Deeper Analysis: Techniques for Successful Problem Solving

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When analyzing genealogical evidence, there are some common techniques which help us think about the data collected around a research question in ways that we might not otherwise see. Common patterns or threads help us to tie the evidence together to create a clearer picture of what the truth might be. The Genealogical Proof Standard states that analysis and data correlation is necessary, but what techniques should we employ to achieve that goal?

What is a Problem?

Something that has an unknown answer.
A question that has a working theory but is not proven.
Research answers which conflict with each other.

The Research Process

Research Question: one of identity, relationship, or event
↓
Research Plan
↓
Research in Quality Sources producing Evidence
↓
Evidence Analysis
↓
Conclusion
↓
“Proof”

Standards

Genealogical Proof Standard
“Tests—through processes of analysis and correlation—of all sources, information items, and evidence contributing to an answer to a genealogical question or problem”

Reasoning from Evidence (nos. 37–50)

46. Evidence independence.
47. Evidence correlation.
48. Resolving evidence inconsistencies.
49. Unresolved evidence inconsistencies.
50. Assembling conclusions from evidence.
**Strategies**

**Proof Argument**
- The process of proving each step will make you revisit your data.
- Shows you where assumptions may be and where you need more evidence.

**Comparison charts**
- by grouping a certain record set about a person or a family
  - compare all census years, deeds, military service, death cause, occupations, …
- by common family characteristics in a chart

**Correlation**
- By sources
  - correlate related record groups together such as plot plan, tax lists, and census
- By chronology
  - identifies missing data
  - highlights illogical and contradictory data
  - shows who lived concurrently
  - can help sort out multiple individuals with the same name
  - can see what events shaped their lives when compared with historical events
- By geography
  - migration map
  - plot maps

**Narrative family history**
- Helps to see where the holes in our knowledge exist.
- Tests our logic and progression of events.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Acree family history: [http://acreetree.net](http://acreetree.net)
Free personalized timeline intermixed with history: [www.OurTimelines.com](http://www.OurTimelines.com)
Hardiness Zones: interactive map at [https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb](https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb)
Gen Detective software program and charts: [https://www.rumblesoftinc.com/index.cfm](https://www.rumblesoftinc.com/index.cfm)

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## TIMELINE FOR TWO COUPLES AND CHILDREN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>(him)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
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<td>Married 2nd</td>
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<td>Death</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date, Place</td>
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## COMPARISON TABLE
Age, Birth Place, Father Birth Place, Mother Birth Place, Occupation

| Person | 1870 Census Age / Place | 1880 Census Age / Place | 1900 Census Age / Place | Birth Place for Father and Mother of Person | 1880 Census Father/Mother | 1900 Census Father/Mother | Occupations
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