



Logs, Sources and Documents...Oh My!

Presented by Heidi Gailey, owner of Sprouting Roots Genealogy
Sproutingrootsgenealogy@gmail.com

Research Logs

Why are Research Logs important?

- They are powerful tools to improve results.
- They help you avoid duplication and to keep track of sources.
- They show negative evidence (what you do not find).

Research logs can also help:

- Organize and correlate copies of documents.
- Weigh evidence to make better conclusions and better lineage links.
- Show strategies and questions from your search.
- Serve as a foundation on which the next generation of researchers can build.

Research Log Must Haves....

- Ancestor's name
- Objective
- The date, place of search
- Source description and citation
- The results or findings

Free Research Log examples

- <https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki>
- <https://familytreemagazine.com/free-genealogy-research-forms/>
- <https://www.cyndislist.com/charts/research/>
- <https://media.americanancestors.org>
- Sproutingrootsgenealogy@gmail.com (Heidi Gailey business email)

Provenance (a record's place and time of origin)

- Ask these questions about the records you find—and you'll better understand the source and what it may (or may not) be telling you.
 - What type of document or item is it?
 - Why was it created?
 - When was it created?
 - Where was it created?
 - Who was the informant?

Original Records

- The first written record of an event
- Generally considered the most authoritative records.
- Often made at or near the time of the event they are documenting.



- Usually by someone who witnessed, participated in, or had direct knowledge of that event.
- Usually includes:
 - Birth, Marriage, and Death records
 - Deeds and Court records from county books

Derivative Records

- A derivative of an original record or other derivative sources
- Includes hand copies and notes, translations, transcriptions, abstracts, extracts, indexes, summaries, or lists.
- They are one or more steps removed from the original source and are subject to copying or transcription error.
- Considered less authoritative.
- Common examples:
 - Indexes for birth, marriage, or death records
 - Indexed census records.
 - Translations or transcriptions of any record

Common Sources, Records and Documents

Understanding Census Records

- Information was recorded by an individual, an enumerator.
- May not be spelled correctly – Enumerator wrote what they heard.
- Did not ask for proof of name, age, and other data.
- Might ask a neighbor or others if no one home.
- Indexers may make errors when transcribing handwriting.
- Census differences and issues (1850 lists each person by name, 1890 destroyed by fire)
- Family Tracking / Census Mapping
- FAN research - Family, Associates, and Neighbors.
- State Census Records
- Other Countries
- https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Category:Census_records_by_country
- Source, Records and Document Tips

Immigration Records

- These often give names, ages of individuals and usually their place of origin. (Passenger lists, ship manifests, naturalization papers, declaration of intent)

Cemetery Records

- Helpful but should be evaluated for accuracy.

Land Records

- Among first records kept in a newly settled area. Valuable information when other records are not available. Women were listed, sometimes with maiden name.



Probate Records

- May include a variety of documents such as wills, letters of administration, inventories of estates, guardianships of young children, etc.

Military Records

- May have birth information, residences, names of family members, details of military service, etc.

Newspapers and Obituaries

- Recorded a variety of information about people in the area.

Histories and Genealogies

- Published books or collections that contain genealogical information. May include county histories, town histories, other types of histories, collections of biographies, genealogies of families, collections of records for a specific area, etc.

Maps (current and historical)

- Atlas of Historical County Boundaries
 - <https://digital.newberry.org/ahcb/index.html>
- Land Plat Maps and Land Grants
 - <https://glorerecords.blm.gov/default.aspx>
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps
 - <https://www.loc.gov/collections/sanborn-maps>

Tips to understanding Documents and Records

- Difference in Names and Spellings
- Maiden Surname “Nee” (French)
- Naming Patterns
- Americanizing Names
- Nick Names : Mary: Molly, Polly, May John: Jack Margaret: Daisy
- Switching First and Middle Names – especially on Census
- Handwriting - <https://script.byu.edu/> This website offers guidance in the deciphering of documents written in archaic handwriting styles or alphabets. Learn about old scripts with tutorials and materials. Get tips on analyzing and interpreting the past.
- Marriage Records – Certificates, Banns and Bonds