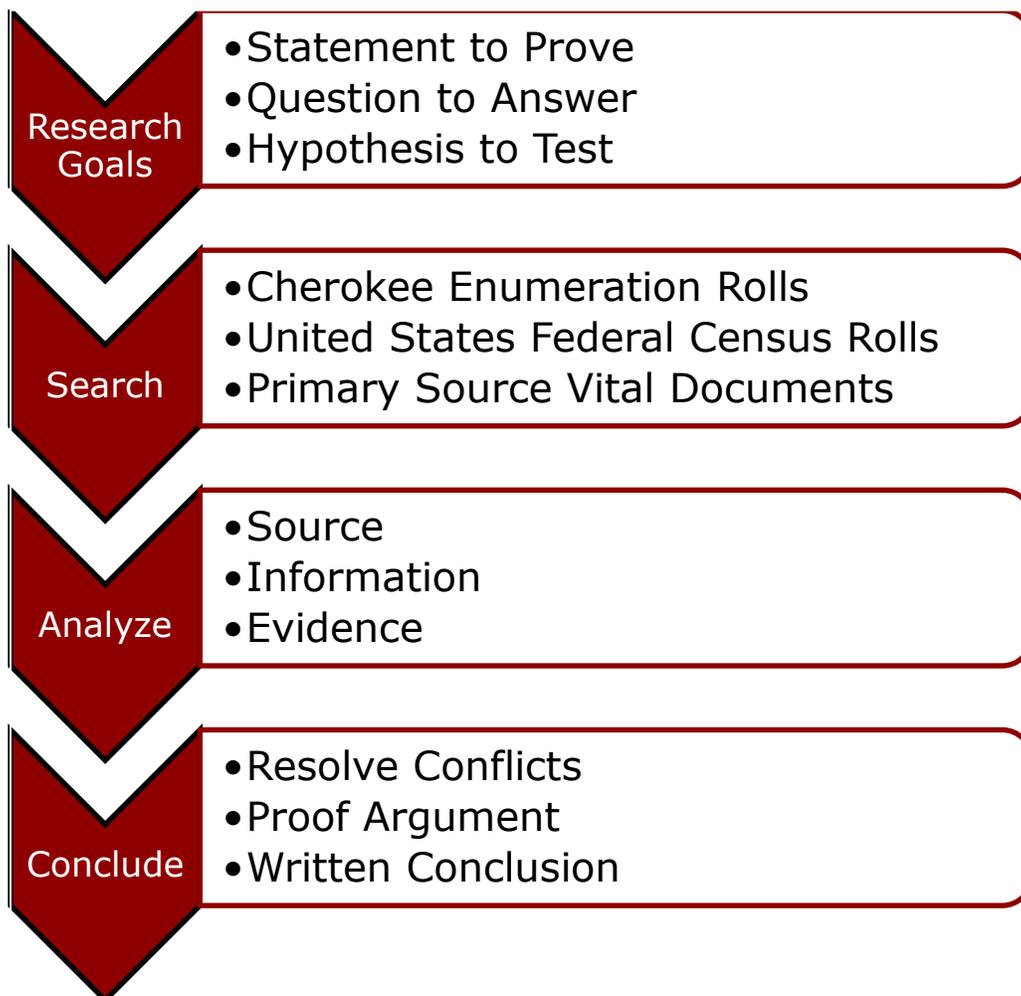


CHEROKEE GENEALOGY SERVICES

RESEARCH PROCESS



- **Define Research Goals:** We identify our objectives and develop a research plan which identifies where we will search. A research log keeps us focused on what we are trying to discover and tracks the progress of our investigation.

- **Search Reliable Sources:** We conduct a reasonably exhaustive search in reliable sources for all information that is or may be pertinent to the identity, relationship, event, or situation in question.
 - As part of data collection we use images, photocopies, and digital images, handwritten and typed copies.
 - We collect and include in our compilation a complete, accurate citation to the source or sources of each item of information we use.

- **Analyze Sources, Information & Evidence:** We analyze and correlate the collected information to assess its quality as evidence.
 - Source – an artifact, document, book, person, etc.
 - Information – data that makes up a source
 - Primary – firsthand (participant, eyewitness)
 - Secondary – secondhand (non-participant)
 - Evidence – our interpretation of relevant information
 - Direct – answers the research question by itself
 - Indirect – relevant but can't stand alone
 - Negative – inference drawn from absence of information that should exist in a record but is missing.

- **Resolve Conflicts:** We resolve any conflicts caused by items of evidence that contradict each other or are contrary to a proposed (hypothetical) solution to the question. Although not always the case, usually:
 - Original sources carry more weight than derivatives.
 - Primary information carries more weight than secondary.
 - Indirect evidence can carry just as much or more weight than direct.

- **Conclude Written Proof:** We arrive at a soundly reasoned, coherently written conclusion. In a proof argument we:
 - Explain the problem
 - Identify the known resources
 - Present the evidence with source citations and analysis
 - Discuss any conflicting evidence
 - Summarize the main points and write your conclusion.