

Using Record Hints to Help You Find Sources

Goal 1.1 – Understand What Are Record Hints

- Record Hints refer to “Sources” like birth, marriage, census, death, military or other information. Sources are a great way to validate the information that has been attached to individuals in your tree. In fact, FACTS not backed up with a good SOURCE, are still purely speculative pieces of information.

Review this handout on “[Why Do We Need Sources?](#)” on this topic.

- FamilySearch and many other sites such as, [ancestry.com](#) with their “shaking leaves” hints, will search for records in the background, and then notify you that there may be record sources for your individuals. This helps take some time out of you having to search for these records.
- Not all of the matched hints however may apply, and so you will need to review them carefully before attaching them to your individual.
- Some hints may come up that match your person so closely that it’s easy to think that they are applicable. For example, a Record Hint came up for David V McBride and wife Sarah Trotter in Cook County, Illinois. My McBrides were from California area, but “could have” moved at some point to Illinois. I attached the sources, and before I knew it, there were children coming up in other record hints. Needless to say, I had to go back and detach several sources and children, after realizing that these individuals were NOT MY individuals, even though ages and such were very similar.
- Whether you use FamilySearch, Ancestry, FindMyPast, MyHeritage, or other database’s Record Hints, CAREFULLY review the information BEFORE attaching. You can always cancel attaching and do a little more research.