

# WHAT IS SO IMPORTANT ABOUT CITING MY SOURCES

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"Genealogy without  
Documentation is just  
Mythology."

2004 in the Ralston Surname posts

And there is only one fault so obvious, so fundamental, that it instantly brands a piece of work as the product of an amateur or careless researcher: poor source citations.

Elizabeth Shown Mills, "Citing Your Sources" Onboard 1 (Sep 1998), 24

"From my standpoint genealogy is either source-based or it is rumor-based. There is no compromise here. A lack of sources means no credibility at all with me. Every unsourced name, every unsourced date, and every unsourced place is entirely suspect. Every fact, sourced or otherwise, is also entirely open to refutation by the discovery of further evidence."

James Tanner *Genealogy's Star* (blog) 2 Feb. 2014

“Unless you know the sources, and unless you know how a particular source acquired a particular piece of information, you can’t judge the information — you just can’t.” –

Mike Morrell (former Acting CIA Director).

## SO, WHY USE CITATIONS?

- Remind yourself where you found the stated fact
- Let others know what sources you used
- Help to weight conflicting evidence
- Help evaluate where to go next
- **MOST IMPORTANT:**  
Citations make your research repeatable.

## SOURCES vs. INFORMATION vs. EVIDENCE

- **SOURCES**
  - Original – first written statement of event
  - Derivative – Subsequent copy
- **INFORMATION**
  - Primary – recorded by a knowledgeable eyewitness
  - Secondary – other the actual eyewitness
- **EVIDENCE**
  - Direct – explicitly stated fact
  - Indirect – fact inferred from one or more sources

If the fact is not public knowledge, provide a specific source to reliable evidence.

- Source should be creditable.
- While original source is best, reliable secondary source is acceptable.
- Provide enough information so reader can find the source.
- Citation number may be placed directly after the fact or the end of the sentence.
- However, readers must be able to clearly tell which information goes with which source.

## Use words carefully.

- An application is not a license is not a certificate.
- Identify source as original, microfilm, on-line.
- Identify original, transcription, and extraction.
- Realize that deed book is official COPY not original deed.
- Identify published and unpublished information

## Creating citation

- Two forms: working notes and final form.
- If using common citation abbreviations (i.e. *ibid.*, *op. cit.*, etc.), they only appear in the final copy.
- Avoid regional nicknames, i.e. HisGen, for location of documents
- Identify institution fully. National Archives – did you mean U.S., Canada, UK?

## TYPES OF CITATIONS

- TEXTUAL
  - *Footnotes*
  - *Endnotes*
  - *Parenthetical*
  - *Hypertext*
- BIBLIOGRAPHY

## FOOTNOTES and ENDNOTES

- Same format
- Difference is in placement
- Footnotes are placed at the bottom of each page and are the most commonly used in genealogical publications.
- Endnotes are placed at the end of the article, chapter, or book. It makes of a cleaner page but requires readers to flip back and forth while reading.

## PARENTHETICAL

- Source is placed just after the statement it supports.
- Used in many scientific publications.
- Makes reading the article slow and at times cumbersome

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Slightly different format
- Listed at end of publication to list all sources used.
- Usually used in genealogical books but not articles.

## HYPertext

- Used in online publishing
- After article is written and loaded to a website, save all the referenced documents to the same website.
- Create an hypertext linking the document to the fact in the text it supports

## INFORMATION NEED FOR A CITATION

- Basic Information
  - *Author (Creator of the record)*
  - *Title (Identification of specific record)*
  - *Publication Information*
  - *Page (Internal Locator)*
  - *Access information (where and when)*

## CITATION FORMATS

- Chicago Manual of Style
- Modern Language Association
- Mills: Evidence (Evidence Explained)
- House style – style used by the publisher

## BASIC TEMPLATE

ITEM AUTHOR (CREATOR) ITEM TITLE ITEM TYPE (if needed) (PLACE OF PUBLICATION: PUBLISHER, YEAR), page

If online add

DIGITAL IMAGE

WEBSITE TITLE URL DATE ACCESSED

Derived from E. S. Mills Evidence Explained and E. S. Mills QuickSheet Citing Online Historical Resources Evidence Style

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Questions

## ORAL INFORMATION

- Etta Marie Dunaway Thornburg, San Francisco, California. Conversations with Julia Coldren-Walker during the summer 1962-1966. Notes held by Julia D. Coldren

## LETTER and E-MAIL

- Letter
  - *Patricia B Cochrane Spofford (Boise, Idaho) to Dear Julia (Julia Coldren-Walker) letter 23 Feb 1989; Information on the children of Franklin Neff Dunaway (1872-1941)*
- E-MAIL
  - *Candi Carol Cochrane Durusu, Millsville, Virginia (e-address for private use) to Julia Coldren-Walker, e-mail 2 Jan 2017 Information of James Carroll Cochrane and Joan Carol Adams.*

[s://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&](https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&)

## TOMBSTONE

- Marlboro Cemetery (Troyton, Delaware, Ohio) Jacob Coldren monument inscription read and photograph by Julia Coldren-Walker 23 Aug 2003
- Find-A-Grave database with images (GSIn=Coldren&GSfn=Jacob&GSbyrel=all&GSdyrel=all&GSst=37&GScnty=2060&GScntry=4&GSob=n&GRid=31397920&df=all&) accessed 7 Mar 2017 Memorial 31397920 Jacob Coldren (c. 1771 -1841) Marlboro Cemetery (Troyton, Delaware, Ohio) gravestone photographed by Dave

## CENSUS

- 1850 U.S. Census, Lagrange County, Indiana, population schedule, Eden, p 14 (script) dwelling 83, family 84, Harvey Coldren, NARA publication 432, roll 157.
- 1850 U.S. Census, Lagrange County, Indiana, population schedule, Eden, p 14 (script) dwelling 83, family 84, Harvey Coldren image, *Ancestry.com* ([http](http://ancestry.com)\\ancestry.com: accessed 7 May 2015) citing NARA publication 432, roll 157.

## Vital Records

- Missouri State Archives, "Missouri Death Certificates, 1910-1965," database (<https://s1.sos.mo.gov/records/Archives/ArchivesMvc/DeathCertificates>, accessed 15 Oct 2015), death certificate 65-028774 (1965), Louise Coldren,