

## Module 5 - Reliable Resources

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### Module 5: Reliable Resources

December 1–7

#### Readings

BCG. *Genealogy Standards*. 2nd ed.

#### Lesson 1:

- Standards #19, 25, 27, 35-36, 40-48

Powell. *The Everything Guide to Online Genealogy*. 3rd ed.

- "Database Search Strategies," pp. 53-56
- "Get Creative with Names," pp. 56-57

Washington, Reginald. "[The Freedman's Savings and Trust Company and African American Genealogical Research](#)." *Prologue Magazine: Federal Records and African American History* 29, no. 2 (Summer 1997).

#### Readings

BCG. *Genealogy Standards*. 2nd ed.

#### Lesson 2:

- Standards #23, 29-33

Leary, Helen F. M. "[Skillbuilding: Converting Records into Reliable Copies](#)." *OnBoard* 5 (May 1999): 20.

Mills, Elizabeth Shown. "[Transcribing Source Materials](#)." *OnBoard* 2 (January 1996): 8.

Russell, Judy G. "[Guardians for the Kids](#)." *The Legal Genealogist*, blog, 1 March 2012.

#### Readings

BCG. *Genealogy Standards*. 2nd ed.

#### Lesson 3:

- Standards #19, 25-27

Sullivan, Amanda. "[This Straightforward Technique Will Help You Uncover Missed Facts About Your Ancestors](#)." *Family History Daily*.

Hatton, Stephen B. "[A Genealogical Timeline as a Research Tool](#)." Originally published in *NGS Magazine*.

<b>Readings:</b>	Powell. <i>The Everything Guide to Online Genealogy</i> . 3rd ed.
Read <b>after</b> completing "Self-check Activity: Timelines."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Unearth Wills and Estate Records," pp. 122–125</li> <li>• "Chase Down Court Records," pp. 125–127</li> <li>• "Land and Property Records," pp. 134–136</li> </ul>
<b>Discussions:</b>	<b>Discussions 7 &amp; 8</b> postings end Monday, December 7 at 11:59 PM ET
<b>Assessments:</b>	<p><b>Module 5A: <i>HeritageQuest</i> Resources</b> due Monday, December 7 at 11:59 PM ET</p> <p><b>Module 5B: Transcriptions &amp; Timelines</b> due Monday, December 7 at 11:59 PM ET</p>
<b>Note:</b>	Access to discussion forums and assessments ends on Monday, December 14.

## Lesson 1: *HeritageQuest* resources

### Overview and Objectives

Public libraries often subscribe to online genealogical resources for their patrons. Some services are available only at the library, and others you can access at home. If your library subscribes to *HeritageQuest Online* (HQ), you can access this resource through your library at home. Boston University provides you access to *HeritageQuest* for this course. If you have forgotten your login or password, please refer to the "Genealogical Research Resources" section in the Syllabus.

The HQ resources are sometimes called "*Ancestry* Lite" because the databases are from *Ancestry*. This is a boon for thrifty researchers. Besides the *Ancestry* databases, HQ provides research aids and guides.

### Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Identify *HeritageQuest* website resources that will be useful for your genealogy research
- Skillfully research a subject by topic or filters
- Understand how to review database descriptions, scope, and limitations
- Distinguish between searching and browsing in genealogy databases
- Access Research Guides
- Research African Americans before and after the Civil War using censuses, slave schedules, and bank records

### Reading Assignments

- BCG. *Genealogy Standards*. 2nd ed.
  - Standards #19, 25, 27, 35-36, 40-48
- Powell. *The Everything Guide to Online Genealogy*. 3rd ed.
  - "Database Search Strategies," pp. 53-56

- "Get Creative with Names," pp. 56-57
- Washington, Reginald. "[The Freedman's Savings and Trust Company and African American Genealogical Research.](#)" *Prologue Magazine: Federal Records and African American History* 29, no. 2 (Summer 1997).

## HeritageQuest Resources

Take a moment to enter the *HQ* website and explore the resources. You will notice that searching HQ involves a new mindset. No longer do you search for a name and hope for the best. You select a record category like censuses, city directories, immigration records, military records, vital records, or wills and probates. Then you search within the category. This forces the researcher to stop "surfing" and to consider sources in each search. This change in strategy will improve your results.

Let's explore a little together, including reviewing database source, description, and scope. If you were interested in Pennsylvania probate records, that would be a great place to start.

1. From the Home screen, click on the "Search" tab.
2. Under the section "Wills and Probates" click "Search Now."
3. Review the Research Guide. This is an excellent four-page summary of what types of records might be found in this collection and what you can learn from them.
4. Return to the section "Wills and Probates" and click on "Pennsylvania, Wills and Probate Records, 1683-1993."
5. Scroll down you will see a section titled "Source Information." This tells you where you can find the original records—in Pennsylvania County, District and Probate Courts.
6. The section beneath is titled, "About Pennsylvania, Wills and Probate Records, 1683-1993." This is the database description. *Ancestry* and *FamilySearch* have similar database descriptions on their sites. The amount of detail varies by database; be sure to read this to learn about what is or is not included as well as other details.
7. Scroll back up to the top of the page. The box with the search buttons is where you can *search* the database. For this particular database you can search by name, date, location, keyword, and case number.
8. To the right of the search box is where you can browse the database in the section titled "Browse this Collection." If you click the down arrow it will show you the counties which are included in this database. A new dropdown box will let you select which category of documents you want to view. If you are interested in a county that is not included in this list, then you know you need to search elsewhere for it as it would not be included in this database.

The image below shows the database description as well as where to search, browse, and review source information.

## Pennsylvania, Wills and Probate Records, 1683-1993

**Search** ☐ Match all terms exactly

First & Middle Name(s)  Last Name

Probate   Year

City, County, State, Country

Any Event   Year

City, County, State, Country

Keyword

e.g. pilot or "Flying Tigers"

Case Number

**Search** Clear search

**Browse this collection**

To browse this image set, select from the options below.

County

Choose...

Notes

**Source Information**

Ancestry.com. *Pennsylvania, Wills and Probate Records, 1683-1993* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015. Original data: Pennsylvania County, District and Probate Courts.

**About Pennsylvania, Wills and Probate Records, 1683-1993**

This collection includes images of probate records from the state of Pennsylvania. Probate records are among the most valuable records available for American genealogy but can be challenging to access because originals are kept in courthouses across the country. This collection...

This is where you **Browse**

This is where you **Search**

Source Information

Database Information

HQ also includes records like the U.S. Serial Set and Freedman's Bank records. We will be using the Freedman's Bank Records during this unit.

### Researching vs. Searching

The key to researching (rather than searching) is to pose a question you will try to answer. It's a bit like the story of Alice in Wonderland. Alice popped down the rabbit hole without a thought to where she was going. As she wandered around, she came upon the Cheshire Cat, and they had a conversation about where she should go.

**Alice:** Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?

**The Cheshire Cat:** That depends a good deal on where you want to get to.

**Alice:** I don't much care where.

**The Cheshire Cat:** Then it doesn't much matter which way you go.

**Alice:** ...So long as I get somewhere.

**The Cheshire Cat:** Oh, you're sure to do that, if only you walk long enough."

~Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*



It's the same way with genealogy. You can wander through names and find results, but those results may not be for your family. It's important to consider what you want to find and then consider where you will find it. HQ makes that easy for you.

Let's say that I have the *Find A Grave* memorial for Levi Whitney. He died on 20 December 1849 and is buried in Bridgewater, Windsor County, Vermont. I want to find more information about Levi. How old was he? Where was he born? What was his cause of death?

The HQ website has a collection called "Mortality Schedules." Mortality Schedules are a part of the U.S. Census collection. The database description for the mortality schedules states the database includes names of individuals who died during the twelve-month period before the census date. Levi Whitney should be in the 1850 Vermont mortality schedule. The information contained in the mortality schedules includes the cause of death. The mortality schedule also includes age and birthplace.

When I *search* for him in this database only one Levi Whitney shows up in the entire mortality schedule index, and he died in a different state in a different year. Does this mean his death was not captured in the mortality schedules? Not necessarily. When you *browse* the database in the "Browse this collection," section, you find that Vermont is not included in the list of twenty-four states that are indexed. He died in Vermont, so he won't be in the HQ collection. That's disappointing, but now you know why he is not included in the database. It is important to understand the difference between searching and browsing a database.

Self-check Activity: *HeritageQuest* Resources

Practice looking at what records are included in some of HQ's record collections by reading the database descriptions and using the "Browse this collection." Download and fill in the following chart for these three categories you may not have used in the past. The first one is done as an example.

Charting Resources

Fill out this form online or download the Word document and fill it out on your own. After filling out either form click the "Show Answer" button to see the completed form. Note that Slave Schedules and the 1890 Veterans Schedule are part of the U.S. Census Records collection.

[Click here to download a copy of this form as a Word doc.](#)

Some <i>HeritageQuest</i> resources using database descriptions and "Browse this collection"			
<i>HeritageQuest</i> Resource	Time Period Covered	Geography Coverage	Content of Record
1860 Slave Schedules	1860 with the census date being 1 June	AL, AR, DE, DC, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, MO, NC, SC, TN, TX, UT, VA.  According to the database description slave schedules were used in NJ too, but they are not browsable in this database.	This census schedule contains information about enslaved persons. The name of the slave-owner is given, and slaves are listed without names. Identities are restricted to age, gender, and color.
1890 Veterans Schedule			

Freedman's Bank: 1865–1874  
African American bank records

[Click here to download the answer sheet as a Word doc.](#)

Besides the collections mentioned earlier, check out the research aids and maps on the HQ website, especially the “Library of Congress Photo Collection, 1840–2000.”

The more you explore HQ, the more you will find. There are other United States collections including vital records. If you don't have United States research, HQ also includes records for other countries.

## Freedman's Bank Records

The Freedmen's Bank, officially The Freedman's Savings and Trust Company, was established in 1865 to be, “a simple savings institution created primarily for former slaves and their descendants.”<sup>1</sup> For many account holders, it was a once in a lifetime opportunity to safely save money. Unfortunately, the bank did not last long, but the National Archives preserved some records as “Microfilm Publication M816, Registers of Signatures of Depositors in Branches of the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company, 1865-1874.”

Be careful not to confuse the Freedman's Bank with the Freedmen's Bureau, officially the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, which was established on the same date as The Freedman's Savings and Trust Company. The Freedman's Bureau was part of the War Department and established with the mandate to supervise affairs relating to freedmen and refugees.<sup>2</sup>

In case you have not read the article about the [Freedman's Savings and Trust](#), **please do so now**.

<sup>1</sup>Reginald Washington, “The Freedman's Savings and Trust Company and African American Genealogical Research,” *Prologue Magazine; National Archives* (<https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1997/summer/freedmans-savings-and-trust.html>).

<sup>2</sup>“African American Records: Freedmen's Bureau,” *National Archives* (<https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/freedmens-bureau>). Also, United States Congress, *Statutes at Large*, vol. 13, 507-508, for 38th Congress, 2nd session, Chapter 90.

## Freedman's Bank Records Sample Document

Susan A. Green, a resident of New Orleans, Louisiana, applied for an account with the Freedman's bank on 14 February 1868. Her card shows she was the widow of Richard A. Green. Her children were Henry, Luda, and Gardner Green. She was living at 31 Claiborne Street at the time, but she was born in Pendleton County, South Carolina.

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**Record for Mrs Susan A. Green**

Date and No. of Application, *Feb 14 1872*

Name of Master, *not known*

Name of Mistress, *not known*

Plantation, *not known*

Height and Complexion, *not known*

Father or Mother? Married? *Not married*

Name of Children, *Henry, Luda, Susan*

Regiment and Company, *not known*

Place of Birth, *Pointe à la Poudre, La.*

Residence, *31 Claiborne St.*

Occupation, *Midwife*

**REMARKS,**

*not known*

Signature, *Susan A. Green*

"U.S., Freedman's Bank Records, 1865-1874," digital image, *HeritageQuest* (<https://search.ancestryheritagequest.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=8755> : accessed 26 Feb 2020), Mrs. Susan A. Green, Louisiana bank card no. 524; citing *Registers of Signatures of Depositors in Branches of the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company, 1865-1874*, M816, roll not given.

Notice that a citation is provided because all records need a citation. You are not expected to be able to create a "perfect" citation, but you should include a citation that gives the record's creator, what it is called, when the source was created, where the source is located, and where in that location it is found. This is briefly explained in Genealogy Standard #5. Citation elements were covered in a previous module.

Look at the record and apply some of the analytical skills you learned in previous modules. Is this an original, derivative, or authored source? What makes you think so? Who do you think was the informant? How would they know the information provided? Who do you think filled out the form? What do you think was the purpose of the questions asked? Was there any bias or reason for the informant to be less than honest?

Susan's daughter Luda applied for a bank account on 7 September 1872. Luda, age 26, was born in New Orleans. She was the wife of Jos. Andrew Robinson and was living at 182 Liberty. She signed her name, indicating she was likely literate.



No. 6675 Record Luda Robinson

Date of Application, Sept 7 1872

Where born, S.C.

Where brought up, S.C.

Residence, 182 Liberty

Age, 26

Complexion,

Occupation,

Works for

Wife or husband, Joe Andrew Robinson

Children

Father, Richard Green

Mother, Susan A. Green

Brothers, Henry, Gardner

Sisters, —

Signature, Luda Robinson

"U.S., Freedman's Bank Records, 1865-1874," digital image, *HeritageQuest* (<https://search.ancestryheritagequest.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=8755> : accessed 26 Feb 2020), Luda Robinson, Louisiana bank card no. 6675; citing *Registers of Signatures of Depositors in Branches of the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company, 1865-1874*, M816, roll not given.

## The Search for James Parker

You will now practice searching in the Freedman's Bank Records database for a person with a common name. When you finish, you will complete the Module 5A Assessment.

James Parker, our subject, applied for a Freedman's Bank account. At the time, he reported he was born in South Carolina and raised in Georgia.

Open HQ and locate the "U.S. Freedman's Bank Record, 1861-1875" link. Note: When you click on the link titled, "U.S. Freedman's Bank Record, 1861-1875" in HQ the title switches to "U.S., Freedman's Bank Records, 1865-1874." We cannot fix this inconsistency on their website, but you are at the right place. A search box comes up. Enter the following information into the HQ search box fields and then click "Search."

First name: James  
 Last name: Parker  
 Birth: South Carolina  
 Lived in: Georgia



way to search smarter.

First, skip anyone not born in South Carolina. You can do this by going back to the search screen and clicking the little square under the "Location" field. Now there are only two James Parkers. Both were born in Charleston, South Carolina. View the two bank applications, and you will find only one mentions Georgia. Now you have found the correct James Parker you were looking for.

In the first part of the assessment, you will use various HQ databases to find and analyze records for James Parker and his associates. There will be some additional questions using other databases in HQ.

## Further Resources for African American Research

*HeritageQuest* has a research aid titled "African American Family Research" which offers suggestions on conducting African American research. The following online sources are also useful for tracing African American ancestors:

- Burroughs, Tony. "[Finding African Americans on the 1870 Census.](#)" *Heritage Quest* (January/February 2001): 50–56.
- Carrier, Toni and Angela Walton-Raji. [Mapping the Freedmen's Bureau.](#)
- Ingle, Cyndi. "[African-American \[links to online sources\].](#)"
- [The Freedmen's Bureau Online.](#)

## Summary of Lesson 1

In this lesson, you explored the resources available at *HeritageQuest*. Rather than searching, you thought about what you want to know and what records group might help you to answer your research question. We will learn more about research planning in Module 6.

You learned how to determine a database's content, time period, and geographic coverage. You learned the difference between searching a database and browsing a database to see limitations on coverage. You explored the Freedman's Bank record set in a search for James Parker. You correlated his bank record with the 1860 slave schedule and 1870 federal census.

Our goal was to expose you to resources that you might not have used before in your own research. Hopefully, you found resources available at *HeritageQuest* that might be helpful in your future research.

## Lesson 2: Transcriptions and Abstracts

### Overview and Objectives

We have become accustomed to using technology that allows us to make photocopies and digital image copies of documents and then share those copies with others. There are times when it is necessary, or desirable, to manually record the information we find in a document. There are different ways to capture the information in a record: transcriptions, abstracts, extracts, and summaries.

#### Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this module you should be able to:

- Describe what transcriptions, abstracts, extracts, and summaries are
- Identify when to use each of these methods
- Transcribe an original document
- Abstract an original document
- Use historical context to evaluate evidence in a record

#### Reading Assignments

- BCG. *Genealogy Standards*. 2nd ed.
  - Standards #23, 29-33
- Leary, Helen F. M. "[Skillbuilding: Converting Records into Reliable Copies.](#)" *OnBoard 5* (May

1999): 20.

- Mills, Elizabeth Shown. "[Transcribing Source Materials](#)." *OnBoard 2* (January 1996): 8.
- Russell, Judy G. "[Guardians for the kids](#)." *The Legal Genealogist*, blog, 1 March 2012.

## Transcriptions

A transcription is an exact re-writing, word-for-word, of a record. The goal is to render the words exactly as they were meant to be. See *Genealogy Standards*, Standards #29 and #32.

When you have an original document, it is helpful to transcribe it. You might wonder why you should go to the trouble?

- You might find yourself in a repository where they do not allow copies or photographs. The only way to capture what you see might be to transcribe it.
- Sometimes it is hard to decipher handwriting. If you spend the time to transcribe it, when you need to refer to the record again it will be easier to refer to the transcription.
- The most beneficial reason for transcribing documents is that if you take the time to scrutinize each word you will understand the document better. It brings nuances to the transcriber's attention. You will likely find details that you would have otherwise missed if you were simply reading the original.

Experienced genealogists usually transcribe records because the transcription acts as a back-up. It's easier to insert text from a transcription or abstract into timelines and reports. You may find yourself looking up meanings of strange words, and those words often lead to research that will break down brick walls.

Transcriptions focus on what the record *says*, not what it *means*. Interpretation of the record comes later.

Some guidelines for dealing with strange or hard-to-read words include the following:

- Don't use "[sic]" unless necessary for understanding. Readers expect some misspellings and peculiarities in the original record.
- Clearly distinguish between the actual document and the transcribers comments by putting all comments in square brackets, i.e., "[Washington County?]"
- Use "[illegible]," "[torn]," etc. for missing or illegible parts.
- If a word seems illegible, spend time studying it. You may be able to decipher it by looking at other letters. Look at other records written by the same scribe. Those illegible words can break down brick walls when they are understood.
- If a missing part is known, it can be added in brackets, e.g., "my son Alex[and]er."
- Be judicious when adding punctuation and always place any added punctuation in square brackets. Otherwise, you may be altering the meaning. For example, in a list of names is it "Mary Susan" or "Mary[,] Susan"?
- If a record is in a foreign language, the transcription remains in that language.

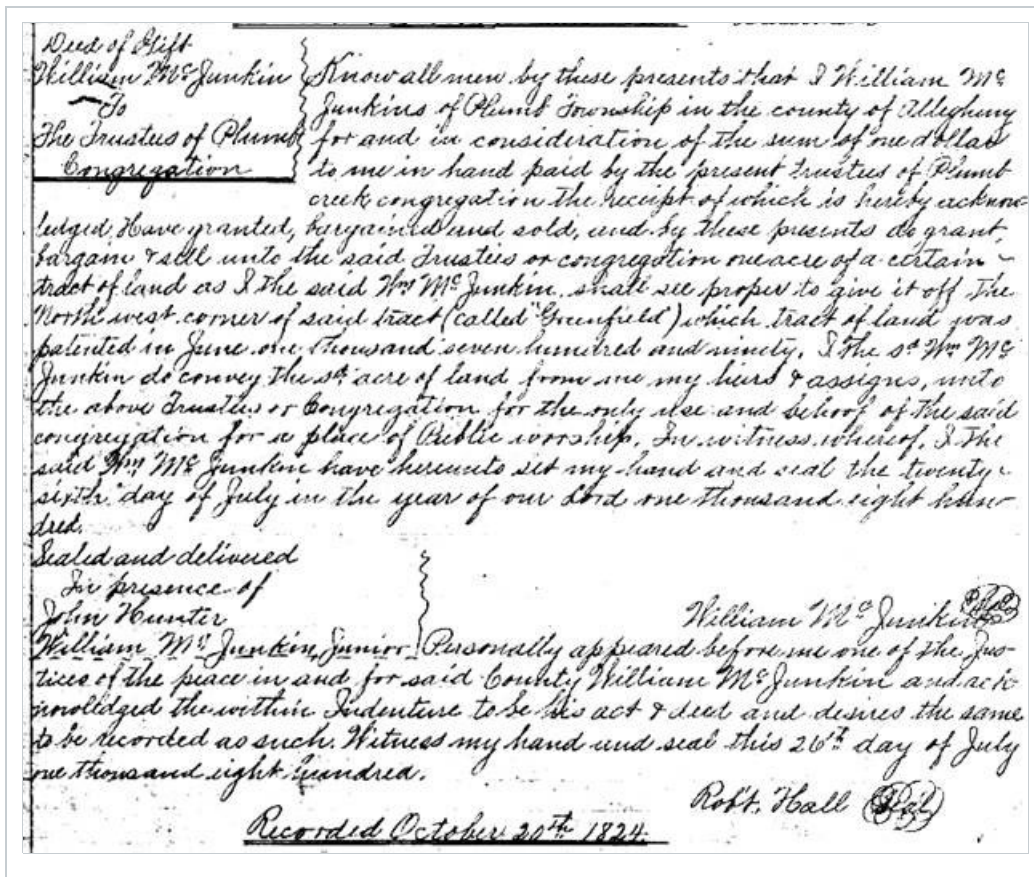
Any time you add something that is not there, or you cannot read, you put it in square brackets. For example, in a will, you will frequently see the phrase "of sound mind and body". If the last three letters of the word "body" were obscured by an ink blot and you could not read it, you might take an educated guess. It would be acceptable to write any of these:

- of sound mind and b[ody?]
- of sound mind and [illegible]
- of sound mind and b[inkblot covering letters]

What wouldn't be acceptable is to write "of sound mind and body" because we only transcribe what we can see.

## Example: Transcription of an Original Document

Now that you have read about transcriptions, try your hand at the following document before answering the self-check activity. You may copy the document to enlarge it, but do not post it in a public area.



Read through the record. Do you see any words that might need to be defined?

Notice the phrase "in consideration" in the third line. It means payment.

The "sd" is an abbreviation for "said." That last letter, the "d" is written above the line, and that's how it needs to be transcribed.

The squiggly lines after McJunkin and Hall show where the seal was placed in the original document. If you look closely, you can see the word "Seal" in the squiggle after Hall.

The "c" in the McJunkin surname is both written above the line, and it has an underscore under it. This was a typical way of handling the "Mc" in a surname. When transcribing, the Mc needs to be written exactly as shown in the original record.

A genealogical citation would look like this:

Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Deed Book 31: 317, William McJunkin to The Trustees of Plumb Congregation, deed of gift, 20 October 1824; Recorder of Deeds, Pittsburgh; FHL DGS 7857999, img 787.

The basic items in a header would include what type of record it is, parties for the transaction/record, location/repository, and relevant dates. You also might include who transcribed it and when. A header for your transcription would look like this:

William McJunkin to The Trustees of Plumb Congregation, Deed of Gift  
 Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Recorder of Deeds  
 Deed Book 31, page 317  
 Written 26 July 1800; recorded 20 October 1824  
 Transcribed by Jane Doe on 1 September 2020

Here's the complete transcription.

William McJunkin to The Trustees of Plumb Congregation, Deed of Gift  
Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Recorder of Deeds  
Deed Book 31, page 317  
Written 26 July 1800; recorded 20 October 1824  
Transcribed by Jane Doe on 1 September 2020

"Deed of Gift

William McJunkin

To

The Trustees of Plumb  
Congregation

Know all men by these presents that I William McJunkin of Plumb Township in the county of Allegheny for and in consideration of the sum of one dollar to me in hand paid by the present trustees of Plumb creek congregation the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, Have granted, bargained and sold, and by these presents do grant, bargain & sell unto the said Trustees or congregation one acre of a certain tract of land as I the said W<sup>m</sup> McJunkin. shall see proper to give it off The North west corner of said tract (called "Greenfield") which tract of land was patented in June one thousand seven hundred and ninety. I the s<sup>d</sup> W<sup>m</sup> McJunkin do convey the s<sup>d</sup> acre of land from me my heirs & assigns, unto the above Trustees or Congregation for the only use and behoof of the said congregation for a place of Public worship. In witness whereof, I The said W<sup>m</sup> McJunkin have hereunto set my hand and seal the twenty-sixth day of July in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred.

	}	William McJunkin {Seal}
Sealed and delivered	}	
In presence of	}	
John Hunter	}	
William McJunkin, Junior		

Personally appeared before me one of the Justices of the peace in and for said County William McJunkin and acknowledged the within Indenture to be his act & deed and desires the same to be recorded as such. Witness my hand and seal this 26<sup>th</sup> day of July one thousand eight hundred.

Rob't. Hall {Seal}

Recorded October 20<sup>th</sup> 1824."

[line breaks preserved, other formatting not preserved, but does not obscure meaning]

Self-check Activity: Transcription

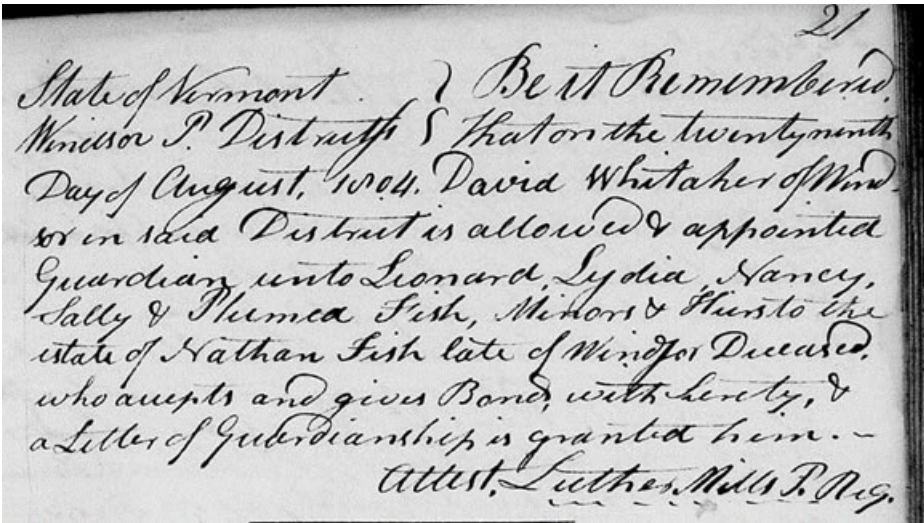
The following item from the Windsor Probate District in Windsor County, Vermont, is used for this example. Transcribe it and then check your transcription against the answer.

Use good judgment about including the same page layout and line lengths that appear in the record. With this image, you can either use the same line length or type until you reach the end of the page width.

Test Yourself

The following image comes from Windsor County, Vermont, Guardians Records, 1804-1842, Vol. 2, p. 21; FHL DGS 008203011, img 20. It was recorded 29 Aug 1804.

Use that information to create a header like the one in the first example.



After you create your transcription, click here to see the answer.

[Click to download the completed transcription as a Word document.](#)

Windsor County, Vermont, Guardians Records  
Vol. 2: 21  
FHL DGS 008203011, img 20  
29 Aug 1804

Transcription  
"

21

State of Vermont}  
Windsor P. District}

Be it Remembered.

That on the twentyninth Day of August, 1804, David Whitaker of Wind-

sor in said District is allowed & appointed

Guardian unto Leonard, Lydia, Nancy,

Sally & Plumea Fish, Minors & Heirs to the

estate of Nathan Fish late of Windsor Deceased,

who accepts and gives Bond, with Surety, &

a Letter of Guardianship is granted him. ~

Attest. Luther Mills P. Reg."

For a visual explanation of how to create a transcript, see this video:





▶ 🔊 0:00 / 4:34

AD



Hi, I'm Shannon Green. Now that you've read about transcriptions in the course material, let's take a look at an original document that was transcribed. This is a photograph of a probate packet found in the Connecticut State archives. This particular probate packet was microfilmed, so the only place you can access these records is in Hartford, Connecticut.

When you open up this packet, there is a single document inside. This is James Greene's original will, which he wrote in 1711. This is what it looks like when you unfold it. When you do your transcription, you will want to transcribe this page as well as the will.

This is what the original will look like. I took photographs and then transcribed the record when I got back to my desk at 11:00. The format for transcription is to have a header, a full reference note citation.

I chose to put my citation below the header. Many people put the citation as a footnote. Then you open and close the quotation marks here and here.

Now let's look at a few common issues and how to transcribe them properly. First, I know you cannot read what is on the screen, so I will keep the line breaks in my transcription the same as in the original. I highly recommend you do this, as it will make it easier to read the transcription for accuracy.

The transcription should reflect capitalization that was used in the original, regardless of modern grammar rules. For example, the words Real and Personal Estate in the will. They are also capitalized in the transcription.

Similarly, the punctuation should remain the same. In this case, the testator put a comma after dollar, and a period after dollar. The transcription is an exact copy of the original, so we keep the punctuation, the same.

Spelling should also remain the same. The original record spells dwelling with one l, so does the transcription. There are no differences in meaning if you change the spelling, punctuation, or capitalization that you don't realize.

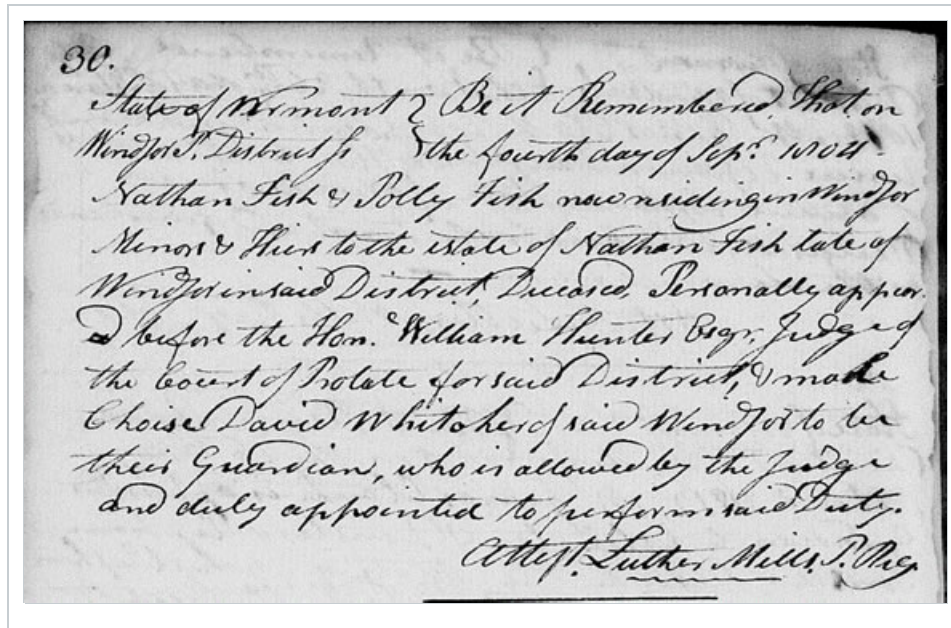


## Historical Context to Evaluate Evidence

A guardianship for Nathan Fish and Polly Fish was also filed in Windsor. While the guardianship for Leonard, Lydia, Nancy, Sally, and Plumea Fish was granted on 29 August 1804, the guardianship for Nathan and Polly Fish was granted on 4 September 1804.

### Source

Windsor County, Vermont. Guardian Records, vol. 2:30; Guardianship of Nathan Fish & Polly Fish; FHL DGS 008203011, img 25.



Remember how we said the interpretation of the document came later? Let's use historical context to understand what these documents mean. The sources we reviewed tell us that Nathan Fish was deceased and he had children.

David Whitaker was named guardian of all of the Fish children, but Nathan and Polly "make choice" of Whitaker. What is going on? We need to look up contemporary definitions of some words. At this point, read Judy G. Russell's blog, "[Guardians for the kids.](#)"

We need to look up the term, "minors and heirs to his estate." The "make choice" phrase could be a key for understanding what was going on.

Understanding documents in the context of their time and place is necessary for extracting as much information as possible, for correctly interpreting that information, and for gaining knowledge about people and their interactions. Laws, customs, religious practices, and terminology morphed and varied. For example:

- Laws determine how much or how little control a married woman has over property, and what she herself could pass on to her heirs. This affects when and how those properties appear in deeds, and what relationships might be stated or implied about the people named in deeds.
- Laws in effect in 1804 determined what should happen to a child after their father died.

The guardianship is from Vermont, and we need to understand what laws applied. Your research interests may not be in Vermont records, but the principle of learning about the laws in place is universal and often provides the key to solving kinship puzzles. The "Law & Genealogy" section on Cyndi's List includes links to current state statutes for each state. There are also links to historical statutes (laws) for some states and the original thirteen colonies. For future use, see *Cyndi's List*: [Law & Genealogy](#) ⇒ [Locality Specific: United States](#).

We know that these children are minors, under the age of 21. We don't know what type of guardianship has been granted, but it's usually guardianship of the child's property.

Let's go back to the guardianship petition for Nathan and Polly Fish. When their father made his will in August of 1804, he named Nathan and Polly as his oldest son and oldest daughter. In September of 1804, they chose who would be their guardian. That phrase tells something about their ages. They were over fourteen but under twenty-one years old.

Handwriting styles have gained and lost popularity. Some need a little reading practice to become familiar, but others are more difficult and require careful study. One simple example: in documents from the 1800s, letters that look to the modern eye as "ff" or "fs" are an old style for "ss." Upon closer inspection, you will note that the tails of the letters go to the left and not the right as a modern "f" does. Other writing conventions different from our own include symbols indicating that a letter should be repeated; a hyphen that resembles our modern equal sign (=); a symbol that may look like a plus sign (+) but has extra squiggles and means "and;" and the last word at the bottom of a page being set off and repeated at the top of the next page. In the guardianship petition, did you notice the double "ss" after the word "District?" When you see "strange" items like this, do a Google search to learn the meaning. One definition is given at Massachusetts Law Updates: ["What does ss. mean?"](#)

## Abstracts

Powell defines an abstract as, "a summary of a document's essential details, including names, dates, places, and events, in the same order that they appear in the original record." Abstracts are frequently created from transcriptions. Let's say you have a transcription of a deed. Most deeds have a lot of boilerplate language. This is language that is typically consistent from deed to deed. The transcription would include all of this boilerplate language, but if you wanted a summary of the key details of the deed, you might create an abstract of the deed. This shortens the document information by recording the pertinent information. See *Genealogy Standards*, Standards #30 and #32. Use abstracts for:

- A series of records of the same type for comparative study
- Preliminary or overview of research notes.
- A way to reference the contents of a document even more quickly than in a transcription.

Some guidelines for abstracts:

- As with transcriptions, add punctuation with extreme care lest its presence change the record's meaning. For example, "My daughters Sally, Mary Francis, and Emily," vs. "My daughters Sally, Mary, Francis, and Emily."
- If there is data normal to the record type but absent in this item you should note it, e.g., "[surname not given]".
- If you are unsure what is boilerplate, check the same record type created in the same place and time. For example, if you are looking at an 1813 deed, read several deeds before and after your deed of interest. This will give you an idea of what the boilerplate language is.
- Be careful not to delete too much. For example, in many wills you will see the phrase, "of sound mind and body." This might seem like boilerplate language, but when people contest wills it is frequently based on the fact that they do not think the testator was "of sound mind and body."

## Extracts

People sometimes confuse abstracts and extracts. An extract, also called a quotation, is simply that—a word for word transcription of a part of a record. See *Genealogy Standards*, Standards #31 and #32. Extracts are frequently used within abstracts or when writing reports.

For example, if you are writing a report and describing what John Doe left his daughter Jane, you might extract that part of the will of John Doe that you had transcribed. The full transcription and image of the original will would likely be attachments to your report, but you could copy and paste the part of that transcription that just dealt with what he left Jane into the body of your report in quotation marks. That would be an extract or quote.

Another common use of extracts is when you are abstracting deeds. You might transcribe the deed first. Then, when you are abstracting the deed, it is common practice to extract or quote the description of the actual parcel of land. This eliminates the risk of errors in misinterpreting the land description.

## Summaries

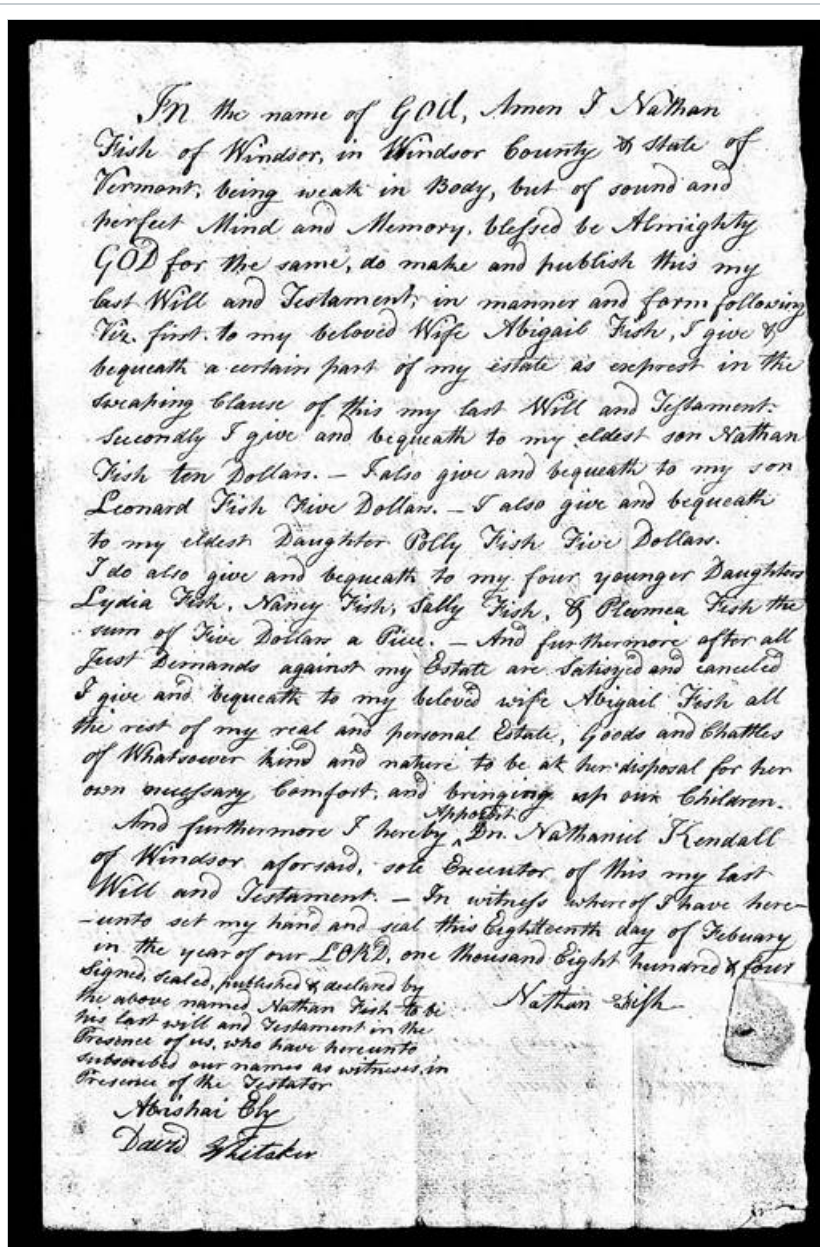
Use summaries for comparing large numbers of records of the same type. See *Genealogy Standards*, Standard #33. It states that summaries follow the rules of abstracting, except in the case of lengthy lists such as estate inventories or a deed description. These may be summarized as

"itemized household goods" or "metes and bounds description included." However, when considering whether to summarize rather than give full legal descriptions, consider that brick wall problems can often be solved from clues inherent in these details.

Can you think of examples in your own research where you might want to use summaries? Or think about when it might be helpful to consult summaries in your own research.

## Example: Transcription & Abstract of an Original Document

Let's try to pull it all together. Below you will find an image of the will of Nathan Fish.



HeritageQuest (<https://search.ancestryheritagequest.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=9084> : accessed 24 Feb 2020) > "Vermont, Wills and Probate Records, 1749-1999," > Probate Files: Fay, S-Fisher, H > img 1184, Nathan Fish will, 1804.

This will contains a lot of information. As with all old records, it's a little hard to read. The first step would be to transcribe the document. We have transcribed the will for you below.

## Nathan Fish Will

Windsor County, Vermont

Probate Files Fay, S–Fisher, H.

written 18 Feb 1804

Transcription

[Note: Line breaks in the original were not observed to save space.]

"In the name of God, Amen I Nathan Fish of Windsor, in Windsor County & State of Vermont, being weak in Body, but of sound and perfect Mind and Memory, blessed be Almighty GOD for the same, do make and publish this my last Will and Testament, in manner and form following Viz. first, to my beloved Wife Abigail Fish, I give & bequeath a certain part of my estate as eseprest in the sweaping Clause of this my last Will and Testament.

Secondly I give and bequeath to my eldest son Nathan Fish ten Dollars. — I also give and bequeath to my son Leonard Fish Five Dollars. — I also give and bequeath to my eldest Daughter Polly Fish Five Dollars. I do also give and bequeath to my four younger Daughters Lydia Fish, Nancy Fish, Sally Fish, & Plumea Fish the sum of Five Dollars a Piece. — And furthermore after all Just Demands against my Estate are Satisyed and canceled I give and bequeath to my beloved wife Abigail Fish all the rest of my real and personal Estate, Goods and Chattles of Whatsover kind and nature to be at her disposal for her own necessary Comfort, and bringing up our Children.

And furthermore I hereby <sup>^</sup>appoint Dr. Nathaniel Kendall of Windsor aforsaid, sole Executor of this my Last Will and Testament. – In witness whereof I have here-unto set my hand and seal this Eighteenth day of February in the year of our LORD, one thousand Eight hundred & four.

Signed, Sealed, published & delivered by the above named Nathan Fish to be his last will and Testament in the Presence of us, who have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses, in Presence of the Testator

Nathan Fish [Appears to be a fingerprint]

Abishai Ely

David Whitaker"

[Appears to be original signatures for Nathan Fish and two witnesses.]



### Self-check Activity: Abstracts

Now that the transcription is complete, you can create an abstract. This abstract has been started for you. Think about whether or not you would want to extract or quote sections of the will and include them in your abstract.

#### Will Abstract

Fill in the parts that remain and then check the answer sheet. Download [a Word version](#).

Nathan Fish's Will from Nathan Fish's Estate, Aug 29, 1804

Abstract

Will of Nathan Fish of Windsor, Windsor County, Vermont

To my wife, Abigail Fish, I give a certain part of my estate as expressed below.

To my oldest son, Nathan Fish,

To my son, Leonard Fish,

To my eldest daughter, Polly Fish,

To my four younger daughters, Lydia Fish, Nancy Fish, Sally Fish,

After all just demands against my estate are satisfied and canceled,

I appoint

Signed 18 February 1804.

Witnesses: Abishai Ely and David Whitaker

Source: *HeritageQuest* (<https://search.ancestryheritagequest.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=9084> : accessed 24 Feb 2020) >

"Vermont, Wills and Probate Records, 1749-1999," > Probate Files: Fay, S–Fisher, H > img 1184, Nathan Fish will, 1804.

Download [the completed Will Abstract](#)

Nathan Fish's Will

Abstract

Will of Nathan Fish of Windsor, Windsor County, Vermont

To my wife, Abigail Fish, I give a certain part of my estate as expressed below.

To my oldest son, Nathan Fish, **I give ten dollars.**

To my son, Leonard Fish, **I give Five dollars.**

To my eldest daughter, Polly Fish, **I give Five dollars.**

To my four younger daughters, Lydia Fish, Nancy Fish, Sally Fish, & Plumea Fish, **I give Five dollars a piece.**

After all just demands against my estate are satisfied and canceled, **I give to my wife Abigail Fish all the rest of my real and personal estate. This is to be used for her comfort and bringing up our children.**

I appoint **Dr. Nathaniel Kendall of Windsor the executor of my will.**

Signed 18 February 1804.

Witnesses: Abishai Ely and David Whitaker

Source: *HeritageQuest* (<https://search.ancestryheritagequest.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=9084> : accessed 24 Feb 2020) >

"Vermont, Wills and Probate Records, 1749-1999," > Probate Files: Fay, S–Fisher, H > img 1184, Nathan Fish will, 1804.

## Discussion 7: Transcripts & Standards

Prepare your post then head over to the discussion board to share with your classmates.

### Discussion 7: Transcripts & Standards

Review this [original document](#) and [associated transcription](#). Does the transcription meet Standards #23, #25, #26, and #29?

Please identify **only one** thing that does not comply with the standards. Why doesn't it comply with standards? What would you do differently with respect to this **one thing** if you were to transcribe the document?

## Summary of Lesson 2



transcribed a document in the self-check activity. The video showed common transcription issues. You learned to find additional resources to help you understand and interpret what that transcription meant.

You also learned about abstracts, extracts, and summaries and when you might use these methods. There was an example of an original will, a transcription of that will, and then you completed a self-check activity to abstract the will. You compared a transcribed document to the *Genealogy Standards* in the discussion board.

The best way to learn about transcribing and abstracting is to practice. When you have time, pull out a few original documents from your research and practice transcribing and extracting them.

For more information, see these sources:

- Powell, Kimberly. [“Abstracting & Transcribing Genealogical Documents Transcription Rules & Techniques.”](#) *ThoughtCo*.
- Sperry, Kip. [“Guidelines for Reading Old Documents: Making Sense of Scribbles.”](#) *Genealogy.com*.
- Sperry, Kip. *Reading Early American Handwriting*. 2008.
- [“Transcription Tips.”](#) *National Archives*.
- [“What is an Abstract and Why Do You Need to Use Them in Genealogy Research?”](#) *AncestralFindings.com*
- [“Transcribing, Abstracting, Extracting & Indexing.”](#) *Cyndi’s List*

## Lesson 3: Timelines

### Overview and Objectives

Timelines are a note form that allows us to organize our research. Timelines are flexible. You can use them anytime you have a variety of records and arrange the grid to suit your purposes.

#### Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Understand the value of a timeline in the research process
- Create a timeline from an assortment of provided records

#### Reading Assignments

- BCG. *Genealogy Standards*. 2nd ed.
  - Standards #19, 25-27
- Sullivan, Amanda. [“This Straightforward Technique Will Help You Uncover Missed Facts About Your Ancestors.”](#) *Family History Daily*.
- Hatton, Stephen B. [“A Genealogical Timeline as a Research Tool.”](#) Originally published in *NGS Magazine*.

Read the following **after** completing “Self-check Activity: Timelines.”

- Powell. *The Everything Guide to Online Genealogy*. 3rd ed.
  - “Unearth Wills and Estate Records,” pp. 122–125
  - “Chase Down Court Records,” pp. 125–127
  - “Land and Property Records,” pp. 134–136

#### Optional timeline creation software and guides

Timelines can be created on paper and with computer software. If you have never created a table,

there are YouTube videos with step-by-step instructions. Do a Google search for “YouTube” and “create a timeline.”

Cyndi Ingle has a section in her Cyndi’s List of Genealogy Sites on the Internet about [how to use Evernote](#) to create a timeline.

How Timelines Organize Records

**Timelines** fit into the Genealogical Proof Standard (GPS). A simplified version of the GPS is shown here.

1. Reasonably exhaustive research
2. Source citations
3. Analysis of findings
4. Resolution of conflicts
5. Write up the findings

Timelines allow you to:

- Identify holes in the research, [GPS, step 1],
- Create a citation that helps clarify whether you should look for a better source, [GPS, step 2],
- Analyze and correlate information, [GPS step 3],
- Visibly see where there may be a conflict, [GPS step 4], and
- Develop the framework for a written narrative [GPS step 5].

You can create a timeline anytime you have a variety of records and you can arrange the grid to suit your purposes. Speaking of purposes, there needs to be a purpose to the timeline. For instance, you can use a timeline to chronologically organize events. You can use a timeline to compare and contrast information in censuses. You can use a timeline to help you clarify the research needed to answer a research question. Various examples are given in this module.

cpe\_gen\_prin\_20\_fa2\_sgreen\_timelines video cannot be displayed here



The easiest way to learn how to create a timeline is to start with vital dates that you can prove. The following illustrates a simple timeline that shows vital events for a woman named Tzilla Titus. Citations aren't given at this point because it's the first attempt at organizing with a timeline. As a general rule, we should always include source citations for statements of fact that are not common knowledge. This often means we need to go back and find the source again.

This timeline was created in a Word table, it could have been created in a spreadsheet, or in an Evernote chart.

### Tzilla (Titus) Miller timeline

Date	What and where
7 Sep 1888	Tzilla Titus was born, Charlotte, Eaton County, Michigan.
3 Jan 1889	William S. Titus, Jr., Tzilla's father, and W. H. Dudley, her grandfather, signed an agreement to be co-partners for two years in a clothing store in Saranac, Michigan. W. H. Dudley put up \$3768.84.
31 Jul 1889	Tzilla's birth recorded in Ionia County, Michigan. (Saranac is the county seat.)
5 May 1897	Brother Ben Edward Titus born, Charlotte.
12 Jun 1898	Tzilla baptized at First Congregational Church, Charlotte, Michigan.
11 Oct 1899	Brother Neil Niesz Titus born, Charlotte.
1 Jun 1900	Tzilla Titus enumerated in the household of her parents, William and S. Josephine Titus, Charlotte, Michigan.
11 Dec 1900	Sister Florence Elizabeth Titus born, Charlotte.
19 Jun 1903	Tzilla graduated from Charlotte Grammar School.
1 Mar 1904	Tzilla's grandfather, William H. Dudley, died, Charlotte.
9 Jul 1904	Sister Maurene Bess Titus born, Charlotte.
31 Dec 1909	Tzilla and Frank Miller wed, Charlotte.
1910	Tzilla's parents and siblings moved to Portland, Oregon.
28 May 1910	Daughter Llololla Tzilla Miller born, Charlotte.
22 Dec 1911	Son Grayland Dudley Miller born, Charlotte.
30 May 1914	Daughter Josephine Arline Miller born, Charlotte.
30 June 1914	Daughter Josephine Miller died, Charlotte.
26 Sep 1918	Brother Neil Niesz Titus died, Brooklyn Navy Yard.
1 Jun 1920	Tzilla and family enumerated in Portland, Oregon, census.

### Timelines Help Compare and Contrast Information

The following timeline example traces information across censuses for John Eppinger and his family of Wasco County and Baker County.

Oregon, in 1860, 1870, and 1880. The citations are provided for the sources at the end of the table. They could also be attached as footnotes.

Could there be more information on the census pages? Possibly. You wouldn't know unless you reviewed all the census columns. Have you ever questioned what the census columns really mean? The IPUMS USA website has the answers.

- Go to the website, [IPUMS USA](https://www.ipums.org/).
- In the left column, under "Documentation" click on "User Guide."
- Scroll down until you see "Enumeration Forms and Instruction" and click on it.
- Click on "1860 Enumerator Instructions."
- Scroll down to "Special Instructions, Schedule No. 1. – Free Inhabitants." This is the population schedule we use most commonly.
- Look at the instructions for "3. Individual Names." Even though relationships are not stated in the 1860 census, the instructions give you information on the order in which the household members were supposed to be listed.
- Let's say you want to know about the column for property in the 1860 census. Scroll down to "12. Value of Real Estate." Here you will find what the census enumerator was supposed to do.
- There's a similar instruction for "13. Value of Personal Estate."

Who	1860 Wasco County, Oregon, census <sup>1</sup>	1870 Baker County, Oregon, census <sup>2</sup>	1880 Baker County, Oregon, census <sup>3</sup>
<b>John Eppinger</b>	John Eppinger, age 26, butcher, \$500 worth of personal estate, born Wirtemberg, married within the year	John Eppinger, age 34, m, w, butcher, \$400 worth of real estate, \$100 worth of personal estate, born Wertenberg, father and mother of foreign birth, male citizen of the U.S.	In 1880, No John Eppinger with the family. No John Eppinger in <i>Ancestry's</i> census index.
<b>Charlotte Eppinger</b>	Charlotte, age 24, born Saxony, married within the year	Charlotte, 32, f, w, keeping house, born Saxe Weimar, parents of foreign birth	Charlotte, w, f, 44, mother, widowed, keeps house, born Saxony, parents born Saxony
		Paulina, 9, f, w, at home, born Oregon, attended school within the year, parents of foreign birth	In 1880, no Paulina with the family. Since she would have been around 19-years-old, she may have married. To do: research Baker County marriage records.
		Clara, 5, f, w, born Oregon, at home, parents of foreign birth	Clara, f, w, 15, dau, attended school w/in the year, born Oregon, father born Wertemberg, mother born Saxony
		Frederick, 3, m, w, born Oregon, at home, parents of foreign birth	Fred, m, w, 13, son, attends horses, attended school within the year, born Oregon, father born Wertemberg, mother born Saxony

<sup>1</sup>1860 U.S. census, Wasco County, Oregon, population schedule, Dalles Pct, page 205 (penned), dwelling 1972, family 1652; digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 25 June 2017), citing NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 1056.

<sup>2</sup>1870 U.S. census, Baker County, Oregon, population schedule, Baker City, page 2 (penned), dwelling 17, family 17, John Eppinger; digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 4 May 2017), citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 128.

<sup>3</sup>1880 U.S. census, Baker County, Oregon, population schedule, Baker City Oregon, ED 1, page 2, dwelling 18, family 18, Charlotte Eppinger; digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 7 October 2017), citing NARA microfilm publication T9, roll 1080.

### Discussion 8: Questions You Develop After Reading the John Eppinger Family Census Timeline

After you develop your questions and answers, go to the discussion board and share them with your fellow students.

#### Discussion 8: Questions You Develop After Reading the John Eppinger Family Census Timeline

When you organize your data into a timeline, you might make observations or see new possible research avenues. Read over the Eppinger census timeline.

Pick **one** of the following questions and post your response:

1. Does it appear that the named subjects are the same throughout the census years? How can you tell?
2. Is the birth information consistent? If not, why do you think that is the case?
3. Does anyone appear or disappear from the family group? What reasons can you think would account for this? Where would you go to do further research to see if your theory is correct?
4. Does the census provide information on home ownership? What does that mean for your research?
5. Is there other data that might suggest research in other records? If so, what records would you search?
6. What might you do next if this was your research project?

**These are thought questions only, please do not do any research.**

### Timelines Help Organize Events Sequentially

The following timeline is a table created to track John Eppinger's migration and associates. The citations will be useful when it comes time to create a report.

John Eppinger's naturalization declaration is cited. Do you know enough about the naturalization process to understand what this record might be and what you might find on the record?

Marian L. Smith has written numerous easy-to-read articles about naturalization. Her "[History of the INS](#)" generally explains naturalization. She also wrote an informative article about [women and naturalization](#). It's a quick read. If you have a woman ancestor who was foreign born, it's a real eye-opener to the laws your ancestress lived under.

1834–1836	Based upon the 1860 Wasco County, Oregon, census <sup>1</sup> and the 1870 Linn County, Oregon, census, <sup>2</sup> John Eppinger was born in Wuerttemberg between 1834 and 1836.
1858	Charlotte Schweiker immigrated to Oregon in 1858. There was no railroad to Portland in 1858. <sup>3</sup> People either travelled by wagon train with the starting place being Missouri, or they arrived by ship travelling "around the horn." Wagon trains left Missouri in the spring and arrived in Oregon in the fall.
1859	In 1859, Oregon became a state.

1859	John Eppinger married Charlotte Schweiker on 14 December 1859 in Portland. Charles Logus and Charles A. Burchardt were the witnesses. <sup>4</sup>
1859	In March 1859, John Eppinger was in the meat market business with Charles Albright in Oregon City, Oregon. <sup>5</sup>
1860	John and Charlotte Eppinger were residing in [The] Dalles, Oregon. John, age 26 and born in Wirtemberg [ <i>sic</i> ], was a butcher with \$500.00 worth of personal property. Charlotte, age 24, was born in Saxony. <sup>6</sup>
1862	John Eppinger made his declaration to become a citizen of the United States in Wasco County, Oregon, on 29 May 1862. <sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1860 U.S. census, Wasco County, Oregon, population schedule, Dalles Pct, page 205 (penned), dwelling 1972, family 1652; digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 25 June 2017), citing NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 1056.

<sup>2</sup> 1870 U.S. census, Baker County, Oregon, population schedule, Baker City, page 2 (penned), dwelling 17, family 17, John Eppinger; digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 4 May 2017), citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 128.

<sup>3</sup> "Portland's Railroad History," online, *Pacific Railroad Preservation Assoc.* (<http://www.sps700.org/portlandrailroadhistory.shtml> : accessed 12 June 2017).

<sup>4</sup> Multnomah County Marriages, Vol. 1, page 63; original books located at Genealogical Forum of Oregon Library, Portland.

<sup>5</sup> *The Oregon Argus*, 2 April 1859, p. 3, col. 3; digital image, *The Historical Oregonian, 1861–1987* (access through Multnomah County Library : accessed 13 June 2017).

<sup>6</sup> 1860 U.S. census, Wasco County, Oregon, population schedule, Dalles Pct., p. 592, dwelling 1942, family 1652, John Eppinger; digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 13 July 2017), citing NARA M653, roll 1056.

<sup>7</sup> John Eppinger Naturalization Declaration, #1863, Wasco County, Oregon; original in possession of Oregon State Archives, Salem, Oregon.

## Self-check Activity: Timelines

### Nathan Fish Case

Create a timeline, using [this Word document template](#) and place information from the following documents into the timeline:

[Nathan Fish Will Transcript](#)

[Nathan Fish Administration](#)

[Fish Deed One](#)

[Fish Deed Two](#)

You can use the following chart to begin the task.

Date	Who	Where	Source
18 Feb 1804	Nathan Fish will written	Windsor, Windsor County, Vt.	<i>HeritageQuest</i> ( <a href="https://search.ancestryheritagequest.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=9084">https://search.ancestryheritagequest.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=9084</a> : accessed 24 Feb 2020) > "Vermont, Wills and Probate Records, 1749-1999," > Probate Files: Fay, S–Fisher, H > img 1184, Nathan Fish will, 1804.
29 Aug 1804	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letters of administration granted to Nathaniel Kendall</li> </ul>	Windsor, Windsor County, Vt.	Windsor County, Vermont, Probate Court (Windsor District), "Card index, 1787–1962, A–L," <i>FamilySearch</i> ( <a href="https://www.familysearch.org/">https://www.familysearch.org/</a> : accessed 27 Feb 2020) entry for Nathan Fish; FHL DGS 7714434, img 3664.

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appointment of appraisers</li><li>• Appointment of commissioners</li></ul> |  |
|--|--|--|

[Download the completed Timeline as a Word document.](#)

As you work through the three supplied items, it becomes clear that there are missing records that could be added to the timeline. It also becomes clear that research into the types of records in the timeline is needed. It's time to read the following passages in the *Everything Guide to Online Genealogy*

- "Unearth Wills and Estate Records," pp. 122–125
- "Chase Down Court Records," pp. 125–127
- "Land and Property Records," pp. 134–136

## Extending the Value of Your Timelines

### Add historic factors to your timeline

If your people were farmers, add information about agriculture. Add historical timelines for the locale where they lived. Did a war occur? Add that to the timeline.

The following online links provide information that can be added to timelines.

#### Economic timelines

Wikipedia The Free Encyclopedia, "[List of recessions in the United States](#)," 2017.

#### Occupational timelines

United States Department of Agriculture. "[Agricultural History](#)," 2017.

Do a Google search for "the history of [name of occupation]"

#### Military timelines

Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. "[Timeline of United States military operations](#)," 2017.

#### More

Cyndi's List has a "[Timelines](#)" category with many more resources.

## Summary of Lesson 3

In this lesson you reviewed different types of timelines. You understand how using timelines fits into the Genealogical Proof Standard as well as how these tools can help you further your research.

In the discussion, you used a timeline to generate additional avenues for further research. In the self-check activity, you created your own timeline using original and derivative sources.

In addition to learning the value of timelines, you learned how to find enumerator instructions for federal censuses. You learned about the history of the U.S. naturalization process as well as mining probate, land, and court records.

Use the tools learned in this lesson to re-examine your research on individuals in your family tree. What holes did you note in your research?

What new questions did you generate? The new analysis might help you break through those brick walls!

**Boston University** Metropolitan College