

Deeper Analysis: Techniques for Successful Problem Solving

Elissa Scalise Powell,
Certified Genealogist® , Certified Genealogical LecturerSM

Elissa@PowellGenealogy.com
Copyright ©2019 Elissa Scalise Powell

When analyzing genealogical evidence, there are some common techniques which help us think about the data collected around a research question in ways that we might not otherwise see. Common patterns or threads help us to tie the evidence together to create a clearer picture of what the truth might be. The Genealogical Proof Standard states that analysis and data correlation is necessary, but what techniques should we employ to achieve that goal?

What is a Problem?

- Something that has an unknown answer.
- A question that has a working theory but is not proven.
- Research answers which conflict with each other.

The Research Process

Research Question: one of identity, relationship, or event
↓
Research Plan
↓
Research in Quality Sources producing Evidence
↓
Evidence Analysis
↓
Conclusion
↓
“Proof”

Standards

Genealogical Proof Standard
“Tests—through processes of analysis and correlation—of all sources, information items, and evidence contributing to an answer to a genealogical question or problem”

Reasoning from Evidence (nos. 37–50)

46. Evidence independence.
47. Evidence correlation.
48. Resolving evidence inconsistencies.
49. Unresolved evidence inconsistencies.
50. Assembling conclusions from evidence.



Certified by Board for
Certification of Genealogists

Strategies

Proof Argument

- The process of proving each step will make you revisit your data.
- Shows you where assumptions may be and where you need more evidence.
- Standards 51, 53, and 54

Comparison charts

- by grouping a certain record set about a person or a family
 - compare all census years, deeds, military service, death cause, occupations, ...
- by common family characteristics in a chart

Correlation

By sources

- correlate related record groups together such as plot plan, tax lists, and census

By chronology

- identifies missing data
- highlights illogical and contradictory data
- shows who lived concurrently
- can help sort out multiple individuals with the same name
- can see what events shaped their lives when compared with historical events

By geography

- migration map
- plot maps

Narrative family history

- Helps to see where the holes in our knowledge exist.
- Tests our logic and progression of events.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Board for Certification of Genealogists. *Genealogy Standards*. Nashville: Turner Pub. Co., 2014.

Croom, Emily. *Unpuzzling Your Past Workbook*. Cincinnati, OH: Betterway Books, 1996.

Greenwood, Val D. *The Researcher's Guide to American Genealogy*. 4th ed. Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2017.

Kintner, Elgin P., MD. *Edward Kintner and Glada Snyder: Ancestral Genealogy and Tour Guide*. Maryville, TN: privately published, 1994.

Mills, Elizabeth Shown. *Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace*. 3rd ed. revised. Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2017.

_____, editor. *Professional Genealogy: A Manual for Researchers, Writers, Editors, Lecturers and Librarians*. Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Company, 2001.

Acree family history: <http://acreetree.net>

Animated timeline and history of the United States: www.animatedatlas.com/movie.html

Free personalized timeline intermixed with history: www.OurTimelines.com

Hardiness Zones: interactive map at <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb>

Charts and forms: <https://cyndislist.com/charts>

Gen Detective software program and charts: <https://www.rumblesoftinc.com/index.cfm>

TIMELINE FOR TWO COUPLES AND CHILDREN

	(him)	(her)	(him)	(her)
Birth				
Marriage				
Married 2nd				
Death				
Children Date, Place				

COMPARISON TABLE

Age, Birth Place, Father Birth Place, Mother Birth Place, Occupation

Person									
1870 Census Age / Place									
1880 Census Age / Place									
1900 Census Age / Place									
	BIRTH PLACE FOR FATHER AND MOTHER OF PERSON								
1880 Census Father/Mother									
1900 Census Father/Mother									
	OCCUPATIONS								
1870 Census Occupation									
1880 Census Occupation									
1900 Census Occupation									