

# 21. It's Not All Done! Finding Places to Research in a Full Family Tree

by: Linda Hilton

## It's Not "All Done"! Finding Places to Research in a Full Family Tree -- Handout

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- 1. Descendancy research** is “the process of identifying all the descendants of a specific ancestral couple” (FamilySearch). When you have gone as far back on the Tree as you can find records, then turn around and find all the *descendants* of a direct ancestor. Flip the Tree over! Instead of researching from the bottom of the Tree up, research from the top of the Tree down. This is particularly useful for those with full trees.
- 2. To access your Fan Chart on FamilySearch’s Family Tree:**
  - Sign into FamilySearch.
  - Click on “Family Tree” – top left corner.
  - From the drop-down menu, click on “Tree.”
  - Click on the drop-down arrow next to “Landscape.”
  - Click on “Fan Chart.”
- 3. By combining the information found on FamilySearch’s Family Tree fan chart filters “Birth Country,” “Sources,” and “Research Helps,” find a place on the Tree where you would likely have success doing descendancy research.**
  - **Birth Country filter:** Choose an ancestor on the Tree from a country that you would feel confident researching.
  - **Source filter:** Choose an ancestor on the Tree with few sources – look for the lighter colors which indicates fewer sources. You want to find a place on the Tree that has been overlooked and where few people have researched and attached sources.
  - **Research Helps filter:** If possible, locate an ancestor on the Tree where there are research helps – data problems, record hints, or research suggestions.
  - Where you find a match for all three of these filters on the fan chart is a place on the Tree where you would likely have success doing descendancy research.
- 4. Descendancy Research:**
  - Find an ancestor that is a match for all three filters in the fan chart – “Birth Country,” “Sources,” and “Research Helps.”
  - Click on that ancestor and open their page.
  - Click on “View Tree” (far right just above red line).

- Click on the drop-down arrow next to “Landscape.”
- Click on “Descendancy.”
- You will now see a list of this ancestor’s spouse and children. The children who do not have an arrow next to their photo do not have a spouse. One possibility for descendancy research is to find spouses for these children, then look for *their* children.
- If a child has an arrow next to his photo, click on it to see the child’s spouse and children. You can continue expanding the chart until you find someone who does not have a spouse or children. This is where you should do descendancy research!

**5. If the descendancy research for your focus ancestor has already been done, go back a generation to look for their parents’ descendants.**

- In the focus ancestor’s descendancy view, click on “Expand.”
- Click on the focus ancestor’s parents.
- Check to see if the children have spouses, children, grandchildren, etc. If they do not, then do descendancy research on them.

“One study calculated that if we went back 10 generations and did the work for their cousins and their cousins’ descendants, there is the potential for about 8 million people if there were only 4 children per family. Many had much larger families. If you have done 8 million names, perhaps you are done and can help other people. But if you haven’t done 8 million names, there are names to find.” Elder Allan F. Packer, “Spiritual Passport,” RootsTech 2014.

**Further Resources:**

- “Making a Case for Descendancy Research,” class handout, *byu.i.edu*:  
<file:///C:/Users/lhilt/OneDrive/Documents-Old%20Desktop/descendancyResearchANewApproachForSuccess.pdf>
- FamilySearch Wiki: Descendancy Research  
[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Descendancy\\_Research](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Descendancy_Research)
- FamilySearch: Easy Steps to: Descendancy Research  
<https://broadcast-portal.lds.org/elearning/fhd/Community/en/FamilySearch/Descendancy/Easy%20Steps%20to%20Descendancy%20Research.pdf>
- “Easy Help for Beginning Your Descendancy Research,” video, FamilySearch blog.  
<https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/easy-help-for-beginning-your-descendancy-research>
- The Family History Guide  
<https://www.thefhguide.com/project-3-descendants.html>