# Genealogical Proof & Source Citations

How do I prove my genealogy? How do I write a source citation that makes sense?

Ancestry Detectives Pam Hutchinson 8 Nov 2022

# This is a refresher

### About this presentation

 Board for Certification of Genealogists provides standards for documentation, research, and writing for professional genealogists

 The standards provide a framework to guide our research and how we present it

 Purpose of this presentation: Review the standards to help you:

- Create a **fact-based** genealogy with

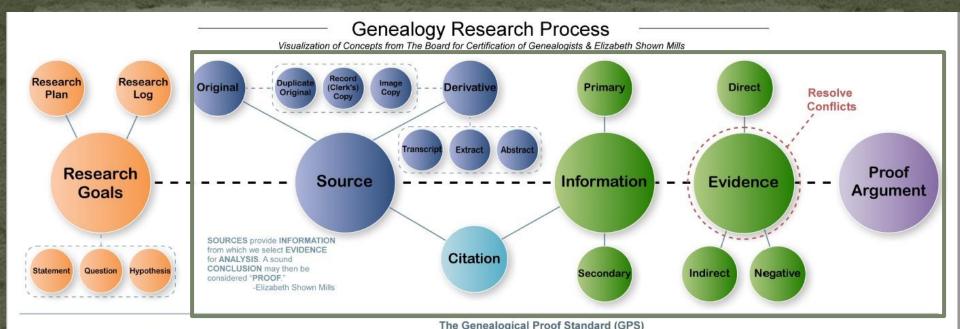
- Adequate, valid **documentation**, and then be able to

**Retrieve** the documentation for another look, and/or direct other researchers to that documentation

# Genealogical Proof Standard (GPS)<sup>1</sup>

 Research that is reasonably exhaustive (thorough)
 Cite sources, completely and accurately (provide a roadmap to those sources)
 Analyze and correlate what you found (Is it sufficient to prove a point. Is it consistent or are there conflicts?)
 Resolve conflicting evidence (explain)
 Summarize conclusions as needed

<sup>1</sup> Board for Certification of Genealogists, "Ethics and Standards", (accessed 21 Oct 2022)



#### Define **Research Goals**

We identify our objectives:

- statement to prove
- · question to answer
- hypothesis to test

#### A Research Plan

identifies where we will search. A Research Log keeps us focused on what we are trying to discover and tracks the progress of our investigation.

#### Search **Reliable Sources**

We conduct a reasonably exhaustive search in reliable sources for all information that is or may be pertinent to the identity, relationship, event, or situation in question.

As part of data collection we use: Images:

Photocopy, digital image, etc. Handwritten or typed copies: Transcript - full, exact copy Extract - partial, exact copy Abstract - condensed version with all important details

Source provenance is the tracking of each representation of a source back to the original

We collect and include in our compilation a complete, accurate citation to the source or sources of each item of information we use

Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace by Elizabeth Shown Mills.

Citing sources gives credibility to our research, helps us have confidence in the research of

#### Analyze Sources, Information & Evidence

We analyze and correlate the collected information to assess its quality as evidence.

Source - an artifact, document, book, person, etc. Original - first oral or recorded form Derivative - from that already written or spoken

Derivatives that might be treated as Originals: Duplicate Original - made at same time as original Image Copy - film, photo, digital copy of original Record (Clerk's) Copy - usually entered in a register

Information - data that makes up a source Primary - firsthand (participant, eyewitness) Secondary - secondhand (non-participant)

Evidence - our interpretation of relevant information Direct - answers the research question by itself Indirect - relevant, but can't stand alone Negative - inference drawn from absence of information that should exist in a record but is missing Resolve Conflicts

We resolve any conflicts caused by items of evidence that contradict each other or are contrary to a proposed (hypothetical) solution to the question.

All conflicts must be resolved.

Although not always the case, usually

- · Original sources carry more weight than derivatives.
- Primary information carries more weight than secondary.
- · Indirect evidence can carry just as much or more weight than direct.

Even primary information from an original source can be wrong.

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#### http://www.jaunay.com/newsletter/images/GenealogyResearchMap.pdf via FamilySearch.org 5 Nov 2022

Conclude

We arrive at a soundly reasoned, coherently

In a proof argument you:

· Identify the known resources

source citations and analysis

· Present the evidence with

· Summarize the main points

and write your conclusion

There is no such thing as a final

disprove your current conclusion.

conclusion. New information

can support, question, or

· Discuss any conflicting

evidence

· Explain the problem

written conclusion.

Written Proof



#### The definitive guide is:

others, and aids during analysis.

#### Sources

Board for Certification of Genealogists. The BCG Genealogical Standards Manual. Orem, Utah: Ancestry Publishing, 2000. Mills, Elizabeth Shown. Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2007

Mills, Elizabeth Shown, Evidence Analysis; A Research Process Map, Washington, DC: Board for Certification of Genealogists, 2006. Mills, Elizabeth Shown. Evidence! Citation & Analysis for the Family Historian. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1997

### Evidence defined- noun

 the available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid.

Source: Oxford's English Dictionary, evidence, https://tinyurl.com/yek/hate, accessed 22 Oct 2022

• "A research question's tentative answer, which may be right or wrong, complete or incomplete..."

Source: Thomas W. Jones, *Mastering Genealogical Proof*, Arlington: National Genealogical Society, 2013), 134

• "information or assertions that are relevant to the problem" Source: Elizabeth Shown Mills. *Evidence Explained, Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace,* Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 2015, 822

# <u>1. GPS - Research</u> thoroughly

- Goal document key life events & relationships *"Reasonably exhaustive"*
  - What a reasonable researcher would search for
  - Not <u>all</u> available documentation

### Include:

- A variety of online resources beyond Ancestry.com
- Items that are available through subscription free trial
  Visit or contact local or state repositories

Tip - Develop a timeline of key life events & relationships

### 2. <u>GPS - Complete and accurate citations</u>

• Goal: provide a roadmap for the reader

### • Who? – author, creator

- What? title of the book, type of certificate, index title,
   When? the event, date of creation or publication, note if not published
- Where in? volume, page, entry number, image 10 of 50 on a microfilm, etc.
- Where? Co. courthouse, Ancestry.com, your file, etc.

Tip: For sites like Ancestry.com, consider adding the original repository information eg.:Who, what, when, pg, Ancestry.com; The National Archives, UK.....

### <u>**4. GPS - Resolve**</u> Conflicting Evidence

Goal: provide a reasonable explanation for the variations

Consider & compare the <u>quality</u> of the evidence - is one piece of evidence more likely to be correct?

Example – name variations: Vernice Minnis (1903) vs. Mildred Bernice Minnis on delayed birth certificate in 1959

Consider whether a more <u>limited answer</u> is best based on the evidence that aligns and is strongest? Eg:
 Birthplace - Mercer Co, PA vs. Greenville, Mercer, PA
 Birthdate - born abt. 1784-1786 vs. born 1784
 Name - Samuel Minnis vs. Samuel B. Minnis

### 5. GPS - Summarize Conclusions

Goal: Describe your process for analyzing the evidence so you can revisit it and/or inform others

Important with conflicting evidence or situations where clear evidence is missing

- summarize in a simple sentence & citations to publishing full proof summary or argument with citations

 Note: Conclusions may include avenues for further investigation and may change as new evidence is uncovered

### Save the summary:

- in your genealogy software
- attach to the person on Ancestry or MyHeritage
- include in the family genealogy you write

### <u>3. GPS - Analyze</u> the evidence

### To summarize:

"Sources give us information, from which we identify evidence.

### All undergo the evaluation process to produce proof."

Elizabeth Shown Mills, "QuickLesson 17: the Evidence Analysis Process Model."

Source  $\rightarrow$  Information  $\rightarrow$  Evidence

### 3. GPS - Analyze

Goal: Determine...

Can you count on the accuracy of the source?
Do you have corroborating evidence? (ideally at least two independent sources that agree)

Consider these questions:

What is the "container" of the information - Source
Who provided the Information and how close to the time of the event was the info provided?

• If using more than one source, how are they related?

• What Evidence does the information provide?

### ----- the Source

Consider: how likely is it that the record process has introduced errors into the source containing the information you are seeking? Is it:

### <u>Primary</u> –

- original- first "edition" of the item, or unaltered image

- derivative- e.g. transcription, index, or translation, of the original

### <u>Secondary</u> –

- authored- someone else took the info and put it into another format such as book, webpage, etc.

Source  $\rightarrow$  Information  $\rightarrow$  Evidence

What are some examples of authored sources that might be used for genealogy?

### ----- the Information

Consider who provided the information. Could the informant process have introduced errors?

- Primary (first-hand) is someone who was there at the time of the event?
- Secondary is it someone who heard it from someone else? *"Hearsay"*
- Undetermined is the source of the information unknown?

Was the document created close to time of event?

### -----the Evidence

- Direct source explicitly states the information sought
- Indirect supports the info sought, but doesn't clearly show it
- Negative (see next slide)
- Conflicting –various sources do not agree

Tips: 1.find sources that are independent of each other rather than one being authored or derived from another 2.Be aware there could be more than one person with same name

### <u>Evidence</u>, cont'd

Negative Findings – relevant record doesn't exist

Example - unable to find the death record in one county, but continued searching in surrounding counties may eventually be successful

Negative evidence – desired information is not in the relevant record

Example – parish registers with "legitimate" next to each entry. Elizabeth Shown Mills' ancestor's entry lacked that word.

Tips: 1. make a note negative findings, eg in research log 2. Create a citation for negative evidence – shows reasonably exhaustive research

### Even 1<sup>st</sup> hand information can be inaccurate – get an independent 2<sup>nd</sup> source to corroborate the evidence

Event	Sources	Independent??
Birth injury	Aunt who helped at birth, MD's medical file	
Occupation	City directory, Census, marriage record	
Residence in KS	Obituary, town history	
Birth date	Birth certificate, death certificate, obituary	
Immigration date	Ship passenger list, census	

# Reaching Proof

Goal: compile enough supporting evidence to create a clear and convincing case

• Absolute proof may not be attainable

What do you think is strongest in each category to reach the best evidence to prove your question or hypothesis?

• Source: Original vs derivative vs authored

• Informant: 1<sup>st</sup> hand vs hearsay



# The source, information contained and what evidence it directly /explicitly provides

Direct evidence from primary (1<sup>st</sup> hand) informant

Direct evidence from secondary (hearsay) informant

Informant w/ some 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> hand knowledge

Date filed

rigina 325 Form V. S. No. 5-50M-9-19-18. COMMONWEALTH PLACE OF, DEATH. DEPARTMENT C sour County of alleghen CERTIFICATE OF DEATH BUREAU OF VITAL ST File No. image Registration District No. illo burg Primary Registration District N **Registered** No Gas [If death occu Hospital or Ward give its NAM street and number.] MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH RSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS COLOR OR RACE 5. SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED 16. DATE OF DEATH hill Write the word. (Dav) (Year 6. DATE OF BIRTH I HEREBY CERTIFY. That I attended deceased Direct (Year) (Month) (Day) If LESS than 1 day that I last saw hand alive on. evidence 7. AGE how many ...... hrs. or and that death occurred, on the date stated above. at min ) The CAUSE OF DEATH\* was as follows: 8. OCCUPATION (a) Trade, profession, or, particular kind of work Sec. (b) General nature of industry, Attended to tested business, or establishment which employed (or employer) 22mos (Duration) 9. BIRTHPLACE. (State or Country) Contributory i<sup>st</sup> hand (Secondary.) (Duration) 10. NAME OF FATHER (primary) 1man-(Signed 15. BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER 13 informant (State or Country) 2. (Address) REN "State the DISEASE CAUSING DEATH ; or in deaths from VIOLENT CAUSES, st. 12. MAIDEN NAME MEANS OF INJURY; and (2) whether ACCIDENTAL, SUICIDAL, or HOMICIDAL OF MOTHER 18. LENGTH OF RESIDENCE (For Hospitals, Institutions, Transient 13. BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER or Recent Residents). In the At place (State or Country) ds. State of death mos... Where was disease contracted, If not at place of death? nformant) Has Former or usual residence (Address) 83 Ehinden 19. PLACE OF BURIAL OR REMOVAL DATE OF BURIAL all.S 19:00 Juch areets ADDRESS 20. UNDERTAKER nope 1 itto bur Local Registrar 21

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Health, Allegheny Co. Death certificate, 1922, Hutchinson, Enoch, File #5003

	Original
	Parish A
Marriage Record	Register
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Gender: Male	Married in this fluink by Bannes this 23 Day of Doc! in the Year One Thousand boom Hundred
Marriage Date: 23 Dec 1770	and Lovonty By me I. Folds.
Marriage Place: Bolton-Le-Moors, Lancashire, England	S & Raled Steeling
Spouse: Betty Cranshaw	This Marriage was folemnized between Us - Botty Cranshaw
FHL Film Number: 1966474	( ha a )
Reference ID: V 4 p 167 no 798	Lancashire, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754-1936
Indexes of two original documents	View image View record
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	Gender Male
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Salah Sutchinson &	Betty gran hohaw With 1912

Church of England Parish Registers Bolton St Peter, Bolton le Moors, Lancashire, England, Marriages & Banns. Dec 1770, entry 798, "Hutchinson-Cranshaw" FHL Film# 1966742; and Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754-1936, Bishops Transcript, Bolton-le-Moors, Lancashire, England, Dec. 1770, Ralph Hutchinson-Betty Crankshaw

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### Resolving conflicting evidence - Was Job Hutchinson's wife Elizabeth Aspinall or Elizabeth Prescott?

- Census shows six claimed children of Job (don't know how they relate to the wife on a census)
- So used General Register Office index to check for mother's maiden surname for each child.
- Birth order, Name, Mother's Maiden, Informant
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Rachel, Aspinall, b.1875, father's name not given, *Elizabeth* was informant
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Enoch, 1878, Prescott, Job
    - 3<sup>rd</sup> Dinah, Prescott, *Elizabeth*
    - 4<sup>th</sup> John, Aspinall, *Elizabeth*
    - 5<sup>th</sup> William, Aspinall, *Elizabeth*
    - 6<sup>th</sup> Job, Prescott, Job
- Found marriage cert for Joseph Hutchinson to Eliz. Prescott, 1877, they made their marks
- Couldn't find birth of Elizabeth Prescott
- Found birth record for Elizabeth Aspinall
- Found Elizabeth Aspinall in UK census with parents

Current Conclusion: Based on Rachel's & Elizabeth's birth records and the children's birth records, Elizabeth's maiden name was <u>most likely</u> Aspinall. **One source did not provide sufficient evidence**.

**Evidence:** Found birth record for Eliz Aspinall of right age and birth place; she had an illegitimate 1<sup>st</sup> child under name Aspinall; Possible 1<sup>st</sup> marriage to Prescott indicated by marriage record for Joseph Hutchinson m. Eliz Prescott 1877. Maiden name provided by Job was always Prescott. Maiden name provided by Eliz to registrars was Aspinall 2 of 3 times. Both Job & Elizabeth were illiterate, which may have lead to the incorrect name of Joseph on the marriage register and Prescott on the birth registration.

Further research: could include using DNA to tie descendants of Job and Elizabeth to other Aspinall descendants. Search non-conformist parish records for Aspinall-Prescott marriage, etc.

# Q1 – Analyzed Findagrave.com record

Find a Grave\*

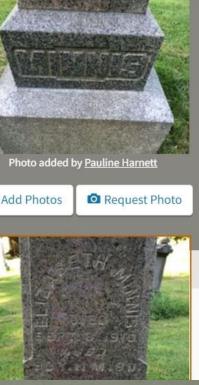
MEMORIALS

CEMETERIES

FAMOUS CC

CONTRIBUTE

- Is this an original, derivative or authored item?
- 2. Who was the informant? Did they provide 1<sup>st</sup> or hearsay info?
- 3. What direct evidence does it provide
- 4. What independent corroborating evidence is needed?



### Elizabeth Newhold Minnis

BIRTH	28 Jan 1820 Greenwood Towns, ip, Crawford County, Pennsylvania, USA
DEATH	8 Sep 1910 (aged 90) Mercer County, Pennsylvania, USA
BURIAL	<u>Stevenson Cemetery</u> Greenville, Mercer County, Pennsylvania, USA
MEMORIAL ID	100009877 · <u>View Source</u>
SHARE 🕈 SA	AVE TO SUGGEST EDITS -
	MEMORIAL PHOTOS 2 FLOWERS 1
Gravesite Det	aile

### Q2: Analyze a source, ie a Bible page

- Is this an original, derivative or authored document?
- Is the information 1st hand, 2nd hand, from unknown source?

Were the entries contemporary to the event?

What direct evidence does the document provide?

Is this page sufficient evidence for the birthdate of Elizabeth Ann Hutchinson born 5 May 1879? Why?

Bleyborth Am? Hetchenson bom 1. 8.4.9 on the 5 Day of many William Statchinson born 7. f. P.7 Day of february on the 10 Hamoh Jane Statelinson born April Dovid Hulchinson born TI & 22 Day Septimber Elemer Hutchinson born 1. S.S. 9. on the 9 Day of November Gener Halchinson born 1. 8.9.7 on Jonaary blice Hutchinson born 18.9.2. an the Gertrade Hutchenson born the 27 June born on James Hutchinson June & 1 stary John Hutchinson born on the 15th day of march, 19 Elsie Hutchinson born on the 18. day of October 190,

Source: Page from the Bible of the William Hutchinson, b. 1854, Bible. Image provided by Jeri Jenkins Jones, 22 Feb 2009, previously of Shermans Dale, PA.

Q 3 – Analyze 1841 UK Census

Evaluate the data bracketed in orange

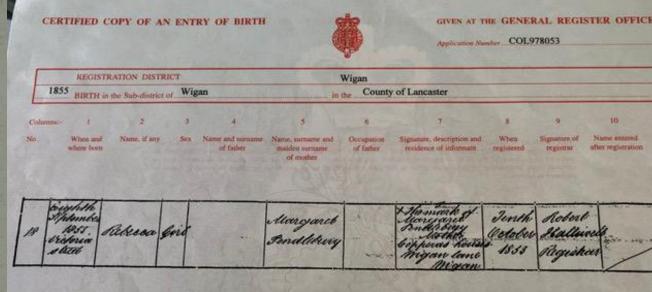
- 1. Is this an original, derivative or authored document?
- 2. Who is the informant? Are they providing 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> hand info?
- 3. What direct evidence does this give you about David and Ann Hutchinson?
- 4. What indirect evidence does this provide about David and Ann Hutchinson?

Distant To us and Workington, County Cumberland, England SEX PROFESSION, TRADE EMPLOYMENT, of each Person who abode therein or of INDEPENDENT MEANS. the preceding Night. 9 akour 30 That buters Bant House Eleanon do toitor Charlotto Unight 54 6) Code miner 1928 John might Cual mines. archabale Dailin 45 MAN Op 37 Jane Darling Ast. may - do ce 12 A 3 张达 Jane do Thomas Thomas 18 boat Mines Jane Matton ho toila 60. Robert Walls 21 yenne-Ceal Muner Exthe Huggins 34 Labourer 0) Betty - do. 13 Par. Jane do John Colalmans autempin Abellan do Cal Miner David Hutchen 5 ann Con miner 134 Williamo Juning 123 0 24 many groing 21 Isabella Juny yes

1841 England Census, Workington, Cumberland, England, pg 13, line 19, Esther Huggins household, Ancestry.com; TNA UK, Kew, England, Class: *HO107*; Piece: *159*; Book: *8*; Enumeration District: *1*; Page: *13*; Line: *19*; GSU roll: *241277* 

# Q4 – Analyzed England Birth Certificate

- 1. Is this an original, derivative or authored document?
- 2. Who is the informant? Are they providing 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> hand info?
- 3. What direct evidence does this give you about Rebecca?
- 4. What negative evidence does it provide about Rebecca?



RTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Births in the District above mentioned.

en at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office, the	8th	day of	November	2005
				And in case of the local division of the loc

#### CB 348867

CAUTION: THERE ARE OFFENCES RELATING TO FALSIFYING OR ALTERING A CERTIFICATE AND USING OR POSSESSING A FALSE CERTIFICATE <sup>9</sup>CROWN COPYRIGHT

WARNING: A CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY.

# Q5 – Analyze an obituary

1. Is this an original, derivative or authored document?

2. Who is the informant? Are they providing 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> hand info?

3. What direct & indirect evidence does this give you about Margaret Roberts?

4. Does this document provide sufficient information to prove who Margaret's parents were? Why?

#### Mrs. Margaret Roberts Mrs. Margaret Roberts Mrs. Margaret Roberts, widow of Thomas Benton Roberts, died this morning, July 1, 1938, at the home of her grand-daughter, Mrs. Lois Williams of Sandy Greek. She

would have been 55 if she had reach ed her next birthday, August 29th. Bhe was the daughter of John and Catherine Baker and was born in Hempfield township, but nearly all her life, since marriage, was spent in Salem township. She was a member of North Salem M. E. church.

Her husband died 29 years ago. Surviving children sons and daughters are: Robecca, wife of D. E. Minnis, Sheakleyville; Emma, wife of George Williams, Salem; John R. Greenville; C. D., Salem; John R. Greenville; C. D., Salem; John R. Greenville; C. D., Salem; ora, wife of John Hurst, Denver, Colo.! Jennie eldest daughter, and wife of A. T. Minnis died eight years ago. There are 16 grandchildren; 50 great grandchildren and 10 great great grandchildren.

Funeral services will be held Mon day at 2 p. m. in North Salem M. E. church; burlal will be made in Stevenson cemetery.

Obituary for Margaret Baker Roberts. The Record-Argus, Greenville, PA. 1 Jul 1933, page 5, column 1. the Death Roll. Greenville Public Library Digital Archives.

# Q 6 – Analyze a marriage bond

- 1. Is this an original, derivative or authored document?
- 2. Who is the informant? Are they providing 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> hand info?
- 3. What direct evidence does this about Asher Williams and Mary Beck?
- 1. Does this document provide sufficient information to prove the marriage of Asher & Mary?

#### Asher Williams + Mary Beck 11-10-1703 KX (Part 1: 1737-1707) - 283 · 283 NOW all Men by these Presents, That we'lloter Williams, John them, & John Will all in the Somethip of Blacks fills County of -Busington Beacher , Work Now Sector ford holden and do fland juffly indebted unto his Preellahing -William Vanhtin hoge Ch "Ganes " Quetoner in chief in and aver the afores . Procince of Vew Vervey - in the Sum of Five Hundred Pounds, of current lawful Money of New-Yerley; to be paid to his taid ) rulling - - --his Succeffors or Affigns: For the which Payment well and truly to be made and done, me - do bind over felore our '- Heirs, Executors and Administrators, and every of them friently Coverally -- firmly by these Prefents, Scaled with our Scale : Dated this South Day of . A cl. - Annoque Domini One Thousand Seven Hundred and Visty Thire 1763

#### THE Condition of this Obligation is fuch, That whereas the above-bounden Aches Williams, John Theorem & John Hall hath obtained Licence of Marriage for him the said Aches Williams of the one Party, and for Mary Beck Spin slee \_\_\_\_\_\_ of the other Party : Now, if it fhall not hereafter appear, that they the faid Aches Williams and Mary Beck \_\_\_\_\_\_ have any lawful Let or Impediment, of Pre-contrad, Affinity or Confanguinity, to hinder their being joined in the Holy Bands of Matrimony, and afterwards their living together as Man and Wife; then this Obligation to be yoid, or elfe to fland and remain in full Force and Virtue.

Molldwards Borden %

Sealed and Delivered in

the Prelence of

John Hall

Alter I Alians

John Starre

# Q 7 – Analyze a Birth Certificate

- 1. Is this an original, derivative or authored document?
- 2. Who is the informant? Are they providing 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> hand info?
- 3. What direct evidence does this give you about Harold Hunter?
- 4. What are the weaknesses of this document?

charged with attending physic CEPTABLE I	ears many birth records were the duty of filing said record. sician, midwife, parent, neares F SIGNED BY THE PARTY			tatute, due to the neglect of cases and may be executed if f the facts of this birth. NO
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### References:

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

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