

Why Do We Need Sources?

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- We add "facts" to our ancestors on Family Tree, such as birth, marriage, death, burial information, etc.
- These facts come from a "source" such as a birth, marriage, death certificate, military records, census records, family bibles, personal journals, etc.
- These facts begin to create a "Time Line" of information about that person such as where born, occupation, where married, where they resided, any military involvement etc.
- Facts should always be supported by actual "Sources" such as those noted above.
- Sources validate WHERE the specific facts come from. Facts without sources should be considered as "invalid" or questionable.
- "Citations" are standardized ways of writing down where the information is located. They connect the source to your research and support any conclusions you may make. There are four descriptor items and are placed in the following order: 1) Author(s), 2) Title, 3) Publisher (formal address), 4) Locator (or page #'s)
- Source citations allow you and others to remember **WHERE** that factual information came from.
- This becomes an "audit trail" for you as you begin to create your assumptions about family tree facts and connections.
- Many genealogy programs will ask you to rate the quality of the sources you find, such as in the example to the right.



Source: **Death Certificate - [redacted]**

Referenced Entry: **Image Death Certificate of [redacted]**

Please specify the source, information and evidence quality of this referenced entry for the mentioned source:

Source Quality	Information Quality	Evidence Quality
<input type="radio"/> Don't know	<input type="radio"/> Don't know	<input type="radio"/> Don't know
<input type="radio"/> Derivative	<input type="radio"/> Secondary	<input type="radio"/> Negative
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Original	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Primary	<input type="radio"/> Indirect
		<input checked="" type="radio"/> Direct

Choose if the source is the original document or if it has been a derivative source.

Is the information in this source first or second hand information?

Specify if the evidence for the referenced object in this source is missing, indirect or direct evidence.

Source Quality:

- **Original Source:** this refers to written, oral, or visual information that have not been copied, transcribed, or summarized, from another record. This type of information carries more weight.
- **Derivative Source:** this refers to records which have been derived (copied, abstracted, transcribed, or summarized) from previously existing source. Examples would be from Indexes where the information provided could have errors in transcription (skipping lines, transposing numbers, etc), poor quality image, handwriting errors, typing errors, etc.

Information Quality:

- **Primary Source:** this would be information provided by someone with "first hand" knowledge of the fact.
- **Secondary Source:** this would be information by someone with "second hand" knowledge".

Evidence Quality:

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- This usually is used when we ask a question (ex: when/where was grandma born?) and then consider whether the source information answers the question.
- **Direct Evidence:** directly answers the question without a need for other evidence to explain or interpret it.
- **Indirect Evidence:** this is circumstantial information that will require further evidence or thought to formulate a reliable conclusion.
- **Negative Evidence:** this would be evidence that brings confusion or counter productive information into your current conclusions.

Let's look at some examples.

- You find your great grandmother's birth year from a headstone. Source quality- Original, Information quality - Secondary (not always accurate, year given by a family member), Evidence quality - Direct if it gives you information about your question, "when was she born", could be Indirect if the information source is in question, Negative if the information contradicts other sources of information. If the source for the birth year was from a death certificate, it could still be secondary information given by a family member. How about if the certificate shows the DEATH date? Original source, Primary information, Direct evidence as it is an event recorded very soon after the death event.
- You interview you grandmother about different aspects of her life. Source quality - Original, Information quality - Primary.
- You transcribe an interview that a family member did with your grandmother about her life. Source quality - Derivative, Information quality - Secondary.
- Note that this classification of sources, information, and evidence are often not as clear-cut as they sound, but they are helpful as you consider and draw conclusions about the overall events in a person's life. Sources are "pieces" of a greater puzzle. Each piece may have some possible "negative" evidence that has to be evaluated in the context of all the pieces. Sources may also contain some inaccurate information, like slightly different names, or dates because of the derivative nature of it. That's where it can be challenging, but rewarding as well. The more sources you have, the better the conclusion you can make.

Four Methods of Sourcing:

- 1) ATTACHING A COPY (or original) of a document, along with the citation information to your person. This is the **best and most "permanent"** way of saving sources.
- 2) REFERENCING information that comes from another site by using the URL (or Universal Record Locator). URLs will come and go depending on the stability of the website. Sites like Find-A-Grave, Ancestry, Google Books, and others that are prominent sites, will likely continue on with the same URLs in the future. Use a free program like RecordSeek to help you write the citation information, copy the URL, and attach to your person on Family Tree.
- 3) Family Tree uses a "SourceLinker" to help you review and attach records you see in Record Hints.

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4) Upload a source to Family Tree as a document and then create a new source and write the citation information.

Capturing Sources:

- 1) Use the "Snipping Tool" in Windows or other screen capture programs to snapshot and create an image you can save to your computer.
- 2) The BEST way of saving a source (better quality), is to download a copy, but not all sites will allow this.

Helpful Articles:

[Download](#) - Use a Family Tree Media Gallery document as a source for your relative.

[Download](#) - Ever find some great information on a website? Easily attach it to Family Tree with this great little app.

[Download](#) - Learn how to use "SourceLinker" to attach sources to Family Tree

[Download](#) - Helpful RootsMagic Article on Sources & Repositories.

[Download](#) - Learn how to cite your genealogy sources

Videos:

[Download](#) - View this video showing how to add sources to Family Tree

Some of the information used was condensed from an article by Kimberly Powell, *Cite Your Genealogy Sources*, on genealogy.about.com