

University of Strathclyde – Centre for Lifelong Learning

Introduction to Family History Research

Referencing for Genealogists

- The big picture: what is referencing and why should you take it seriously?
- What different referencing styles are there?
- The shopping list: what is generally needed to make up any reference?
- The recipe: How do you create references for different types of sources?
- Linking it all up into endnotes!

The Big Picture

Our work is developed by gathering data, thinking about ideas put forward by others (say in histories or family trees) and then creating our own family trees or responding to those ideas.

These sources can be books, journal articles, newspaper reports, census records or web pages - in fact anything at all!

Citing or Referencing

It is essential that you acknowledge the material that you have consulted to prepare a piece of academic work. This acknowledgement is called **citing** or **referencing**.

A reference or citation is an entry, whether in an endnote or bibliography, which gives precise details of the original source of the information used. Whenever you directly copy the words of another author (quoting) or put their ideas into your own words (paraphrasing) you must acknowledge that you have done so.

How you acknowledge their work depends on the style of referencing/citing you are following. Whatever style you use, the most important thing is use it consistently throughout your piece of work.

Referencing Styles

There are many, many referencing styles out there in the world. Different academic disciplines use different styles and it's a good idea to become comfortable with the style used in your discipline.

Many departments in the University of Strathclyde use a form of referencing called **Harvard** and the CCL Genealogical Studies Programme uses a variation of it.

Other Common Referencing Styles

- **Chicago** – often used in the social sciences, literary studies, arts and many other fields.
- **Vancouver** – created for use in medical journals but has become common in other fields. Also known as the 'numbered' style.
- **APA** (American Psychological Association) - often used in psychology (surprise!) and the social and behavioural sciences.
- **MLA** (Modern Language Association of America) – often used in literary studies and the arts.

Primary vs. Secondary Sources

There are two types of research sources you will probably be using in your genealogical research – primary and secondary. Each is important to your work and each type needs to be referenced accurately so that your readers know where you found your information.

Primary Sources

Primary sources are those which were created at the time or near to the time of the events recorded. Examples are:

- birth, marriage and death certificates,
- census returns,
- parish registers,
- wills,
- diaries,
- photographs,
- letters and accounts written at or near the time of the events recorded.
- Newspaper or other articles written at or near the time of the events recorded

Secondary Sources

Secondary sources are works written at a much later date than the events being described and are based on primary sources, other secondary sources or a mixture of the two.

Examples are:

- books
- newspaper or magazine articles that describe events in the distant past
- books compiling historical photographs (the photographs are primary sources, the book itself is a secondary source!)
- memoirs written much later than the events should probably be considered secondary sources.
- encyclopaedias

Referencing Essentials – secondary Sources

The information in your **secondary sources** citations should enable your reader to find the original material you consulted. This means any citation should contain all the information needed to uniquely identify that item.

A **secondary source** citation should include at a minimum:

- Author(s)
- Title
- Title of journal, book if source is an essay, etc.
- Edition (if not the first edition)
- Publisher
- Place of publication
- Year of publication

If any of this information is missing (not having an author is common), then leave it out. Here's an example of a reference for a book written about the history of Scotland:

Devine, T. M. (2006) **The Scottish nation, 1700-2007**. 2nd ed. London: Penguin Books.

And one for a website:

U.S. Department of State. **Department of State Personalities of Note**.

<http://www.state.gov/s/d/rm/rls/perfrpt/2002/html/19129.htm> : accessed 19 August 2012.

Referencing Essentials – Primary Sources

References for **primary sources** of similar type, e.g., birth registers, should always be cited in a standardised format. See the examples in the referencing guide.

For all sources other than centrally held civil registers, census records and parish registers, cite the repository's reference code, name and location as the last three elements in the reference, i.e.:

- Creator
- Title
- Date of record
- Collection
- Reference code
- Repository and Repository location

If a source has been accessed only online, the information outlined above should appear along with the web address and the date accessed.

Here's an example for the 1841 Scottish census:

Census. 1841. Scotland. Kingsbarns, Fife. 441/00 001/00 007.

<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk> : accessed 9 September 2008.

And one from a birth record found online at ScotlandsPeople:

Births (CR) Scotland. Kelvin, Glasgow. 10 July 1910. MCCALDEN, Archibald Weir. 644/13 0778. <http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk> : accessed 26 July 2012.

Our 'Harvard' Style of Citing/Referencing

There are three things to deal with when creating our 'Harvard' style citations...

Firstly, you need to add consecutive super-script numbers after the material you've sourced from elsewhere; these numbers will link the material with its citation in the endnotes section at the end of your paper. A superscript number should be placed either at the end of a sentence or at the end of a paragraph that uses information from a single source.

Citing Primary Sources

As so much information used in writing about a family comes from just several primary sources – think of a census record that deals with an entire family or a marriage certificate – you can refer to a single source over and over simply by referring to it with a single superscript number in the text for each primary source. If you are NOT using the references

tool in Word, this is the easiest thing to do; if you are using this tool, it's easier just giving a new reference for each piece of data.

These are examples for primary sources (note that source number 1 was used twice):

'Individual four was Edwin Marr, aged 4, born in North Stonington Camp, Connecticut, son of Alexander and Elspet, living in Old Machar, Aberdeenshire.¹ Potential records were found for Edwin including: a WWI United States Draft Registration card for an Edwin Lewis Marr, born in 1877; a listing in the 1930 Burlington, Connecticut, US Federal Census; and a death record from 7 February 1950.^{2,3,4} Clearly Alexander and Elspet were living in Aberdeenshire in 1881 in a relatively comfortable home with 4 rooms with windows.¹

Endnotes

1. Census. 1881. Scotland. St Andrews, Fife, 453. ED 7A. p.15. www.ancestry.co.uk : Accessed 01 August 2008.
2. United States of America, Selective Service System. World War I **Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918**. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration. M1509, 4,582 rolls. www.ancestry.co.uk : accessed 11 August 2008.
3. United States of America, Bureau of the Census. **Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930**. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1930. T626, 2,667 rolls. [database online] www.ancestry.co.uk : accessed 11 August 2008.
4. Connecticut Department of Health. **Connecticut Death Index, 1949-2001**. Hartford, CT, USA. [database online] www.ancestry.co.uk : accessed 11 August 2008.

Citing Secondary Sources

When dealing with secondary sources, you'll also be using superscript numbers to link information used in your writing to the list of references. Secondary source references include the exact page number within the book or magazine that the information came from. If you've accessed the information online, you need to include the address of the webpage you used and the date you found it.

Example of secondary source superscript numbers:

The native Scots, who had been restrained only by fear of the king, now, as the army broke up in confusion, set about slaying all the English in their own ranks on whom they could lay hands, while those who were able to escape, we are told, took refuge in the royal castles.¹ Or, as the Scottish historian puts it, the Scots and Galwegians, when their king was captured, made constant attacks upon their French and English neighbours and slew them without mercy.²

Endnotes

1. Frank, Cecilia. (1975) *A general history of Scottish warfare in the early modern era*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 136.
2. McConnell, Duncan. (1865) *O fateful day: a bloody time in old Scotland*. Edinburgh: White Scribe Press. p. 865.

Endnotes

By using the superscript numbering system, your reader can easily locate the full description of the item you have cited within the corresponding endnotes section provided at the end of your document.

These endnotes acknowledge the source of the information referred to and include the page number(s) that the information came from in your source (if a secondary source).

Endnotes example

1. Smith, James, ed. (1992) *Scottish Local Government*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. pp. 10-12.
2. Ibid., pp. 17-18.
3. Williams, Arthur and Goldstone, George (2004) *Poverty in 19th century Edinburgh*. London: HarperCollins. p. 56.
4. Census, 1841. Scotland. St Andrews, Fife. ED 7A. p. 15. 441/00 001/00 007.
www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk : accessed 26 June 2008.

Summary of points

To summarise the main points about referencing:

- Be consistent in your citation formation.
- Include any essential citation information.
- Give yourself plenty of time to create your endnote section.

Further resources

There is a good overview of Harvard provided by the Anglia Ruskin University Library. You'll find that some of the elements are dealt with a little differently than our style but their examples are a good starting place for creating references for types of sources that we may have missed out.

Anglia Ruskin University Library. *Harvard system of referencing guide*.

<http://libweb.anglia.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.htm> : accessed 25 September 2015.