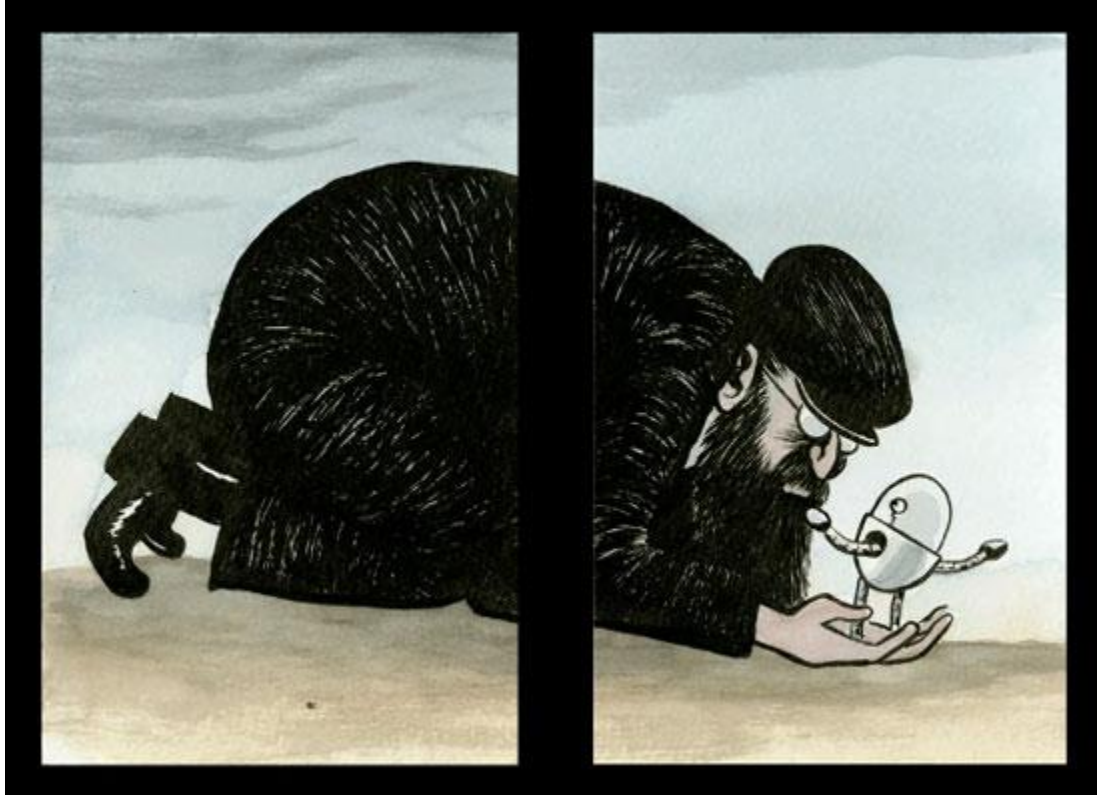




"There's a sort of 'neo-Luddite' position I like where you don't actually argue against anything, but you worry. You never reach a point where you're done and you know you did it right, but instead you keep asking questions, coming up with problems, and trying to answer. You try to be thoughtful. You try to be careful and conscientious and mindful. It's open-ended and ongoing and you're never sure that you're right, in any sort of final way, but you take the position it's better to ask and be aware than to just accept.

I love this cartoon illustration of this, which [James Strum](#) drew in his series of articles on Slate, [Life Without the Web](#):" Daniel Silliman Blog Posts
http://danielsilliman.blogspot.com/2010_05_01_archive.html

Live in your data

Focus In

Add up all the small details until they build a new scenario for you

Muster all the help you can from anywhere and everywhere

Problematic Approaches to Genealogy and Solutions

LACK OF A CONSISTENT WORK PLAN	Develop a general goal and a limited number of immediate objectives pursuing and analyzing all sources. Have a consistent work plan. Thoughtfully plan how, who, what, when, and where you will do the research to solve the problem. Be flexible if a new find takes you in a new direction. [7]
LACK OF DIRECTION	Biting off more than you can do is overwhelming when looking for data. Have a road map of where you are going and what you are looking for.
THE NARROWED FIELD	The parameters of a search sets the research fields. Research goals, objectives and attitudes determine the initial focus of the genealogical search. This perspective often locks the search into one time and one place and shapes the approach. Genealogical research is not a one size fits all. Each family presents a unique problem.
TUNNEL VISION	Take a deep breath. It is easy to get tunnel vision when you work too long without success and when you have success, to forget how you got there. Correlate what you have found. Use new forms to pull out new patterns and force your brain to try something different. [4]
TOO MANY DIRECTIONS AT ONCE	Loss of focus and inability to limit the research project causes illogical record searches. Begin as you go. Create a system of files and folders to keep track of your finds research documentation. For each search keep track of what you search for, what you searched and what success you had. Document and organize AS YOU GO. [3]
LOSING TRACK	When record keeping is poorly organized it causes us to repeat searches or lose data/records. Partially fill out logs BEFORE looking at each source. This includes each search's goal (person and event you seek to document). [2]
GETTING LOST	Find out how to find out. Know where the records are and how to access them. Keep asking why the records show what they show (or do not show) and what that implies.
THE NARROWED VIEW	Look beyond "just collecting vital data" to see an ancestor as part of a family, a community or a culture. An understanding of the family and community units(s) allows the researcher to branch out into other kinds of records.

Review and Focus

Ask the Experts

Looking at our introductory material like a case study helps us scientifically decide what the goal and objectives of the search should be. Persistence, innovation, and thoroughness are traits to develop to move you beyond your current data.

<i>Getting Focused Start with the most likely records</i>	Always use sources with the best odds of success first. If those do not solve the problem, turn to less likely ideas. Keep searching even the least promising possibilities. Just as the census gives you a glimpse of your family in different time periods, birth and death records can pinpoint a person in time.
<i>Go from the known to the unknown.</i>	Use the information your family left you. Move back slowing in time. Find recent events first, then work back to earlier events.
<i>Focus on one question at a time.</i>	Pick ONE event (for example, John Doe's birth) and search until you find it. Stick with it. Gather anything you find on the family and associates, but concentrate on the event you selected. Do not change focus until you either find it or exhaust all possibilities trying.
<i>Look for alternate spellings and nicknames</i>	Some ancestors are listed by nicknames (Polly for Mary, Bob for Robert), by a middle name, or by initials. See Guessing a Name Variation . Also search for alternate spellings. Clerks misspell names all the time, and indexers have difficulty reading them. Think phonetically. For lists of possible spelling substitutes see pages 331 and 336 of Kory L. Meyerink, ed., <i>Printed Sources: A Guide to Published Genealogical Records</i> . (Salt Lake City: Ancestry, 1998). (FHL book 016.9293 P96m). Failure to find some quirky versions of the individual's name is a red flag that you probably are not being imaginative enough during your searches.`
<i>Indexing, Translation and Transcription problems</i>	
<i>Primary vs Secondary sources: know the difference</i>	<i>Do not trust copies selected by someone else</i> If possible, look at the original with your own eyes.
<i>Ask A Librarian</i>	Many libraries and archives have records not available on the Internet. If you write a concise, detailed note most librarians can give you 15 minutes of reference time from their desk. Be sure to offer to pay for copies and give your email and snail mail address.