



NATIONAL GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY®

Guidelines for Sound Genealogical Research

Recommended by the National Genealogical Society

Remembering always that they are engaged in a quest for truth, genealogists and family history researchers consistently

- recognize that information relevant to answering genealogical questions can come from various types of sources, including but not limited to documents, artifacts, and genetic testing reports;
- record the source for each item of information they collect;
- test every hypothesis against credible evidence, and reject those that the evidence shows are incorrect;
- seek original records as the basis for their research conclusions or reproduced images of original records when there is reasonable assurance the records have not been altered in their reproduction;
- use compilations and published works primarily for their value as guides to locating original records and for analysis of the evidence discussed in them;
- state something as a fact or as a proven conclusion only when it is supported by convincing evidence, and identify the evidence when communicating the fact or conclusion to others;
- limit with words such as “probably” or “possibly” any conclusion not based on convincing evidence, and explain their reasoning;

- avoid distributing or publishing inaccurate information and unsupported conclusions in a way that may mislead other researchers;
- state carefully and honestly the results of their own research, and acknowledge all use of other researchers' work;
- recognize the collegial nature of genealogical research by making their work available to others through publication, or by placing copies in appropriate libraries or repositories, and by welcoming critical comment;
- consider with open minds new evidence and others' comments on their work; and
- become familiar with research and ethical standards set by other genealogical organizations, such as the Board for Certification of Genealogists, the Association of Professional Genealogists, the International Commission for the Accreditation of Professional Genealogists, the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies, and the Genetic Genealogy Standards Committee.

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