



Unit 1 - Lesson 1 - The Big 5

Who can get excited about learning the Genealogy Standards of Proof? Everyone who wants to avoid the disappointment of false starts, common beginner mistakes and wasted efforts.

There is nothing more disheartening after months of work than discovering that your results are in question. Just like the lady who travelled to Scotland to visit the town her ancestors came from, only to find out when she returned home that she had visited the wrong town; or the two fellows who thought they were distant cousins and after many years of thinking they were related found out they were not; they are still friends, so that's pretty nice. Even I have experienced this – I contacted another genealogist thinking I may have finally broken through a very frustrating brick wall, only to find out that I was the source of information this fellow used, even though it clearly states on my website that the evidence for the individual in question is unproven.

Discovering that all of the hours you have spent were wasted and now you have to start again is unfortunately, and all too often, a situation that a beginning genealogists may face. Why? Only because you did not know the **Big 5 Basic Guidelines of the Genealogical Proof Standards**. Not knowing that some sources may contain errors and that not all research, either in print or online, is credible and factual can be a costly and/or time consuming mistake.

That is why we at Genealogy Beginner are going to set you up for success with the knowledge and awareness to avoid a similar situation for yourself. By following some simple guidelines, this never needs to be you. After this course, you will have developed the impeccable habits of the wise researcher. You will know the basic principals of and the reasons why you need to work to a standard of proof. You will learn how to look for a reliable source and how to spot misleading information, and you will have spent your time and money wisely.

Welcome to your first lesson in Beginning Genealogy.

In this lesson, you will be learning about the basic principals and standards of conducting genealogical research. At the conclusion of this lesson, you will understand the value of clear, concise and factual research, and why it is so important to all of us.

There is no big secret to be unveiled — what it all comes down to is asking the following questions:

- **Have you written down where you found your information?**
- **Have you reasonably searched every resource?**
- **Does all of your information point to the same conclusion?**
- **Are there any conflicts that need to be resolved?**
- **Can you retrace your steps and defend your argument?**

These are the questions that make up the five elements for the Genealogical Proof Standard as set out by the Board for Certification of Genealogists (BCG).

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