

# Steamer *Kate* Explosion: Correlating Indirect Evidence to Identify and Correct an Error

Board for Certification of Genealogists® Presentation

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What happens when the indirect evidence of a death and a probate record don't agree? The research begins in earnest! That's what happened in the case of the death of Antoine/Anthony Lallament of Mobile, Alabama. When did he actually die? Which record is correct? What would other available records reveal? This case study provides the research methodology involved in solving this problem.

## Create a Genealogy Research Plan

- A. Define and state the problem or the objective.
- B. Review, in detail, what you know about the research problem.
  - a. Assemble all the data/documents (on that ancestor) that you already have.
- C. Analyze the data/documents that you have.
  - a. Look at your research documentation objectively (without preconceived ideas).
  - b. Re-evaluate what you know.
    1. Separate your information from your conclusions.
  - c. Judge the evidence reliability.
    1. Original, derivative, or authored narrative source?
    2. Primary, secondary, or undetermined information (knowledge of the informant)?
    3. Direct, indirect or negative evidence to the problem?
- D. Create or Update your files.
  - a. Create or update the data in your family tree program.
  - b. Create or update the source citations for your facts.
  - c. Create or update your Research Log.
  - d. Create or update your Timeline.
  - e. Create or update your locality search.
- E. Create a list of the action items needed with the resources to review and the repositories to visit to eliminate any weaknesses and gaps in your previous research.
- F. Execute your research plan.
- G. Evaluate your results; draw your conclusions; and make a report.

## Analyze Your Data/Documents

Pull every piece of documentation about your "problem" ancestor from your files. It doesn't matter what the record is, pull it out so that you can take a closer look at it. The sources we use can sometimes tell us more than we think. We need to look at them – from upper left corner, to bottom right corner and every word in between. Look at it objectively – with new eyes, without preconceived ideas. Toss out all of your previous thought about the record. Now, using what you know about source types, information, and evidence reanalyze your documents.

1. "BCG Resources on Key Skills." *Board for Certification of Genealogists*.  
<https://bcgcertification.org/learning/skills/> [Access to various skill building resources.]

2. Mills, Elizabeth Shown, CG, CGL, FASG, FNGS, FUGA. *Historic Pathways*.  
<https://historicpathways.com/>
3. ———. *Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 2007.
4. ———. "QuickTips: The Blog 2 Evidence Explained." *Evidence Explained*.  
<https://www.evidenceexplained.com/blog> [Blog posts by Ms. Mills providing advice and insight and answering readers' questions.]
5. ———. "QuickLesson 17: The Evidence Analysis Process Map." *Evidence Explained*.  
<https://evidenceexplained.com/index.php/content/quicklesson-17-evidence-analysis-process-map>  
[QuickLesson 17 provides information on the Evidence Analysis Process Map and explains how it is used. This QuickLesson is just one of 26 provided by Ms. Mills at this website.]
6. Rose, Christine, CG, FASG. *Genealogical Proof Standard: Building a Solid Case*. Dexter, Michigan: Thomson Shore, Inc, 2005.
7. Rubincam, Milton, FASG. *Pitfalls in Genealogical Research*. Salt Lake City, UT: Ancestry Publishing, 1987.
8. Stevenson, Noel C., *Genealogical Evidence: A Guide to the Standard of Proof Relating to Pedigrees, Ancestry, Heirship and Family History*. Laguna Hills, CA: Aegean Park Press, 1979.

### **Place Your Ancestor on a Timeline.**

A timeline is a visual representation of events within a particular time in which your ancestor's life events are compiled into strict chronological order within the type of timeline chosen. There are many types of timelines - Family, Church, Geographic Area, History (U.S. & World), Military, Science, Social, Sports, Disasters, etc. Timelines can also be used to help you analyze a genealogy problem or brick wall by inserting the information on all of the records and resources you have researched.

9. Carruth, Gorton. *The Encyclopedia of American Facts & Dates*. 8th Edition. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1987.
10. *Craig's Internet Links*. <http://links.cncwebsite.com/AGEPage/Top40.htm> [This one provides a list of songs popular during the life time. At the bottom are more choices.]
11. "Historic Events & Birthdates that occurred on a SELECTED day of the year." *Scope Systems*.  
<http://scopesys.com/anyday/> [Find lists of famous people who were born or died on any date, religious observances, holidays, religious history, and POW/MIA information.]
12. *CalendarHome.com*. <https://calendarhome.com/> [You can view a month or year calendar for any year 1 to 10,000 A.D. All leap years and calendar changes are accounted for. You can also print out perpetual calendars. Under "Calculate" there are other calculators for dates.]
13. "Timelines Archive." *Fact Monster*. <https://www.factmonster.com/us/timeline-archive> [Timelines for World History, Country History, U.S. History, Society & Culture, Disasters, etc.]
14. "This Day in History." *History Channel*. <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history> [What was happening on a specific day in the life of your ancestor?]
15. "Those Were the Days." *440 International*. <https://440int.com/twtd/today.html>
16. "Timelines." *Internet4Classrooms*. <https://www.internet4classrooms.com/timelines.htm> [Various timelines for historical events and times, science & technology, and links for making and customizing your own timeline.]
17. "Timeline: U.S. Military Actions and Wars, 1775-1994." *PBS.org*.  
<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/us-military-actions-and-wars-1775-1994/>

## Create a Locality Search

A locality search is a search for the records of the place and time your ancestor lived and the repositories that hold those records. Look for information on the date the state, county, city, or town was formed. What is its parent county or counties and boundary changes? Look for the start date for birth, marriage, death, land, probate, tax records, etc. Look for information about maps, census records, manuscript collections, newspapers, migration trails, and more. Add in the addresses and contact information for the state archives, state/county/city vital records department, county clerk, local public library, courthouse, and genealogical society(ies). Check for years of record loss – and whatever is appropriate for your area of research and time period.

18. Eichholz, Alice, PhD, CG, editor. *Ancestry's RedBook: American State, County, & Town Sources*. 3rd Edition. Salt Lake City: Ancestry, 2004. [A digital version is available at [https://wiki.rootsweb.com/wiki/index.php/Red Book: American State, County, and Town Sources](https://wiki.rootsweb.com/wiki/index.php/Red_Book:_American_State,_County,_and_Town_Sources) ]
19. "FamilySearch Research Wiki" *FamilySearch*. [https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Main\\_Page](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Main_Page)
20. Hinckley, Kathleen W., CG. *Locating Lost Family Members & Friends*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Betterway Books, 1999.
21. Meyerink, Kory L., MLIS, AG, FUGA, editor. *Printed Sources: A Guide to Published Genealogical Records*. Salt Lake City: Ancestry, Inc., 1998.
22. Smith, Juliana Szucs. *The Ancestry Family Historian's Address Book: A Comprehensive List of Local, State and Federal Agencies and Institutions and Ethnic and Genealogical Organizations*. Salt Lake City: Ancestry, Inc., 1997.
23. *The Handy Book for Genealogists, United States of America*. Eleventh Edition. Logan, Utah: The Everton Publishers, Inc., 2006.
24. *The USGenWeb Project*. <http://www.usgenweb.org/> [This is an all-volunteer project spanning the entire United States. The top level is the US, then it goes to the State level, and then to the County level.]
25. Want, Robert S., editor. *Directory of State Court Clerks and County Courthouses*. Washington, DC: Want Publishing Co., 2006.

## Finding Historical Context

Read, read, and read some more – and not just items with "genealogy" in the title. Read everything you can about your area of research and your topic(s) of interest. Put your ancestor in their cultural, historical, and geographical context.

26. "Digital Collections." *Library of Congress*. <https://loc.gov/collections/> [Provides more than 100 collections and more than 9 million individual items.]
27. Baker, Donna, PhD. "Narrowing Birth Dates-A Free Tool does the Math for you." *Golden Channel Publishing*. <http://genohistory.com/2016/07/20/narrowing-dates-excel-tool/> [Free calculator form for narrowing dates for resolution.]
28. Beine, Joe. "Online County Histories, Biographies & Indexes – USA." *GenealogyBranches*. <https://www.genealogybranches.com/countyhistories.html>
29. Chorzempa, Rosemary A. *MORBUS, Why and How Our Ancestors Died: A Genealogist's Dictionary of Terms Found in Vital Records with Descriptions of the Diseases as They Relate to the Health of Our Ancestors*. Chicago, IL: Polish Genealogical Society of America, 1991.
30. "Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers." *Library of Congress*. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>

31. Colletta, John Philip, PhD. *Only a Few Bones: A True Account of the Rolling Fork Tragedy and Its Aftermath*. Washington, DC: Direct Descent, 2000.
32. ———. "Hazards of Histories." *Family Tree Magazine*, July 2011, pp. 29-32.
33. Davis, Robert Scott. *Georgia Black Book: Morbid, Macabre, & Sometimes Disgusting Records of Genealogical Value* (2 volumes) Greenville, SC: Southern Historical Press, 1982.
34. Drake, Paul, J.D. *What Did They Mean By That? A Dictionary of Historical Terms for Genealogists*. Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, Inc., 1994.
35. ———. *What Did They Mean By That? A Dictionary of Historical Terms for Genealogists. Some More Words, Volume 2*. Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, Inc., 1998.
36. "FamilySearch Catalog" *FamilySearch*. <https://www.familysearch.org/en/> [Check the library catalog to find a listing of their holding for your research area. Search under the city, county, and state.]
37. "FamilySearch Digital Library." *FamilySearch*. <https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/> [This collection of more than 500,000 digitized genealogy and family history publications includes family histories, county and local histories, etc.]
38. Friedman, S. Morgan. *The Inflation Calculator*. <https://westegg.com/inflation/> [The inflation calculator is great when you have a value amount for your ancestor's worth, but you want to find out what it equates to in today's value. Use this calculator as a clue and in conjunction with others.]
39. *Google Earth*. <https://www.google.com/earth/index.html> [Download this free program, type in an address, and go right down to a map of the neighborhood.]
40. *Graphical Display of the Federal Township and Range System*. <http://illinois.outfitters.com/genealogy/land/twprangemap.html>
41. Hefner, Loretta L., compiler. *The WPA Historical Records Survey: A Guide to the Unpublished Inventories, Indexes, and Transcripts*. Chicago: The Society of American Archivists, 1980.
42. "Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record/Historic American Landscapes Survey." *Library of Congress*. <https://loc.gov/pictures/collection/hh/>
43. *Internet Archive*. <https://archive.org/> [Non-profit; digital library offering free access to book, movies, music, archived web pages, and more.]
44. Key, Watt. *Among the Swamp People: Life in Alabama's Mobile-Tensaw River Delta*. Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 2015.
45. Kiple, Kenneth F. and Elaine Willis, editors. *Plague, Pox & Pestilence: Disease in History*. Sterling Publishing, 1997.
46. Kirkham, E. Kay. *The Handwriting of American Records for a Period of 300 Years*. Logan, UT: The Everton Publishers, Inc., 1973.
47. "Map." *Bureau of Land Management*. [navigator.blm.gov/map](http://navigator.blm.gov/map) [Access to the Navigator Toolbox. "Navigator provides a centralized location to discover and access BLMs geospatial data..."]
48. Mills, Elizabeth Shown, CG, CGL, FASG, FNGS, FUGA. *Isle of Canes: A Historical Novel*. Provo, UT: MyFamily.com, 2004.
49. ———. *Historic Pathways*. <https://historicpathways.com>
50. "National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections." *Library of Congress*. <https://loc.gov/coll/nucmc/> [An index to manuscript collections; free cataloging program operated by the Library of Congress; includes the author, title, description, notes, subjects, repository, etc.]
51. Norris, David A. "Giddy Up! Your Ancestors' Horse-drawn Vehicles." *Family Chronicle*, July/August 2012, pp. 18-22.
52. ———. "Holidays, Quarter Days and Term Days." *Family Chronicle*, Nov/Dec 2012, pp. 6-10.

53. Philibert-Ortega, Gena. "From Their Kitchen to Yours." *FamilyTree Magazine*, March/April 2012, pp. 28-32.
54. ———. "Quick Guide: Food History Websites." *Family Tree Magazine*, December 2012, p. 64.
55. "Principal Meridians and Baselines." *Bureau of Land Management*.  
[https://glorerecords.blm.gov/reference/default.aspx?id=05\\_Appendices|06\\_Principal\\_Meridians\\_And\\_Baselines](https://glorerecords.blm.gov/reference/default.aspx?id=05_Appendices|06_Principal_Meridians_And_Baselines)
56. "Prints & Photographs Online Catalog." *Library of Congress*. <https://loc.gov/pictures/> [Consists "of more than 14 million items".]
57. *Project Gutenberg*. <https://gutenberg.org/> [Over 70,000 free eBooks.]
58. Reader's Digest. *The 20th Eventful Century. Inventions That Changed the World*. Pleasantville, NY: The Reader's Digest Association, Inc., 1999.
59. "Records." *Mobile Probate Court*. <https://probate.mobilecountyal.gov/public-records/records>
60. "Research Our Records." *National Archives and Records Administration* (US NARA).  
<https://www.archives.gov/research> [Includes photographs.]
61. Shubert, Betty Kreisel. *Out-of-Style: A Modern Perspective of How, Why and When Vintage Fashions Evolved*. Mission Viejo, CA: Flashback Publishing, 2013.
62. Stryker-Rodda, Harriet. *Understanding Colonial Handwriting*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1996.
63. "Township and Range - Public Land Survey System on Google Earth." *Earth Point*.  
<https://www.earthpoint.us/Townships.aspx>
64. *U.S. National Archives and Records Administration*. <https://www.archives.gov/>
65. United States Board on Geographic Names. *USGS-United States Geological Survey*.  
<https://edits.nationalmap.gov/apps/gaz-domestic/public/search/names> [On-line U. S. Gazetteer. Great site for finding places in the U.S.]
66. Various authors. *The Writer's Guide to Everyday Life in . . . Series*. (Various publishers; various dates).
67. "Vine & Olive Colony." Vertical File, Genealogy Department, Mobile Public Library, Mobile, Mobile County, Alabama.
68. Walch, Timothy, PhD., compiler. *Our Family, Our Town: Essays on Family and Local History Sources in the National Archives*. National Archives Trust Fund Board: National Archives and Records Administration, 1987.

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