

Lancashire Family History & Heraldry Society



Chorley Branch Education Group Talk Handout First Steps Research Strategies

Little more than common sense!

- Start your research with yourself and work backwards
- Do not start with Napoleon and work towards yourself!
 - Demonstrate –
 - Draw a direct line ancestor tree and compare to a descendant tree.
- Research more than one line.
 - When you get stuck with one line, and you will, you can swap to another.

- I study eight
 - Chapman
 - Thornton
 - Willis
 - Ferguson
 - Medd
 - Brown
 - Beatty
 - Craig
- Plus a few others
 - Boyd
 - Capstick
 - Patterson
 - etc.
- When you return to the stuck line you might find that
 - You have gained more experience
 - More records have become available
 - Especially on the internet
 - New possibilities have occurred to you

Use the records in combination.

- A birth certificate leads to a marriage.
 - Childs surname with mothers maiden name plus approximate date.
- A marriage certificate leads to a birth.
 - Father's name, date of marriage and age can lead to the birth of the bride & groom.
- All supported by the census
 - Gives family groups
- But don't restrict your self to just these!
 - What else can we use?
 - Church records
 - MI's
 - Quarter Sessions
 - Newspapers
 - Wills and Probate
 - Poor Law

- Directories
- Electoral Registers
- Military Records
- Migration Records
- School Records
- Criminal Records
- Hospital Record
- Etc.

Be sure that you have your facts right!

- Does everything tie in with what you already know?
 - A discrepancy could mean that you have selected the wrong one.
- If not can you reasonably account for the differences?
 - We all know that ages and birth places can vary from census to census but don't jump to the idea that you have the correct one.
- Might another source better fit the facts?
 - Look again!
- Do other sources confirm your deductions?
 - In the 1911 census John Smith says he was born in Chorley and his age indicates he was born in 1850
 - ` In the 1901 census he was born in Euxton in 1851
 - In the 1891 census he was born in Chorley in 1849
 - You find a birth in 1850 in Euxton that appears to fit.
- **Is it the correct one?**
 - We are fortunate that the birth entry on Lancashire BMD gives the mothers maiden name as Brown.
 - We look at the 1851 census and we find John Smith in Euxton with his parents James Smith and Mary. The ages of the children suggests they were married in c1845.

- We look for a marriage of James Smith and Mary Brown in 1845 in Euxton and indeed we find one.

- **Does this prove that this is the correct birth?**

- **No, not yet!**

- In 1911, 1901 and 1891 John's occupation is a Printer. (What kind of printer?)

- We check the 1861 census and find him still at home with his parents and his occupation is Farmer's son.

- Some doubt now!

- Collect all the information about every family member, all census's, births, baptisms, marriages, deaths & burials, newspapers, maps, etc. and check that they do not contradict one another.

- Check that you have a full nine months between the children. Look for large gaps in the ages of children. Are some missing?

- Check and recheck your facts.

- I go through the line I am researching again when I return to it after a period. It is good practice and reminds me what I have done before.

A minimum of three legs to a stool!

- A minimum of three bits of information to prove any fact.

- Birth
- Marriage
- Death
- Military rank
- Etc.

- But any stool can fall if it has a wonky leg.

Do not trust anything.

- Family tales could turn out to be completely wrong!
- Other people's research should not be trusted!

- Ronald T Chapman
- Ronald Chapman
- R T Chapman
- R Chapman
- Ronald Thornton Chatman ...
- If this fails enter in fuller detail but leaving out the Surname
- If you cannot find a particular member of a family in the census then look for other members. (Wife, Children, Father or Mother)
- Choose the family members with unusual forenames.
- Alternatively look for the youngest child. It should be at home with its parents.

Researching at record offices, Libraries etc.

- If possible search their catalogues online before you set out.
- Write down what you want to find and the details from your research.
- Take lots of things to research.
- Take with you a pad of paper, pencils, camera, batteries, a family tree etc.
- Find out what the local rules are and what identification is needed before you go.
- Write down exactly what you are searching for, what the source is and the years searched even if you find nothing.
- At the top of every sheet of paper write down the source, where you are researching and the date.
- Also number each sheet of paper.
- Transfer your rough notes into fair copies and file them away as soon as possible.

Sources

- You should always record what your source is, where it is kept and what it says.
- This enables you to go back and check your facts but also allows others to follow the same tracks as you.

What are 'Sources', 'Citations' and 'Repositories'?

- Repository

- Record Office
- Library
- Could be a bookshelf at home
- Or indeed Aunty Alice

- Yes, where Information is held
 - You have found a birth on Lancashire BMD and received a certificate from Registry Office, on the Docks at Preston
- What to you record as the repository? LancashireBMD? Registry Office? Your Home?

- Source
 - The source could be the
 - document,
 - book,
 - Certificate,
 - Audio recording,
 - Photograph
 - A person
 - Etc.

 - The source description might include
 - Book title
 - Author
 - Publisher
 - Years covered
 - Repository
- Citation
 - The Citation might include
 - The relevant text
 - Page number
 - Line number
 - Evidence Assessment

Lancashire Family History & Heraldry Society
Chorley Research Centre at Astley Hall Farmhouse

Opening times

First & Third Saturdays Noon—4:00pm

Monday, Wednesday & Friday 10:00am—4:00pm

Last appointment 3:00pm

Booking advisable—Tel. 01257 231 600 (When centre is open), Tel 01257 262 028 (When centre is closed)

or

Book on line at - Chorley Family History Research Centre Website – www.cfhrc.com

Research Enquires - chorleyresearch@lffhs.org.uk

Chorley Branch Website - www.lfhhschorleybranch.com

LFHHS

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