

How to Document Your Sources

It is crucial that you carefully document everything you find about your family history.

Effective documentation is shown on this site in the examples shown of the **Claims Records** and the **Notary Records**.

The documentation shown on sample Piedmont Project Family Group Records was acceptable for its time (the early 1960s), but the abbreviations were linked to a private classification system that has been replaced. It is now considered much more desirable to document sources in such a way that anyone, anywhere in the world, could easily determine what the source was. And anyone wishing to read the source of the information itself should be able to locate the specific facts easily—in sources such as those on this site, in published genealogies, or wherever.

For *Gli Esuli*, as another example, proper documentation would include the following for the Durand-Canton family, used as an example on this site:

Armand Hugon, A. & E.A. Rivoire, *Gli Esuli Valdesi in Svizzera (1686-1690)* (Torre Pellice: Subalpina, 1974). Page 91, exiles # 1200 – 1203. (FHL book 945.1 D4h; also FHL film 1,181,530 item 4)

In other words, for published sources, effective documentation includes the author(s), the title, publication details, page number, and where the published material was accessed. For published material accessed through Interlibrary Loan, the lending library should also be identified.

There are a number of guides to help you document your sources. The classic guide is a book called *Evidence Explained--Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace* by Elizabeth Shown Mills (Baltimore, Maryland, Genealogical Publishing Company, 2007). This book is also a great source of information about how to evaluate genealogical evidence. Several of the more advanced genealogical software programs, including Legacy Family Tree and Roots Magic, include features to help you properly format your sources.

All of this is vital information to record your sources of information. Your granddaughter or grandson should someday be able to follow your exact steps and find the records with ease.