

# Genealogy Source Citations Quick Reference

## Basic Concepts

- A *source* is the record used in locating information. Sound genealogy research is built on a variety of sources.
- A *citation* is a notation that connects the *source* to your research and supports any conclusions made.
- A *footnote* is a reference system using numbers or special characters to alert the reader to a source citation at the bottom of the page.
- An *endnote* is simply a *footnote* placed at the end of the document. Many researchers prefer endnotes since they don't interfere with the readability and flow of a document.
- A *bibliography* is a listing of sources used but does not refer to specific passages and often lacks page numbers or other locators.

## Do's and Don'ts

- Don't delay capturing your source information. In the excitement of "the find," we often say to ourselves, "I'll go back later and cite my source." Certain sources can later be elusive such as websites and online databases.
- Use a genealogy database application that helps you capture your source citations by providing formatting hints or templates.
- Take advantage of style guides such as reference sheets and even online bibliography generation sites.
- Be consistent. If you select a certain citation style, stick to it and don't mix various formats.
- Specific source types require specific citation formats. A format for a source such as a book should not be used for an online database or website.
- When citing Internet-based sources, always note when the source was located, i.e. "accessed on March 29, 2009."
- Don't be an *Id.*-iot. Avoid use of *ibid* or its abbreviation *id.* which is Latin for *in the same place*. Using *id.* to refer to the previous citation can be dangerous if citations become sorted out of order.

## Citation Components

A citation has the following components:

### Author, Title, Publisher, Locator

- **Author:** format can be "First Name Last Name" or "Last Name, First Name."
- **Title:** format can be *Title* or Title. Also article titles may precede publication title.
- **Publisher:** format often includes publisher location, name and year published and sometimes in parentheses.
- **Locator:** usually a page number or range of page numbers depending upon the source type.

In addition, for online sources you may need:

- **Accessed:** list date when source located as in "accessed on March 29, 2009."
- **Examined:** list search criteria as in "examined for any reference to 'xyz'."

## Citation Styles

**APA** – the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* is a widely accepted documentation style within the social sciences but not often used in genealogy.

Mills, E. S. (2007). *Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace*. Baltimore, Maryland: Genealogical Pub Co.

**Chicago** – refers to *The Chicago Manual of Style* which is a style guide for American English. It is the style most often used by genealogists.

Mills, Elizabeth Shown. *Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace*. Baltimore, Maryland: Genealogical Pub Co, 2007.

**MLA** – published by the Modern Language Association of America, the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing* is an academic style guide used widely in the United States.

Mills, Elizabeth Shown. Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace. Baltimore, Maryland: Genealogical Pub Co, 2007.

**Turabian** – refers to *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations* and named after its author Kate L. Turabian.

Mills, Elizabeth Shown. *Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace*. Baltimore, Maryland: Genealogical Pub Co, 2007.

## Helpful Links

- **Citing Sources** from *Cyndi's List of Genealogy Sites on the Internet*  
(<http://www.cyndislist.com/citing.htm>)  
A stellar collection of links on why you should cite your sources, citation formatting styles, and how to cite particular types of sources.
- **How To Cite Sources** from *Genealogy.com*  
([http://www.genealogy.com/19\\_wylie\\_print.html](http://www.genealogy.com/19_wylie_print.html))  
An excellent overview by John Wylie on how to cite specific types of sources encountered in genealogy.
- **Internet Citation Guide for Genealogists** from *ProGenealogists*  
(<http://www.progenealogists.com/citationguide.htm>)  
Provide "code templates" and samples of Internet citations using a "cut and paste stylesheet." Covers most of the source types encountered by genealogists.

## Bibliography Generation Sites

Most genealogy database software will help you track your source citations and even provide formatting templates for different types of entries. If you are not using such software, these bibliography generation sites provide the same features and can assist with citation formatting.

- **BibMe** <http://www.bibme.org>  
Main focus is on books and you can look-up a book using its ISBN number. You can also type the title or the keywords of the title.  
Edit the information returned from the look-up and then add it to a bibliography which you can later download to a Microsoft Word file. Also offers formatting for sources cited from websites, magazine articles, newspapers and even interviews and lectures.
- **Citation Machine**  
<http://citationmachine.net/index2.php>  
Select from MLA, APA, Turabian or Chicago formats and then Print or Non-Print sources. Enter information in the fields and your citation will appear properly formatted for you to copy and paste into a document.
- **EasyBib** <http://www.easybib.com>  
"The free bibliography composer," it can generate a citation based on a book's ISBN number. It also offers a list of over 50 other source formats including journal and magazine articles, web sites, online databases, family bibles, even live performances.  
Once the citation has been built, you can easily switch from MLA to APA or Chicago/Turabian formats. You can also build a bibliography by adding the citation to a Microsoft Word document.

## Coding Footnotes on Blogs and Websites

If you want to cite your sources when composing blog posts or creating web pages, you will need this information:

- **WordPress:** there is an easy to use plugin, FD Footnotes, to be installed on your hosted blog.  
<http://tr.im/i7p6>
- **Blogger:** some tips and tricks on adding footnotes to your blog posts. <http://tr.im/i7oU>
- **HTML:** for some blogs and websites you will need to learn the HTML code for setting up footnotes and making them "jump" to the citation. <http://tr.im/i7oy>

## Recommended Reads and Items

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

The genealogist's "bible" when it comes to citing a dizzying variety of sources from an article to a zeppelin exhibit!

E-book version via Footnote: <http://tr.im/i7gx>  
Via Genealogical Publishing Company: <http://tr.im/i7pT>

- **Citing Online Historical Resources QuickSheet**  
by Elizabeth Shown Mills

A handy laminated reference card which instructions on how to cite those online sources such as websites, message boards, blogs and more.

Via Genealogical Publishing Company: <http://tr.im/i7fZ>

- **Citing Ancestry.com Databases & Images QuickSheet**  
by Elizabeth Shown Mills

If you use Ancestry's sources it helps to know how to best cite them – and this is another handy laminated reference card to the rescue!

Via Genealogical Publishing Company: <http://tr.im/i7g8>



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