

ROOTDIGGER

3rd Quarter: July - September 2007

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Why Genealogists Say "Without Proof there is No Truth"

by Kory Meyerink, MLS, CG

3rd Quarter 2007

New family historians often ask: What's all this hubbub about documentation? Why does it matter, and what difference does it make where I got my information? After all, I am just doing this as a hobby, or to sort out the branches on the family tree for the upcoming reunion. Often there is the feeling that "I'm not going to publish my findings or write a book" and no one is going to see this research but me. Anyway, I'm just doing this for fun and the fun is in the searching, not in writing down, in minute detail, where the information came from, so "cut me some slack and lay off the preaching about citing sources."

Well, I can appreciate those thoughts; they are not much different than my thinking several years ago when I got started. But since then, I've seen the light! Let me share with you three of the many reasons why you want to document your family history findings. Let's begin with the most useful reason.



You have to prove your research.

Documentation Will Make Your Research Easier and Faster

Surprising, but true. Taking time to document where you got your facts (or allegations) will save you time later in your research. Let's face it, most of us do our research a little bit at a time, as we have time and opportunities. Often you do some research on one family, only to set it aside for a couple years (or more) while other activities, and even other research, take priority. Well, what happens when you sit down to work on that line you put off two or three years ago? Without writing down what you searched and where you found your information, you will likely look at some of the same sources again, only to find, or not find, what you had already learned. Like me, I am sure you do not want to spin your wheels redoing what you did earlier. Indeed, isn't that part of what we love about genealogy? It's always a new adventure. No two searches, or families, are quite the same.

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Special points of interest:

- *Genealogy without proof is just mythology*
- *Create confidence in your research*
- *Think of yourself as Perry Mason going to the courthouse*
- *DNA and Genealogy*



Everyone wants to list royalty in their ancestors, but can you prove it????

,but he had assigned different parents to Penelope than had my third-great Aunt!!!



If not too weathered, tombstones can reveal some very important dates.

"Without Proof there is No Truth"

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Example

We would have found one of my wife's ancestors much faster if her cousins had documented the source of their information sooner. For years we heard that Frank Cromwell came from Woodstock, but the state was not given. We searched every Woodstock in the northern states (there are more than a dozen) without finding him. Many years later, when her cousins sent us a picture of Frank's mother, we learned the source of the Woodstock statement. The back of the picture included the name and city of the photographer. Only then did we find out that this was a fair-sized city, with a photography studio in the mid-nineteenth century. This seemingly insignificant piece of documentation redirected our efforts to Woodstock, Ontario where we did find Frank and his family.

Documentation Helps Prevent Duplication of Research

In the course of our research, we can't help but spend some time re-searching families others have already researched. Eventually, someone else will be researching some of the very same families we are looking for today. Indeed, one of the admonitions new researchers receive is to check for "previous research." Most of us don't have time to do only "original research" on all of our families, after all, every person we find means there are two more (his or her parents) for us to find. We depend on quality previous research to speed us along our search. Without documentation, we do not know what sources somebody has already used. This means we will likely use some of the same sources the earlier family historian used. This wastes our time and resources which could better be used to solve problems others haven't tackled yet.

Example

Years ago I located a distant cousin who had acquired some pedigree charts and family group records about a common ancestor, Penelope Hazzard. Clarence King had compiled these pages in the 1950s, but he had assigned different parents to Penelope than had my third-great Aunt (Arcelli Hall). My task was to determine which, if either set of parents, were correct. Much to my dismay, none of the material I received from Clarence King or Aunt Arcelli indicated how they arrived at their conclusions. It took me about two days of research in probate, land, and other records to learn that Clarence had made the right connection. Oh, how I wish he had just made a simple suggestion such as "according to Joshua Raymond's will, Penelope was an unrecorded child of Oliver Hazzard and Elizabeth Raymond."

Documentation Gives Others Confidence in Your Research

Yes, this is the old standby reason you read in every genealogy textbook, but that does not make it any less true. Indeed, nobody seems to argue with the genealogist's maxim: Without proof, there is no truth. The problem is that many people, especially those just starting out, do not plan on publishing

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"Without Proof there is No Truth"

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their research findings, as they are just doing it for their own interest. But, let's examine that concept for a minute. Throughout the course of our research we are constantly using the research of others. It may be a published family history, a brief biographical sketch, or a computerized lineage from Ancestral File or the World Family Tree. As noted above, our research moves forward much faster when we use such resources. Now, if we use such resources, aren't we obligated in some way to contribute (i.e. give back) to that growing pool of previously solved genealogical puzzles?

When we eventually do contribute new information to the database of our choice, or print up a booklet for a family reunion, won't we want those who use our information to believe what we say is true? If you have ever had to correct (or demolish) a cherished "family tradition," (and some of us get a strange sense of satisfaction in doing so), you will want to document your findings to make them believable. Of course, not everyone will believe you over Uncle Lester, but many will, and the your true version of the story will eventually be accepted, but only if others have confidence in your research.

Even if you continue to resist publishing (in print or electronic format) parts of your family history, you will likely end up communicating with some distant (or close) cousin doing research on a line common to both of you. This is simply a function of genealogical "networking." As you research, you will find another researcher who has submitted information to the International Genealogy Index or one of the databases noted above, or written an article for a local genealogical periodical, or joined a lineage society with your common ancestor. You will naturally want to contact him or her to learn if they have more information. They will want to exchange information and learn what you have found out. You may place a query seeking information about a problem, or answer one from another researcher.

In all of these situations, you will want others to have confidence in your research, just as you will want to have confidence in theirs. That confidence can be had for just a little bit of documentation.

Documentation Doesn't Have to Be Hard

Perhaps the biggest objection to documentation is the dismay at the necessity of proper formatting when citing sources. Well, guess what? There are so many ways to cite sources, that formatting your citations should not be a big hang-up or time commitment. Certainly if you are submitting an article for a scholarly journal you would be expected to follow their citation format.

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Why-oh-why didn't they put names and dates on the back of all the pictures?

Perhaps the biggest objection to documentation is the dismay at the necessity of proper formatting when citing sources.



Bibles and Church records are excellent sources.



"Without Proof there is No Truth"

continued



At last resort, pack your bags, hop in the car and head out to find the true source.

There is only one hard and fast rule for general documentation: Record enough information so that another researcher can determine what you have searched



Early Church records may sometimes be the only source available.

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Lineage societies require a certain level of documentation to constitute proof of a connection. And, indeed there are some emerging standards for "scholarly documentation." However, the good news is that you DO NOT need to follow those standards in everything you document.

There is only one hard and fast rule for general documentation: Record enough information so that another researcher can determine what you have searched. Thus it is not enough to say "U.S. Census" for a source. That is not specific: Which year? Which county and state? What page number? You would want to say, for example, "1850 census, Berrien County, Michigan, page 213." This however is the bare minimum. This is adequate for many research purposes, and it is information that is already on your research log.

Research log? I certainly hope that as a family historian, you have learned the value of a research log or calendar of searches. This is the beginning of documentation, and helps fulfill all three of the reasons for documentation that I've given in this article:

- *A research log speeds your research by easily listing just what sources you have already searched, and what your results were.*
- *It also limits duplication of your research efforts by reminding you what you searched, when you searched, and who you were looking for in that source.*
- *Lastly, it is a quick way to provide confidence to others with whom you share your findings, as you can easily photocopy or print out a copy of your log.*

For those who want to go just a little further in citing their sources, the six elements of a good source citation include:

- *Author (who provided the information)*
- *Title*
- *Publication information (publisher, location)*
- *Date of the information (usually the year)*
- *Location of the source you used (library or archive) and the call number*
- *Reference number to the specific information (page, entry, line, etc.)*

Consistent formatting is useful, helpful, and even required in some settings, but for now, don't get hung up on the commas and colons. Just begin citing your sources, and cite them well enough that others can understand what you searched.

Kory Meyerink is an accredited genealogist who lives in Salt Lake City where he currently conducts professional research for ProGenealogists.com, a division of Ancestral Quest, and for Genealogical Research Associates. He is the author of Ancestry's Printed Sources, past president of the Utah Genealogical Society, founder of the Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy, and teaches at many national and local conferences.

Adventures in Genealogy: Documentation or Rednecks, Rumors and Proof

A Couple of weeks ago I was sitting in the Dairy Queen eating a Chicken Fried Steak and talking Genealogy with Elmer Joe Cox. Yes, THE Elmer Joe Cox of Wolfe City Texas. For those of y'all that don't know him, Elmer Joe has been doing Genealogy for over 50 years, Is the founder of the Nomocotton Genealogy Society and is one of the experts I occasionally consult with.

EJ was trying (again) to explain to me exactly why it is so important to find documentation and cite sources. He explained to me that what we genealogists need to be is 50% Barnaby Jones and 50% Perry Mason. After he stopped laughing at me, he explained that Barnaby Jones was a TV Detective durin the 70's. (Did Y'all know Uncle Jed got a job after he left Beverly Hills?) I still looked confused so he explained himself.

The first thing you gotta do is go out and find the facts. It don't matter if you are going through Census Records, Cemeteries, Land Deeds, Family Bibles, Marriage Licenses or Birth Certificates you gotta find the facts before you can record them. Now your sweet old Aunt Bertha may tell you she was born in Feb of 24 and you record that in your files. Two years later while you are at the court house you find her birth certificate which says she was born in Feb of 23. There are a couple of real good reasons she may have gotten the date wrong, Her Memory might be failing, She might wanna be younger than she is or she might be trying to hide the fact that she was born 5 months after her parents married. What ever the reason You need to put in the correct date and Cite the Source. This is a case of going from clues you got (Aunt Bertha said she was born in Feb of 24 in Cooper Texas) to Facts you find (She was born in Feb of 23 in Cooper Texas). That's where the Barnaby Jones part comes in, you gotta go out and investigate this stuff.

Then you gotta build an ironclad case. Think of yourself as Perry Mason going into a court room. You don't wanna get up there and Say "Well Aunt Bertha told me she was born in 1924, and just look at that sweet face. Everyone knows she wouldn't Lie." Cause as sure as you do that some distant cousin that never met her is gonna come back and say "According to the Delta County Court House she was born in 1923, so either she is a liar or you just don't know your stuff." Then that two bit turkey is gonna quit sharing info with you. I tell you what somebody ought to drag that boy out and horsewhip him. I mean after all -----Huh----- Oh yea the column. Sorry about that got a little distracted there for a second. You wanna be able to prove the material in your family history. Collect those Birth Certs, Marriage Certs, Land Deeds, Mark down the Names, Pages, Authors,

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Whenever possible, gather the clan for a family archive picture, your heirs will be soooo... appreciative.

Then that two bit turkey is gonna quit sharing info with you!



Remember, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. Check out the neighborhood for family members.



Cite Your Genealogy Sources

By Kimberly Powell



If you have Heraldry in your past include it in your documentation.

**properly citing your sources
leaves a big audit trail for
others to follow,**



Carefully examine your sources.

A Guide to Documenting Your Genealogy Research

You've been researching your family for a while and have managed to correctly assemble many pieces of the puzzle. You've entered the names and dates found in census records, land records, military records, etc. But can you tell me exactly where you found great, great-grandma's birth date? Was it on her tombstone? In a book at the library? In the 1860 census on Ancestry.com?

When researching your family it is very important that you keep track of every piece of information. This is important both as a means of verifying or "proving" your data and also as a way for you or other researchers to go back to that source when future research leads to information which conflicts with your original assumption. In genealogy research, any statement of fact, whether it is a birth date or an ancestor's surname, must carry its own individual source.

Source citations in genealogy serve to:

- *let others know on which records you based your facts (did the birth date you have for your great-grandmother come from a published family history, a tombstone or a birth certificate?)*
- *assist others in evaluating your research (if you were lucky enough to find a complete family tree for your grandfather on the Internet, wouldn't you want to know where the information came from?)*
- *provide a reference in cases where a newly found fact appears to conflict with previous assumptions*
- *help you to go easily go back to a previously used source when you realize you may have missed information or you have found new details which may lead to more information from that source*

In other words, properly citing your sources leaves a big audit trail for others to follow, letting them know what documents you looked at, so they can judge your family tree connections and assumptions for themselves. In conjunction with research logs, proper source documentation also makes it much easier to pick up where you left off with your genealogy research after time spent focusing on other things.

Types of Genealogy Sources

When evaluating and documenting the sources used to establish your family tree connections, it is important to understand the different types of sources.

- **Primary vs. Secondary Sources**

Referring to the quality of the record, primary sources are records created at or

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Cite Your Genealogy Sources

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near the time of an event by a person who had reasonably close knowledge of the event. Secondary sources, by contrast, are records created a significant amount of time after an event occurred or by a person who was not present at the event. While both types of sources are important in genealogy research, primary evidence usually carries more weight than secondary evidence.

- **Original vs. Derivative Sources**

Referring to the provenance of the record, original sources are records that contribute written, oral, or visual information not derived - copied, abstracted, transcribed, or summarized - from another written or oral record. Derivative sources are, by their definition, records which have been derived - copied, abstracted, transcribed, or summarized - from previously existing sources. Original evidence usually carries more weight than derivative evidence.

Two Rules for Great Source Citations

Rule One - Follow the Formula -

While there is no scientific formula for citing every type of source, a good rule of thumb is to work from general to specific:

1. *Author - the one who authored the book, provided the interview, or wrote the letter*
2. *Title - if it is an article, then the title of the article, followed by the title of the periodical*
3. *Publication Details*
 - *place of publication, name of publisher and date of publication, written in parentheses (Place: Publisher, Date)*
 - *volume, issue and page numbers for periodicals*
 - *series and roll or item number for microfilm*
4. *Where You Found It - repository name and location, Web site name and URL, cemetery name and location, etc.*
5. *Specific Details - page number, entry number and date, date you viewed a Web site, etc.*

Rule Two: Cite What You See -

Whenever in your genealogical research you use a derivative source instead of the real thing, you must take care to cite the index, database or book that you used, and NOT the actual source from which the derivative source was created. This is because derivative sources are several steps removed from the original, opening up the door for errors, including:

- *handwriting interpretation errors*
- *microfilm viewing errors (out of focus, back side bleeding through, etc.)*
- *transcription errors (skipping lines, transposing numbers, etc.)*
- *typing errors, etc.*

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Don't lean on others to support your research.

derivative sources are several steps removed from the original



With persistence you may finally break through that brick wall.



Remember that the county of today may not have been the county 150 years ago.

You can only accurately cite the marriage record if you have viewed it for yourself.



Your local Library may be the doorway to your ancestors.

Cite Your Genealogy Sources

continued

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Even if a fellow researcher tells you that they found such and such a date in a marriage record, you should cite the researcher as the source of information (noting as well where they found the information). You can only accurately cite the marriage record if you have viewed it for yourself.

Article (Journal or Periodical)

Citations for periodicals should include the month/year or season, rather than issue number where possible.

Willis H. White, "Using Uncommon Sources to Illuminate Family History: a Long Island Tuthill Example." National Genealogical Society Quarterly 91 (March 2003), 15-18.

Bible Record

Citations for information found in a family bible should always include the information on publication and its provenance (names and dates for people who have owned the bible)

1. Family data, Dempsey Owens Family Bible, The Holy Bible (American Bible Society, New York 1853); original owned in 2001 by William L. Owens (put mailing address here). The Dempsey Owens Family Bible passed from Dempsey to his son James Turner Owens, to his son Dempsey Raymond Owens, to his son William L. Owens.

Birth & Death Certificates

When citing a birth or death record, record 1) type of record and name(s) of the individual(s), 2) the file or certificate number (or book and page) and 3) name and location of the office in which it is filed (or the repository in which the copy was found - e.g. archives).

- 1. Certified transcription of birth certificate for Ernest Rene Ollivon, Act no. 7145 (1989), Maison Maire, Crespières, Yvelines, France.*
- 2. Henrietta Crisp, birth certificate [long form] no. 124-83-001153 (1983), North Carolina Division of Health Services - Vital Records Branch, Raleigh.*
- 3. Elmer Koth entry, Gladwin County Deaths, Liber 2: 312, no 96, County Clerk's Office, Gladwin, Michigan.*

From an online index:

- 4. Ohio Death Certificate Index 1913-1937, The Ohio Historical Society, online <<http://www.ohiohistory.org/dindex/search.cfm>>, Death certificate entry for Eveline Powell downloaded 12 March 2001.*

From a FHL microfilm:

- 5. Yvonne Lemarie entry, Crespières naissances, mariages, décès 1893-1899, microfilm no. 2067622 Item 6, frame 58, Family History Library [FHL], Salt Lake City, Utah.*

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Cite Your Genealogy Sources

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Book

Published sources, including books, should list author (or compiler or editor) first, followed by the title, publisher, publication place and date, and page numbers. List multiple authors in the same order as shown on the title page unless there are more than three authors, in which case, include only the first author followed by *et al.* Citations for one volume of a multivolume work should include the number of the volume used.

Margaret M. Hoffman, compiler, The Granville District of North Carolina, 1748-1763, 5 volumes (Weldon, North Carolina: Roanoke News Company, 1986), 1:25, no.238.

**The number in this example, indicates a specific numbered entry on the page.*

Census Record

While it is tempting to abbreviate many items in a census citation, especially state name and county designations, it is best to spell out all words in the first citation to a particular census. Abbreviations which seem standard to you (e.g. Co. for county), may not be recognized by all researchers.

1920 U.S. census, population schedule, Brookline, Norfolk County, Massachusetts, Enumeration District [ED] 174, sheet 8, dwelling 110, family 172, Frederick A. Kerry household; National Archives microfilm publication T625, roll 721; digital image, Ancestry.com, <http://www.ancestry.com> (accessed 28 July 2004).

Family Group Sheet

When you use data which has been received from others, you should always document the data as you receive it and not use the original sources cited by the other researcher. You haven't personally checked these resources, therefore they are not your source.

1. Jane Doe, "William M. Crisp - Lucy Cherry family group sheet," supplied 2 February 2001 by Doe (put mailing address here).

Interview

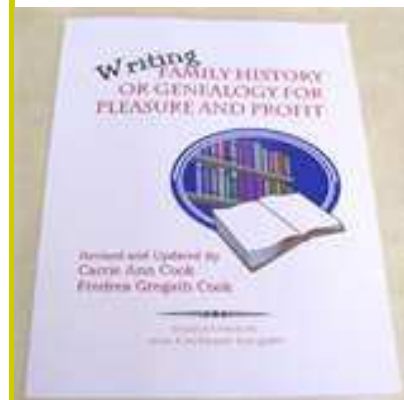
Be sure to document who you interviewed and when, as well as who is in possession of the interview records (transcripts, tape recordings, etc.)

1. Interview with Charles Bishop Koth (interviewees address here), by Kimberly Thomas Powell, 7 August 1999. Transcript held in 2001 by Powell (put mailing address here). [You can include an annotation or personal comment here.]

Letter

It is much more accurate to quote a specific letter as a source, rather

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Sooner or later you need to publish the results of your research. Do some further research on publishing your tree.

Abbreviations which seem standard to you (e.g. Co. for county), may not be recognized by all researchers.

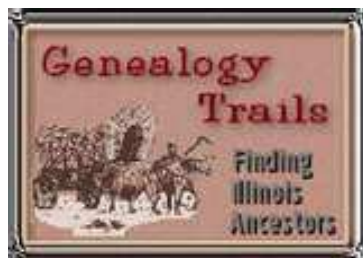


Earn your Boy Scout badge for Genealogy.



Use your imagination in designing your documentation, but be sure to document!

Be sure to include the name of the newspaper, the place and date of publication, the page and column number



Don't reinvent the wheel, see if someone else has laid the groundwork.

Cite Your Genealogy Sources

continued

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than just citing the individual who wrote the letter as your source.

1. Letter from Patrick Owens (put mailing address here) to Kimberly Thomas Powell, 9 January 1998; held in 2001 by Powell (put mailing address here). [You can include an annotation or personal comment here.]

Marriage License or Certificate

Marriage records follow the same general format as birth and death records.

1. Marriage license and certificate for Dempsey Owens and Lydia Ann Everett, Edgecombe County Marriage Book 2:36, County Clerk's Office, Tarboro, North Carolina.
2. George Frederick Powell and Rosina Jane Powell, Bristol Marriage Register 1:157, Bristol Register Office, Bristol, Gloucestershire, England.

Newspaper Clipping (Marriage Announcement, Obituary, etc.)

Be sure to include the name of the newspaper, the place and date of publication, the page and column number.

1. Henry Charles Koth - Mary Elizabeth Ihly marriage announcement, Southern Baptist newspaper, Charleston, South Carolina, 16 June, 1860, page 8, column 1.

Web Site

This general citation format applies to information received from Internet databases as well as online transcriptions and indexes (i.e. if you find a cemetery transcription on the Internet, you would enter it as a Web site source. You would not include the cemetery as your source unless you had visited personally).

1. Wuerttemberg Emigration Index, Ancestry.com, online <<http://www.ancestry.com/search/rectype/inddbs/3141a.htm>>, Koth data downloaded 12 January 2000.

Kimberly Powell's interest in genealogy began over 20 years ago with a school project and has developed into a passion. She is a proud member of the Association of Professional Genealogists, the National Genealogical Society, the International Society of Family History Writers and Editors, and several local genealogical societies, and is the author of "Everything Family Tree, 2nd Edition" by Adams Media (2006). Her special area of expertise is breaking down proverbial brick walls.

Kimberly majored in Cognitive Science at Carnegie Mellon University, with a minor in flute performance. She maintains ongoing professional genealogy training through online classes, seminars, self-study, and genealogical conferences.

From Kimberly Powell:

I'm proud to provide you with the guidance you need to break down your genealogy 'brick walls' through how-to articles, free genealogy lessons, the latest news and product reviews and an extensive list of excellent online genealogical resources.

Genetic Testing as the Ultimate "Document"

By L. David Roper

Genealogy is a term that means genetic connections of many people. The ultimate arbiter of genetic connections is DNA. The use of Y-chromosome testing for male lines in genealogy has been done since July 2001. (Unfortunately, mtDNA testing for female lines is not very helpful in genealogy. However, there are instances where it can be helpful)

There are many cases where apparently excellent paper documentation disagreed with the Y tests. Using the data one has collected before the Y tests, when combined with the DNA results, it is possible to make connections between families that no paper documentation can do.

In the near future full chromosomal DNA testing will become affordable, greatly expanding the possible use of DNA in genealogy.

Of course, DNA testing is not absolutely perfect. Mistakes can be made in the testing and in reporting the results of the testing. But such mistakes can be kept very small in number by vigilance.

Rednecks, Rumors and Proof

continued

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ISBN numbers, Pub Dates of those books you use. Also tell where you found the book, in case you need to check back or someone else wants to double check your stuff. (Its that Big Mouthed Distant Cousin again.) When you use Micro Fiche markdown all the pertinent data off of it, the fiche number and where you found it. When getting info of a census Fiche, mark down everything you can find, Enumeration Date, Enumerator, Fiche Number, Page, Line number and color of the Librarians Eyes. (Ok, Maybe I got a little carried away there at the end.) What it boils down to is that you wanna be able to prove in a court of law what you are saying is true. Now don't get me wrong you aint gonna have to go to court or anything, but that is the level of proof you should strive for.

Of course you won't always be able to attain (That means get to) that level of proof, but site any source you use. If the information comes from an interview with Aunt Bertha put that in as the source, with the date of the interview and her age at the time of the interview. That way if five years down the road you find another source that isn't exactly the same on dates and such you can weigh the evidence that 77 year old Aunt Bertha gave you against the new material to determine which is probably more accurate. Personally I use both sources and make a notation of the discrepancies.

I guess that's all for now, Y'all have fun but cite those sources.

Adios and Keep Smiling



A well established family tree needs documentation to ensure that the "roots" with support all the "branches"

If the information comes from an interview with Aunt Bertha put that in as the source!



Don't be surprised by what you dig up when you start digging into family history.



**Marion County
Genealogical Society**

Mission Statement

The Marion County Genealogical Society is dedicated to creating and promoting an interest in genealogy, focusing on research in Marion County, Florida and in supporting members in their research.

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A great assistance in organizing your records.

What is Copyrighted?

By Rhonda R. McClure

First, let's look at just what is copyrighted in a book. The copyright law was designed to protect creativity. The **facts** that are listed in the book are not covered under copyright. After all, if you and I can both find a marriage record and incorporate the marriage date and place into our Family File then neither of us can copyright the marriage date and place. A book, however, is more than just facts.

If you look at a book you will find that there is probably narrative, some photographs, and perhaps even some family stories included. The compilation of all of this is what is covered by the copyright notice at the front of the book. Copyright was designed to protect this creative compilation. The facts in the book can be used by yourself or others in their genealogy. Of course, as researchers, we should be citing sources for all the information we are sharing.

If the information included in a book is truly all about your family, what you can do is to add the information (the facts) into your Family File. As mentioned above you should be citing sources for all of your information, so as you add the information from a book you would then cite the book as the source of the event.