

“Think Like a Reporter to Avoid Rookie Genealogy Mistakes”

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DO:

- Follow the clues you find like the “dun-duns” on “Law and Order.” Where is the next place the information is propelling you? Go there!
- Remember Maurice Templesman – the info is out there somewhere. It’s up to you to find a path to it. If you can’t go right to the bullseye, how can you use the concentric rings? Remember: you probably have more information at the outset of your search than you realize.
- Get creative in how you search. Use wildcards. Think broadly. Adjust your strategy, *especially* with Jewish genealogy (shifting names, etc.)
- Play “Concentration.” Remember the cards you’ve seen and turned over.
- Remember your logic grid. Do all the details match?
- Be a gatekeeper, not a vacuum, especially when it comes to importing other people’s trees.

DON’T:

- Start searching for records before you know *where* your family is from.
- Rely too much on hints. Remember quality over quantity.
- Assume every document you need will be online. If a search returns a record that seems like it *could* be the one you want, don’t assume it *must* be. Learn what’s out there and where.
- Forget common sense. Always remember Occam’s Razor – the most likely scenario is the least complicated.
- Overthink it. Sometimes all it takes is a simple Google search.

Some Resources

- Steve Morse’s Ellis Island Gold Search: (Expanded tools for searching arrivals) <http://stevemorse.org/ellis2/ellisgold.html>
- Steve Morse Federal Census ED finder tool: <https://stevemorse.org/census/unified.html>
- Children Can’t Be Born Before Their Parents: <https://blog.myheritage.com/2017/12/children-cant-be-born-before-their-parents-a-common-sense-guide-for-genealogical-beginners/>
- The JewishGen Community Database: <https://www.jewishgen.org/Communities/Search.asp>
- The JewishGen Family Finder <https://www.jewishgen.org/jgff/>