WHAT ARE SOURCES?

A source is the origin of genealogical information that may become evidence after a genealogist has properly analyzed it as part of reaching a conclusion.

Types:

Document	Artifact	Other items
Book	Photograph	containing data
Website	Audio recording	
Person	Video recording	

Birth and Death Certificates, Wills, Contracts, and Census Records are all examples of sources.

Sources may be either **original** (not derived from a prior record) or **derivative** (extracted, transcribed into a typescripted or handscripted copy, abstracted, etc., from an original record).

A Source may be either **primary** or **secondary** information depending upon the degree of participation (first hand knowledge) of the informant.

> **Primary** information comes from people who were participants, observers, or otherwise in a position to have first-hand knowledge of the recorded information — an eyewitness account. Primary sources can take many forms, such as:

> | | | |
> |---|---|---|
> | Newspapers | Tax lists | Censuses |
> | Letters | Court documents | |
> | Journals | Church records | |

> > Even published books can be considered primary sources if they were printed during the time of the event.

> > However, *not* all information in an original record is "primary." For example, a death record usually contains primary information about the death, but secondary information about the person's birth.

> **Secondary** information comes from those who were not present at the events, and thus are furnishing hearsay or traditional information, or are quoting original or derived records. A source of information created or compiled from original records, compiled records, or both.

Directness of the Evidence

The information in a record is contained in a statement that provides either direct or indirect evidence regarding your research objective.

> ***Direct statements*** give a straightforward fact. For example, a baptismal record may state the birth date of the child being baptized. Whenever possible, try to find records that

directly state specific facts as proof of a genealogical event or relationship.

Indirect statements support a fact by reasonable inference. For example, if a census record lists a person's age as 45 in 1851, it implies a birth in or near 1806. Often you may need to gather more substantial information. Indirect (often called circumstantial) evidence usually requires additional evidence to prove a fact.

WHAT ARE CITATIONS?

A citation is a reference to a source, and is also known as a source note. A proper citation describes the location of the source in sufficient detail that **you** and subsequent researchers can find the evidence. A proper citation also describes the specific details from the source that affected the analysis, and the specific place within the source where those details reside, such as a page number.

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Good websites to get more information on Sources and Citations and how to use them:

Encyclopedia of Genealogy: http://eogen.editme.com/SourcesAndCitations
Family Search Wiki: https://wiki.familysearch.org/en/Evaluate_the_Evidence

HOW TO USE REUNION TO CITE YOUR SOURCES

Source records come in many different types and are comprised of one or more source fields.

What Is a Source Type?

When you add a new source, you can specify its **type**. You can also change the type of an existing source. The type of source refers to the collection and order of source fields that comprise the source.

You can add or remove fields that make up the various source types, and thus fundamentally

alter the structure of new, "empty" source records. In addition, you can build your own types of source records. Some preset source types are shown below.

Source Types		
Book	Free Form	Monograph
Census Record	Interview	Newspaper
Cemetery Record	Land Record	Pamphlet
Church Record	Letter	Periodical
Conversation	Military Record	Tax List
Family Bible	Miscellaneous	Vital Record

Each Source Type Has a Collection of Fields

When you add a source, a collection of fields associated with the source type will automatically appear in the Source Fields section of the Edit Source window. For example, when you add a **Book** source, a collection of fields typically associated with a book will automatically appear. In addition, every source type contains a Free-Form Text field.

Source Type:	Interview	Book	Newspaper
Source Fields:	Interviewee	Author	Author
	Interviewer	Title	Article Title
	Date	Publisher	Name
	Location	Publication Place	Date
	Free-Form Text	Publication Date	Free-Form Text
		Free-Form Text	

Changing the Type of a Source Record

To change the type of a source record, open a source record by choosing **List -> Sources** and double-clicking a source in the Source List. Then use the Source Type popup menu button, located in the lower-left corner of the Edit Source window.

When a source is converted from one type to another, its fields are inserted into the new source intelligently, following this process:

1. Empty fields of the original source are removed.

2. The fields in the new source type are placed at the beginning of the new source record.

3. Fields from the original source whose names match the names of fields in the new source are merged into the new source.

The remaining fields of the original source (that don't appear in the new source type) are appended to the new source record.

What Is a Source Field?

A **source** is comprised of one or more **source fields**. Examples of source fields include: author, title, compiler, contact person, quality of data, repository, etc.

A **source field** represents a single element of a source record, much like birth place represents a single element of a person's record, and marriage date represents a single element of a family record. Every source field is available for use with any source record.

A **type** of source refers to the collection and order of fields that comprise the source. In Reunion, you can add or remove fields that make up the various source types and build your own types of source records.

Help with Citations:

Here are a couple of group lists you can join to get help with using Sources and Citations. The second one is brand new and looks like it will be the most useful in terms of learning; they will be going chapter by chapter through Elizabeth Shown Mills' book, *Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace (2nd Edition):*

1. The Transitional Genealogists List was created to provide a safe environment for genealogists to learn best practices as they transition to professional level work. To subscribe from the list, please send an email to TRANSITIONAL-GENEALOGISTS-FORUM-request@rootsweb.com with the word 'subscribe' without the quotes in the subject and the body of the message

2. The Source Citation study sessions will utilize the following Yahoo group: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SourceCitations/