

THE PROFESSOR WAS A REVOLUTIONARY: A CASE STUDY FOCUSING ON THOROUGH ANALYSIS AND CORRELATION

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Introduction¹

The task was simple enough: Locate the birth and death certificates for John Craven, born in England in about 1865. His wife was Gladys Ralston and their daughter (the client's grandmother) was Hathor Elise Garside Craven.

The client provided us with family photographs and copies of a passenger list, a census report, a death certificate, and a marriage certificate.

The client also reported a number of family stories regarding John Craven:

- Pursued an academic career including education at Uppsala University
- Became a lecturer and professor in Oriental Studies
- Met Gladys about 1920 when she was working as his research assistant
- Went to England with throat cancer, spent all of his savings on treatment
- Died in the London Clinic between 1926-1932, leaving nothing for Gladys and Hathor

Genealogy Proof Standard (GPS)²

To reach a sound conclusion, we need to meet all five components of the GPS:

1. Reasonably exhaustive research.
2. Complete and accurate source citations.
3. Thorough analysis and correlation.
4. Resolution of conflicting evidence.
5. Soundly written conclusion based on the strongest evidence.

Each one of these components was of vital importance to solve this puzzle, but thorough analysis and correlation were essential after the reasonably exhaustive research was concluded.

Thorough Analysis and Correlation

To perform thorough analysis and correlation we must carefully consider all of the evidence found in each record we consult.

The document itself

- What is the purpose of the document?
- When was the document created?
- By whom?
- Where did the creator acquire the information recorded on the document?
- Other evidence such as handwriting, ink, fill-in-the-blank vs. free-form, etc.
- Consider historical context.

¹ All URLs were accurate as of June 2021.

² "Genealogical Proof Standard," *Board for Certification of Genealogists*,
<https://bcgcertification.org/ethics-standards>.

What does each word and term mean?

- Use a legal dictionary³, glossaries⁴, dictionaries of the time period or the Oxford English Dictionary (OED)⁵, to ensure we understand the words as they were understood when the document was written.
- Who are the other people mentioned in the document?
- Determine the names of the people referred to as pronouns (he, she, they).
- F.A.N. club
- Note witnesses, sponsors, clerks, judges, ministers, etc.

Correlate times and dates as needed

- Create a written timeline or chronology
- Consider the date of document creation
- Consider how dates are affected by the switch from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar⁶
- Utilize maps as needed

Locate each place on a map

- "Directions" on Google Maps (traveling on foot)⁷
- Consider rivers, mountains, and other geographical features which might influence travel
- Also consider the time of year, weather, traffic as appropriate
- Google view

How does the information from this document fit with the information found in other documents?

- No sweeping things under the rug
- Have an answer or find an answer
- Occam's Razor⁸

What do you think? Does the evidence presented verify the real identity of John Craven? What is the most compelling piece of evidence? What questions do you still have? If you aren't convinced, why not?

³ For an online version of the 4th edition of *Black's Law Dictionary*, try <http://heimatundrecht.de/sites/default/files/dokumente/Black%27sLaw4th.pdf>.

⁴ Two of my favorites for sussing out old occupations are the *Family Researcher's Dictionary of Old Occupations* (<https://familyresearcher.co.uk/glossary/Dictionary-of-Old-Occupations-Index.html#Old%20Occupations%20-%20B>) and the *Obscure Old English Census Occupations* (<http://worldthroughthelens.com/family-history/old-occupations.php>).

⁵ For residents of Multnomah County, you can access the OED online at <https://multcolib.org/resource/oxford-english-dictionary> (log-in required).

⁶ For more information on the switch from the Julian to Gregorian calendar and the double-dating notations, see <http://libguides.ctstatelibrary.org/hg/colonialresearch/calendar>.

⁷ This is a great article detailing some of the cool things you can do with Google Maps: <https://pcmag.com/news/44-google-maps-tricks-you-need-to-try>.

⁸ Franciscan Friar William of Ockham declared "Entities should not be multiplied without necessity" or "The simplest solution is most likely the right one." See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Occam%27s_razor.

For further reading, here are some articles you might find handy. And of course, Elizabeth Shown Mills' *Evidence Explained* and Thomas Jones' *Mastering Genealogical Proof* are two very useful standards.

For more information on the practice of thorough analysis and correlation, see

"QuickLesson 17: The Evidence Analysis Process Map," *Evidence Explained*,
<https://evidenceexplained.com/content/quicklesson-17-evidence-analysis-process-map>.
Discusses *sources*, *information* or "facts", and *evidence* or the interpretation of the information.

Robert Call, "Evidence Analysis Explained: Digging Into Genealogical Sources," *Legacy Tree Genealogists*, <https://legacytree.com/blog/evidence-analysis-sources>; and
-----, "Evidence Analysis Explained Part II: Evaluating Genealogy Information," *Legacy Tree Genealogists*, <https://legacytree.com/blog/evaluating-genealogy-information>; and
-----, "Evidence Analysis Explained Part III: Evaluating Genealogical Evidence," *Legacy Tree Genealogists*, <https://legacytree.com/blog/evaluating-genealogical-evidence>.
This three-part article discusses in detail the process of evaluating genealogical evidence.

Michael Hait, "Analysis of Evidence in the Genealogical Proof Standard," *Planting the Seeds*,
<https://michaelhait.wordpress.com/2011/11/27/analysis>.
First in a series of posts discussing analysis and correlation, beginning with a list of helpful questions to ask of every document we research.

Amy Bowser Tennant, "Analyze Genealogy Records Like a Pro: For the Beginner," *The Genealogy Reporter*, <https://thegenealogyreporter.com/analyze-genealogy-records>.
Discusses the processes for source analysis and information analysis.

"Exactly WHEN Do We Analyze Our Evidence?," *Evidence Explained*,
<https://evidenceexplained.com/index.php/quicktips/exactly-when-do-we-analyze-our-evidence>.
Analysis must occur as each document is found and after we have assembled a collection of documents.

"QuickLesson 16: Speculation, Hypothesis, Interpretation & Proof," *Evidence Explained*,
<https://evidenceexplained.com/index.php/content/quicklesson-16-speculation-hypothesis-interpretation-proof>.
Discusses the difference between – and the proper uses of – speculation, hypotheses, interpretation, and proof.

"Facts, Truths, and Reality," *Evidence Explained*,
<https://evidenceexplained.com/index.php/quicktips/facts-truths-and-reality>.
A very brief discussion of the notion that we can use evidence to determine facts, or the truth, or reality.

"Quick Lesson 23: No. Records Do Not Speak for Themselves," *Evidence Explained*,
<https://evidenceexplained.com/index.php/content/quick-lesson-23-no-records-do-not-speak-themselves>.
Underscores the importance of understanding both individual words and entire documents in their proper historical context.

Dealing with inaccurate records

"QuickLesson 3: Flawed Records," *Evidence Explained*,

<https://evidenceexplained.com/index.php/content/quicklesson-3-flawed-records>.

Thorough research and thorough analysis are necessary to spot inaccuracies and determine which record contains the most accurate information.

Katy Barnes, "2 Guidelines for Resolving Conflicting Information in Sources," *Legacy Tree*

Genealogists, <https://legacytree.com/blog/2-guidelines-for-dealing-with-conflicting-information-in-sources>.

Considering primary vs. secondary sources, and the importance of locating additional sources of information to determine the most accurate information.

Negative results as part of thorough analysis and correlation of evidence

"The Upside of Negative Results," *Legacy Tree Genealogists*,

<https://legacytree.com/blog/upside-negative-results>.

Offers six methods of overcoming negative search results including F.A.N. club research, historical context, and DNA testing.