THE INSTITUTE OF HERALDIC AND GENEALOGICAL STUDIES

THE SCHOOL OF FAMILY HISTORY

A Course of Study in
GENEALOGY
and
FAMILY HISTORY

written and edited by
The Tutorial Staff of the Institute

Sources and Citations

SOURCES AND CITATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Why? The basic principle behind recording your sources is to enable you to find the same information again to help in your own research, potentially saving you time wasted repeating searches unnecessarily.

It enables you to share your research with others.

Fully sourced family tree or report gives your research credibility

Key Points

- There is no one "right way" to write a source citation.
- All necessary information should be included
- Standardise your format – keep to one style

TERMINOLOGY

A **source** is the description of what you looked at during your research, whether a book or a record collection, such as a particular parish register or the 1851 census. These are used in **bibliographies** and when describing your research or **searches**.

A **source citation** is the source plus an extra level of detail, for example the description of where within a source you found a particular fact, which page of the book, or which reference within the census return for a particular year relates to the person of interest. Source citations are used to reference **facts** such as names and dates of birth.

In practice you will have a combination of both in your list of references, and examples are provided later in this document.

THE COMPONENTS OF A SOURCE CITATION

Genealogists use a wide variety of different sources, some published, some original documents, some examined in person, some examined online. Here we use a set of building blocks for you to select from appropriately and provide examples. Not all will apply to all sources and source citations.

WHO – author / creator
WHO – publisher
WHO – who the record relates to

WHAT – type of document
WHAT – title of document, name of collection
WHAT – format: original document, transcription, index
WHAT – reference number

WHERE – the archive or website where the source was consulted
WHERE – where within the document is the information found

WHEN – when was the document published
WHEN – when was the document examined

Not every item is required for every type of source. The next stage is work out what to include when and in what order.

Remember- **is the information you have included sufficient for you to find the source again later**? Let this be your guide.

EXAMPLES of SOURCES

Books

Even for publications there is more than one accepted convention. Our suggestion for books is the format:

Author,	*Title*, Edition,	Publisher,	Place & Year of Publication,	Page
<WHO>	<WHAT>	<WHO>	<WHERE> & <WHEN>	<WHERE>

Examples:
> Example 1.
> Colin D. Rogers, *The Family Tree Detective*, 4th ed., Manchester University Press, 2008.

In the first example there is an edition number, but the place of publication is not stated separately so not included. When a book is used as a general source do not specify page numbers.

> Example 2.
> Helen Osborn, *Genealogy, Essential Research Methods*, Robert Hale, London, 2012, pp. 174-201.

The second example is a first edition, so no edition number is necessary. For this example the focus is the chapter on citing sources so include the relevant page numbers.

Periodicals

The citing of journals and family history magazines is similar to books but with the additional need to specify details about the issue number or edition:

Author, "Title of article", *Publication*, Volume, Issue, Year of Publication
<WHO> <WHAT>   <WHAT> <WHEN>

Examples:
> J. S. W. Gibson, "Printed Indexes to Probate Records after 1850", *The Local Historian,* Vol. 15, No. 4, Nov 1982.
>
> Phil Tomaselli, "Find Your First World War Army Ancestors Online", *Who Do You Think You Are?*, Issue 145, Nov 2019.

Websites

General:

The simplest form of website source is reference to the website in general:

Title of website, URL, date accessed.
<WHAT>   <WHERE> <WHEN>

Example:
> *The Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies*, www.ihgs.ac.uk, accessed 1st November 2019.

WHY include the date? Websites change and are taken down constantly. It is therefore important for future researchers to know that if they cannot find your website, it was there on a certain date.

WHY include the word "accessed"? This is not essential but helps to make it clear the date the website was accessed not the date it was created.

Articles and blog posts:

If the item of interest is a particular article within a website the author's name and the article title should be included:

Author,	Article title,	*Name of website*,	URL,	date accessed.
<WHO>	<WHAT>	<WHAT>	<WHERE>	<WHEN>

Examples:

Bruce Robinson, An Overview of the Reformation*, BBC*, www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/tudors/reformation_overview_01.shtml, accessed 1st November 2019.

Brianne Kirkpatrick, What DNA testing CAN'T tell you*, Family Tree Magazine*, https://www.family-tree.co.uk/how-to-guides/expert-blogs/what-dna-testing-cant-tell-you, accessed 1st November 2019.

Note that the ordering of information here is similar to that used for books. The name of the website and URL can be considered similar to the publisher and place of publication.

Databases and collections:

Many sources cited are databases and collections within websites, such as the many collections found on Ancestry and Find My Past. Simply referencing "Ancestry" is not sufficient.

Here we use the following format:

Full title of collection,	website URL,	reference of original data,	location of original data,	date accessed
<WHAT>	<WHAT>	<WHAT>	<WHERE>	<WHERE>

Example:

British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920, www.ancestry.co.uk, original data: WO 372, The National Archives, accessed 1st November 2019.

There are conflicting opinions on this type of reference. You *may* want to include the URL for the actual database rather than just the Ancestry homepage. Precise website addresses often change on the big websites, and so too do database titles.

The following is another *option*:

Example:
> *British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920,*
> http://search.ancestry.co.uk/search/db.aspx?dbid=1262, original data:
> WO 372, The National Archives, accessed 1st November 2019.

Either is acceptable, but the **full title of the database is essential** to enable a reader to find the same collection again.

WHY include the location and reference of the original records? These are important to include as online access is not always guaranteed in the long term. Licensing agreements end, commercial priorities change. However, sometimes this information is not provided. Do not guess! There could be more than one copy of the documents.

Example:
> *Dorset, England, Church of England Deaths and Burials, 1813-2010*,
> www.ancestry.co.uk, original data: Dorset History Centre, accessed 1st November 2019.

In this case the collection is a number of parish registers and a reference for the original data as a whole is not appropriate.

Examples:
> *1891 England Census,* www.ancestry.co.uk, original data: RG 12, The National Archives, accessed 1st November 2019.
>
> *1891 England, Wales & Scotland Census,* www.findmypast.co.uk, original data: RG 12, The National Archives, accessed 1st November 2019.

Note the difference in collection title between Ancestry and Find My Past.

England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1916-2005, www.ancestry.co.uk, original data: General Register Office, accessed 1st November 2019.

eBooks

Increasingly the information we are using in our family history research is available in electronic form online. This adds a layer of complexity to our sources as we must include the information on how we accessed the book.

Examples:

William White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Suffolk* [eBook], 1855, https://play.google.com/books, accessed 1st November 2019.

Walter Arthur Copinger, *The Manors of Suffolk: notes on their history and devolution, Vol. 1 The Hundreds of Babergh and Blackbourn* [eBook], Unwin, London, 1905, https://archive.org/details/manorsofsuffolkn01copiuoft, accessed 1st November 2019.

Diane Elder & Nicole Dyer, *Research Like a Pro, A Genealogist's Guide* [Kindle edition], Family Locket Books, Highland, Utah, 2019, www.amazon.co.uk, accessed 1st November 2019.

An important point to note is that, whilst older books that have been made available online tend to be of a fixed format, newer books published in e.g. Kindle format change pagination from device to device. When creating references for modern eBooks use section headings rather than page numbers if you want to specify part of a book.

Original documents and manuscripts

Much of our research relates to original material at the archives. Here we apply pragmatically our Who, What, Where, When approach:

Place,   *title*,   document reference,   format,   repository, when accessed.
<WHERE>   <WHAT>   <WHAT>   <WHAT>   <WHERE>   <WHEN>

Examples:

Ickleton, Cambridgeshire, *Baptism Register 1844-1881,* original document, P96/1/5, Cambridgeshire Archives, 1st November 2019.

Kedington, Suffolk, *Baptism Register 1813-1845,* FL 595/4/3, original document examined on microfiche (fiche 4-5 of 18), Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmunds, 1st November 2019.

Woodford St Mary the Virgin, Essex, *Baptism Register 1872-1894,* D/P 167/1/12, digital images of register pages, http://seax.essexcc.gov.uk/ParishRegisters.aspx, 1st November 2019.

WHY do we include the format? The format here includes detail of whether the original pages (or copies of them) have been viewed or a transcription used. Transcriptions can contain errors. In addition, some microfilm copies are of poor quality. You may find that if you revisit the same record when digital images have been published online you are able to find the entry you were looking for originally.

EXAMPLES of SOURCE CITATIONS

A source citation is the detailed information about where within a record the information is to be found relevant to the individual of interest. An earlier source example shown was for a census collection on *Ancestry*. If we want to use the census as evidence of an individual's approximate year and place of birth we need a detailed source citation.

In the simplest of terms we take the source we already had and add the additional information to identify the individual.

Examples:

George Young, *1891 England Census,* www.ancestry.co.uk, Reference: Class: RG12, Piece: 2412, Folio 11, Page 16, original data: The National Archives.

John Cowling, *Baptism*, 1859, Ickleton, Cambridgeshire, Baptism Register 1844-1881, P96/1/5, Cambridgeshire Archives.

Winifred May Hopkins, *GRO Birth Index*, Registered: 1911 Mar Q, Aston, 6d, 376 England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915; www.ancestry.co.uk, original data: General Register Office.

or

Winifred May Hopkins, *GRO Birth Index*, Registered: 1911 Jan-Mar, Aston, 6d, 376; England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915; www.ancestry.co.uk, original data: General Register Office.

If you are using the source citation as found on the General Register Office website, the details would change to:

Examples:

Winifred May Hopkins, *GRO Birth Index*, Registered: 1911 Mar Q, Aston, 6d, 376 Mother's maiden name REYNOLDS; www.gro.gov.uk

You may prefer to write the reference with the full descriptors:

1911 Q1, District: Aston, Vol: 6d, Page: 376

Winifred May Hopkins, *Birth Certificate*, Reference: Registered: 1911 Mar Q, District: Aston, Vol: 6d, Page: 376, General Register Office.

You do not need to include the GRO reference for certificates you have in family papers. Do *not* include the e.g. BXCB123456 numbers in your certificate references. These are simply chronology stamps applied by the GRO and cannot be used to trace back your order.

Be pragmatic for other documents. Think about what should be included for you or someone else to find that entry again.

HOW TO USE SOURCES AND SOURCE CITATIONS

A source list in its simplest form is a simple list, a *Bibliography*, of the sources you have used when preparing your work at the end of your assignment or report. This is often all that is required.

If you are writing a piece that includes source citations for your facts then you will need to add citation numbers throughout your text.

Example:

George Young was born c. 1857 in Birmingham, Warwickshire.[1]

You can either use footnotes, where the details for that source citation are added at the bottom of the relevant page, or endnotes, a list of all your references at the end of your work.

TAKING IT FURTHER

The examples in this document are there to serve as a guide and are suitable for research in the UK. There are many more possibilities. You may have more detail about locations if you have a family from a number of countries.

There are a number of works published on the creation of source citations, for example:

- Ian G. McDonald, *Referencing for Genealogists, Sources and Citations*, The History Press, Stroud, Gloucestershire, 2019.

- Elizabeth Shown Mills, *Evidence Explained, Citing History Sources from Artefacts to Cyberspace*, 3rd ed. revised, Genealogical Publishing Company, Baltimore, Maryland, 2017.

- Anglia Ruskin University, *Harvard System*, https://libweb.anglia.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.htm, accessed 1st November 2019.

- Helen Osborn, *Genealogy, Essential Research Methods*, Robert Hale, London, 2012.

- Jeff La Marca, *Simple Citations, Making Life Easier for Family Historians*, http://www.simplecitations.com, accessed 1st November 2019.

Reading these is optional. There is extensive discussion in these works on the most appropriate way to create sources. Should names be surname then first name or the other way around? Should full website addresses be used for websites? In what order should the various elements be included? Which parts should be in italics and which parts in brackets? There is much contradiction and if you try to create a source using all of these you will tie yourself in knots.

Which is right? All of them. As noted at the start, there is no one right way. If you are already familiar with these works and prefer alternative formatting then use an alternative system, but **be sure to include the minimum information we have highlighted for each source type here**.

SOFTWARE PACKAGES

There are also software packages that create sources for you. You may use your family tree software to create sources. In most cases there is a distinction between the "source", the 1891 census, and the "citation", the detail specific for an individual. The "citation" part may be referred to as the "citation detail", "source details", "citation notes" or similar.

Other software, dedicated to generating sources, is also available such as Mendelay and End Note.

If you want to use any of these then feel free to do so, just **be sure to include the minimum information we have highlighted for each source type here**.