source!!

- So you can give credit where credit is due ~ it’s the right thing to do
- So others can evaluate your research
- So you know where you have looked & the results, including the date & location of the source
- So you can compare quality & reliability of your sources
II. Overcoming “Brickwalls”

Resources Beyond Vital Records

★ Point-in-time....
★ Migration....
★ Honorable Mentions....
★ Legal, social, religious interaction....
★ Military conflicts....
Point-in-Time

- Census schedules
- City directories
- Probate records
- Cemeteries & Mortuary records
Migration

★ Land records
★ Immigration records
★ Historic events
★ Maps
Honorable Mention

- County histories
- Occupation records
- Newspapers
- Biographies of others
Legal, Social, Religious Interactions

- Court records
- Membership in social organizations
- Church records
Military Conflicts

★ Military service & unit records
★ Pension records
★ Draft registration application
★ Veterans medical & cemetery records
III. What to do next ~

* Develop a Research Plan

* Define the research “problem” / objective - the question to answer
* Determine “who, what, when, where, how”
* Identify resources & how to access
* List possible Internet sites to search
* Plan a field trip - go, do, experience
* Evaluate results, adjust, & repeat