

SEMINAR

Ready for some fun?

Genealogists are the most impatient people in the world - we want everything done yesterday. As a result, we don't take the time to "Cite" our sources or to Abstract our records properly.

Websters:

Abstract: To remove, to separate. A summary, containing the substance, or a general view of books or writings. I like to say: Getting the meat out of it.

Today we will touch on some subjects that have to do directly or indirectly with Abstracting genealogy records.

1. **Evidence:** Primary, Secondary and Preponderance or greater weight of the evidence, and how it effects your abstracting talents.
 2. **Record Evaluation**
 3. **Cite your Sources .**
 4. **Discuss various forms used in Abstracting.**
 5. **Hands on abstracting:**
 6. **Summary**
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Genealogical Evidence.....

Show book. Noel C. Stevenson 1979. This book is one of the best of its kind that I'm aware of. It can be seen in our Gen. Lib., I'm sure. Had I known everything that Mr. Stevenson had to say about evidence before I began my genealogical pursuits, I may not have done it. Because as far as he is concerned...there is no such thing as positive evidence unless you were there and you saw it with your own eyes. It is from this book that I abstracted what I am about to tell you about what Genealogical Evidence is.

1. PRIMARY EVIDENCE - THE BEST EVIDENCE RULE.

This means the ORIGINAL of any document: letter, will, etc. Remember that deeds, wills, mortgages, etc. recorded in books in the courthouse ARE NOT PRIMARY EVIDENCE. They are copies of the originals which have been returned to the person who submitted them to be registered. In the case of a will or estate settlement, check to see if the original packet is still located in the courthouse and research those documents. In our courthouse, they are called the Black Boxes - as well as in many other courthouses.

The reason for PRIMARY EVIDENCE and Best Evidence Rule is that experience throughout the centuries has demonstrated that there is less chance of fraud, forgery, mistake, and dishonesty if original records are produced.

2. SECONDARY EVIDENCE.

Is a substitute for the production of the original.

An original genealogical record in a family Bible would be considered primary evidence, it would be necessary for someone to testify that the Bible was in proper custody. Proper custody indicates a member of the family.

Of course you are all aware of the "publication date" etc. on a Bible record used as evidence.

3. PROOF. To some it means ABSOLUTE OR CONCLUSIVE PROOF.

Stevenson says that "to genealogists, absolute proof or conclusive proof of ancestry is NOT possible. There are few things in life which can be proven to an absolute certainty.

Most of us follow this line of reasoning. A pedigree or ancestry is established according to a PREPONDERANCE or GREATER WEIGHT OF THE EVIDENCE. That, of course, is NOT conclusive or absolute proof.

Preponderance of greater weight of the evidence means that in order to establish facts it is necessary to produce sufficient reliable evidence which satisfies the conscience.

In other words, it is simply using common sense and intelligence. The evidence must be substantial. Quality not quantity is what counts.

In applying the principle of preponderance of the evidence, a genealogist will be substituting books, records, and documents instead of the testimony or statements of witnesses, unless the witnesses are living.

The evidence must be relevant. There must be a relationship between the evidence and the facts to be proved.

4. DIRECT AND CIRCUMSTANTIAL

DIRECT EVIDENCE acts on the mind in a clear and direct manner.

Example: In a will it states, "I give to my son Joe Doe Jr. the sum of ____"
The mind is not required to spend any time figuring the meaning of that sentence.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

Requires the mind to juggle the facts to ascertain their meaning.

Example: It would seem reasonable that all who are buried in a family plot are related. Or that all the persons named under the head of a household in the 1850 census are related.

Remember and I quote: "Evidence is none the less effective because it is circumstantial, if it be consistent, connected and conclusive."

5. HEARSAY EVIDENCE.

I am sure you will be surprised to hear that Hearsay Evidence is used with reference to that which is written, as well as to that which is spoken. This kind of evidence does not derive its value solely from the document but also rests on the veracity and competence of some other person.

Examples of hearsay evidence or information are:

1. Family records (including family Bible records)
2. Church Records

3. Vital records of births - my birth cert. Delayed.
Name of my mother is wrong. It states Lillian Anne Gunter when in reality, it was Annie Lillian Gunter. I have a letter in her handwriting which is signed by her that she changed her name when in highschool because she wanted the initials to spell something - LAG. I did not get this certificate changed because all of her official records are as Lillian Anne Gunter.
4. Vital records of Marriage. My Marriage record. My husband's middle name is misspelled on it. Should be Furgerson, not Ferguson. I was not aware of this until after I asked for a copy of our marriage record from the courthouse. I suggested to my husband that we really ought to get that changed, but he said not to bother. That people spelled it any way they wanted to anyway.
5. Vital records of deaths - Show grandfather, Robert Elbert Meek's death certificate. This certificate shows his father to be Joseph Meek. Searched for two years for a Joseph Meek - and it took a trip to the courthouse in Carroll Co. AR to find out his name was Jonathan Jasper. Tried to get that changed, but they said I had to have an affidavit from someone who knew him. He died in 1903. So it will continue to lead genealogists down the garden path for years to come. Would you like to know why the informant did not know the proper name? My grandfather R. E. Meek was born after his father "left home." He was raised by a step-father, so I'm quite sure his mother never mentioned his father. And of course R. E., not having a great deal of respect for his father, never spoke of him.
6. Deeds
7. Last wills and testaments
8. Court records
9. Census records
10. Pension files
11. Military service records
12. All manuscripts, local and county histories.
13. All family genealogies whether published in book form, printed, mimeographed, typewritten or

14. Oral Statements of family members - UNLESS THOSE PERSONS POSSESS PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE GENEALOGICAL FACTS CONCERNING THE FAMILY. Who has personal knowledge regarding facts relating to their families in 1700?
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RECORD EVALUATION:

See Separate sheets

CITE YOUR SOURCES, by Richard Lackey.

Show book -

Richard is deceased. He and I shared a Massingill line. I miss him. Richard says: "...Genealogists should have a standard form of citations which meet their special needs. They need to adopt an acceptable reference form or style for citing the records commonly used in the field."

Beware of being informed that the source was "The Census" or "Marriage Record." Any person who can properly learn to abstract a document can also learn properly to cite it so that another interested researcher can quickly and easily locate the record.

Not every genealogist is interested in submitting work to a journal, completing a book, or even in completing a compiled genealogy. Every genealogist should, however, want the results of his work to be useful even if maintained only in organized note form. Thus, every person seriously engaged in genealogical research has a vested interest in developing some standard form of suitable written citation of documents.

Standard Form to Cite the source used. Be sure to write down the author's full name, the title of the book (or document) Where it may be found or where it came from, and the page. I usually include the name of the library, the call number, the publisher, and date published. Anything that will enable you to find this source again if you need it, or if anyone else wants to find this source.

I wish I had done this when I first began genealogical research. I have some papers at home that I haven't the slightest idea where they came from. And no way to find them now.

I saw a person in SLC one time with a stamp that she used to remind her of exactly the information she needed to cite the source.

As we said at the beginning - impatience can play havoc with our research

unless we take the time to cite the source properly. Just remember - it just costs a little more time to go first class.

FORMS USED IN ABSTRACTING.

A few good tips: Do not ever change the spelling, punctuation, numbers, or phrases as used in the document. Use the Quotes to show that is what the record says. When you use a reference in a family history and it is verbatim from the record, use the quotes at the beginning and then again at the end. That will indicate to you and to anyone reading it that you didn't make it up but copied it from what ever reference you give.

I have a little trick I use. If there is a question as to the spelling of a name or reference, I put a question mark before the word. A question mark behind the word means it is their question.

The following forms will be passed out on your way out. Please pick them up at the desk.

- A. Wills
- B. Land Records
- C. Deed Record
- D. Cemetery
- E. Obituaries
- F. Document abstract.
- G. Marriage Records

Other forms just for your use:

- a. Census history & how to use it
 - b. Time Schedule
 - b. Census calculations
 - c. Relationship chart
 - d. Research log
 - e. Soundex form
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HANDS ON ABSTRACTING.

Pass out the following, and ask that they abstract them on a blank piece of paper. Then discuss what they abstracted.

- f. Will
 - g. Deed
 - h. Obit
-
-

Summary: Do hope that you are all ready to go out and cite your sources, evaluate your documents, and do your abstracting.

If you have any questions. I'll try to answer, if not, perhaps someone else here will be able to answer.

Our Society has 141 titles on our publications list. Most of these stopped around 1900. That has been 100 years ago now, so they need to be brought up to at least to coincide with the Census Records. I understand that the 1930 Census records will be released soon.

Our Society is need of persons who can spend a little time at the courthouse, here at the library, or in some instances take books home to abstract for us to publish. We now have, thanks to Floyd & Betty Dimitt, two laptop computers that may be utilized to help with abstracting records.

Check with Barbara or me and we will find you something to do. Thanks.

Turn meeting back to Jackie...

DELAYED BIRTH CERTIFICATE
Montgomery County, Texas

Abstracted by _____
Date _____

Certificate # _____

Full name _____

Sex: Male ___ Female ___ Race _____

Date of Birth _____

Father: _____

Mother: _____

Residence: _____

Residence: _____

Race: _____ Age at this birth _____

Race: _____ Age at this birth _____

No. of Children b. this mother _____

No. of Children now living _____

Affidavit A. County _____

Affidavit B. County _____

Acquainted with the facts at the time of birth.

Acquainted with the facts at the time of birth

Not related by blood or marriage:

Accepted & recorded Date: _____

DELAYED BIRTH CERTIFICATE
Montgomery County, Texas

Abstracted by _____
Date _____

Certificate # _____

Full name _____

Sex: Male ___ Female ___ Race _____

Date of Birth _____

Father: _____

Mother: _____

Residence: _____

Residence: _____

Race: _____ Age at this birth _____

Race: _____ Age at this birth _____

No. of Children b. this mother _____

No. of Children now living _____

Affidavit A. County _____

Affidavit B. County _____

Acquainted with the facts at the time of birth.

Acquainted with the facts at the time of birth

Not related by blood or marriage:

Accepted & recorded Date: _____

PROBATE MONTGOMERY COUNTY, TEXAS

Abstracted by _____
Date _____

Volume _____ Page _____

Estate Settlement of _____ Died: _____

Location: _____

Administrator _____ Executor _____

Guardian _____ Appraisers _____

Heirs: Spouse _____

Sons: _____

Daughters _____

Other legatees _____

Comments _____

PROBATE MONTGOMERY COUNTY, TEXAS

Abstracted by _____
Date _____

Volume _____ Page _____

Estate Settlement of _____ Died: _____

Location: _____

Administrator _____ Executor _____

Guardian _____ Appraisers _____

Heirs: Spouse _____

Sons: _____

Daughters _____

Other legatees _____

Comments _____

**PROBATE MINUTES
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, TEXAS**

Abstracted by _____
Date _____

Volume _____ Page _____ Date _____

Heirs or Estate of _____

Administrator/s _____ Guardian/s _____

Executor/s _____

Comments _____

Volume _____ Page _____ Date _____

Heirs or Estate of _____

Administrator/s _____ Guardian/s _____

Executor/s _____

Comments _____

Volume _____ Page _____ Date _____

Heirs or Estate of _____

Administrator/s _____ Guardian/s _____

Executor/s _____

Comments _____

**DEEDS REPUBLIC OF TEXAS,
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, TEXAS**

Abstracted by: _____

Date: _____

Volume _____ Page _____ Deed _____ Release _____ Deed of Trust _____

Grantor: (Seller) _____ Residence _____

Grantee: (Buyer) _____ Residence: _____

Dated _____ Consideration _____ Acres _____ Located _____

Names mentioned in land description: _____

Signed: _____ Date _____

Witnesses: _____

Date Recorded: _____ by _____

Comments: _____

Volume _____ Page _____ Deed _____ Release _____ Deed of Trust _____

Grantor: (Seller) _____ Residence _____

Grantee: (Buyer) _____ Residence: _____

Dated _____ Consideration _____ Acres _____ Located _____

Names mentioned in land description: _____

Signed: _____ Date _____

Witnesses: _____

Date Recorded: _____ by _____

Comments: _____

DELAYED BIRTH CERTIFICATE
Montgomery County, Texas

Abstracted by _____
Date _____

Certificate # _____

Full name _____

Sex: Male ___ Female ___ Race _____

Date of Birth _____

Father: _____

Mother: _____

Residence: _____

Residence: _____

Race: _____ Age at this birth _____

Race: _____ Age at this birth _____

No. of Children b. this mother _____

No. of Children now living _____

Affidavit A. County _____

Affidavit B. County _____

Acquainted with the facts at the time of birth.

Acquainted with the facts at the time of birth

Not related by blood or marriage:

Accepted & recorded Date: _____

DELAYED BIRTH CERTIFICATE
Montgomery County, Texas

Abstracted by _____
Date _____

Certificate # _____

Full name _____

Sex: Male ___ Female ___ Race _____

Date of Birth _____

Father: _____

Mother: _____

Residence: _____

Residence: _____

Race: _____ Age at this birth _____

Race: _____ Age at this birth _____

No. of Children b. this mother _____

No. of Children now living _____

Affidavit A. County _____

Affidavit B. County _____

Acquainted with the facts at the time of birth.

Acquainted with the facts at the time of birth

Not related by blood or marriage:

Accepted & recorded Date: _____

DEATH CERTIFICATE
Montgomery County, Texas

Abstracted by _____
Date _____

Full name: _____

Sex: _____ Color/Race: _____ Single _____ Married _____ Widowed _____ Divorced _____

Date of Birth _____ Date of Death _____

Place of Birth _____

Father: _____ Mother: _____

Birthplace of Father _____ Birthplace of Mother _____

Burial: _____ Funeral Home: _____

Filed: _____

Full name: _____

Sex: _____ Color/Race: _____ Single _____ Married _____ Widowed _____ Divorced _____

Date of Birth _____ Date of Death _____

Place of Birth _____

Father: _____ Mother: _____

Birthplace of Father _____ Birthplace of Mother _____

Burial: _____ Funeral Home: _____

Filed: _____

Full name: _____

Sex: _____ Color/Race: _____ Single _____ Married _____ Widowed _____ Divorced _____

Date of Birth _____ Date of Death _____

Place of Birth _____

Father: _____ Mother: _____

Birthplace of Father _____ Birthplace of Mother _____

Burial: _____ Funeral Home: _____

Filed: _____ (Page # _____)