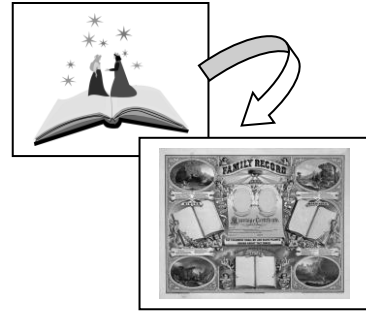


## ***From Fable to Fact: Gathering Oral History to Find Family Records***

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### **“Communication is narration” – Walter R. Fisher**

### **Begin with the known (family stories) and work to the unknown (proof documents)**

#### **Step 1**

Start with interviews or information/stories from relatives and those who knew your ancestors; list the alleged factual information elements that might be provable

#### **Step 2**

Compare the story information to facts from the locations and time periods

#### **Step 3**

Search the documentation information from all available sources for your family members

- Census records
- Wills
- Deeds
- Photos
- Vital Records
- Newspapers
- City Directories
- Regional Histories
- Military and Pension Files
- Maps
- Websites
- Family Ephemera and Artifacts
- Letters, Diaries, Journals
- Immigration and Naturalization Records
- Cemetery Records and Tombstones
- etc.

#### **Step 4**

Create an expandable timeline using the information from Steps 2 and 3 to verify that the story elements match with historical records and

### **Step 5**

Identify historical information to put ancestors into a context for the geographic location

- Wars
- Epidemics
- Elections and Political Events
- Changes of Geographic Boundaries
- Territories Becoming States
- Religious Events
- Medical Advances
- Economic Conditions
- Weather Events
  - Blizzards
  - Hurricanes
  - Floods
  - Tornadoes
  - Draughts
  - Meteor Showers
- Disasters
  - Fires
  - Earthquakes
- Regional Events
  - Fairs, Expeditions, etc.
  - Openings of Businesses
  - Mass Migrations
  - Discoveries
    - Gold
  - Creation of Landmarks, etc.
    - Railroads
    - Canals
    - Harbors
- Etc.

### **Step 6**

Combine the historical information with the ancestor's timeline to get a picture of the possible inter-relationship.

### **Step 7**

Write out the combination of history and family data to show how your ancestor may have been affected by the various events and enter the verified information into your genealogy software (and/or online tree) and CITE THE SOURCES completely (so you can find them again)

### **Step 8** (complete as you go through the steps, updating as needed)

List the places you searched but did NOT find helpful information (this helps keep you from searching again or reminds you to check again if more data emerges that might reveal facts from those sources)

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