

Evidence! Making Your Case: Evaluating Family History Sources & Information

Identity can be defined as "the distinguishing character or personality of an individual." [Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary] In genealogical terms, however, the concept is far more complex. Every person in the history of the world is unique. Only one individual bought forty acres bordering specific neighbors on 2 December 1842 in a given county. Only the grantee (or his or her close associate) paid tax on the same land the next summer. Only he (or his close associate) sold it twenty years later. The records left by a person's interactions with his surrounding environment form his unique identity. Laura Murphy DeGrazia, CG & Karen Mauer Green, CG - *The NY Genealogical & Biographical Record*, Vol 145, No 3, July 2014 - The Editors' View.

Begin with a specific family history question that you might be able to answer. Consider what types of sources might contain information leading to a conclusion. Sources (original or derivative) are a container & can be almost anything. Cite each source on the front of your work sheet. **Sources yield information** (primary, secondary or indeterminable). Both sources and information have physical presence - they can be seen &/or touched. Information is analyzed for **evidence** (direct or indirect; consistent or conflicting; present or absent; or negative). Reaching a conclusion to answer your question is the goal. The Genealogical Proof Standard is much more than evidence. The GPS is a process & a way of thinking about the documentation that comprises a good family history set within their physical & social geography - Context. Genealogy is an exciting research discipline which brings history to life when & where your ancestors lived it. The more you know, the richer the experience. GPS gives one structure & support for conclusions.

The Research Process

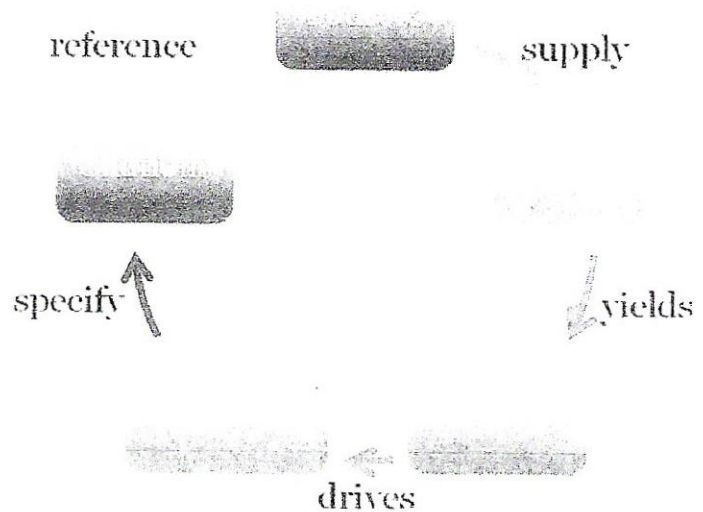


image from Robert Raymond wiki

Elizabeth Powell Crowe, *Genealogy Online*, 10th Ed. (NY: McGraw-Hill Education, 2015), ebook.

Thomas W. Jones, *Mastering Genealogical Proof* (Arlington, VA: National Genealogical Society, 2013).

Robert Raymond, "Genealogical Maturity," wiki article - *FamilySearch.org*, November 2011. + his associated articles.

Elizabeth Shown Mills, *Evidence! Citation & Analysis for the Family Historian* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1997).

Elizabeth Shown Mills, *Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace*, 2nd Ed. (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 2009)(Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 2009).