

## Critical Connections: Putting the Pieces & Strategies Together

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*"As anyone researching their family history knows, a family's story is much bigger than names, dates, and locations. Records can tell us things such as someone's date of birth, where they lived, or what their profession was, but they do not always illuminate the context of 'why' our ancestors made certain choices."*

Elizabeth Hodges (Senior Genealogy Librarian, ACPL)

Having a great time finding your families' stories is the adventure of a lifetime. Having fun and engaging well are not mutually exclusive.

Content and context are king.

Commit to finding all the evidence; commit to analyzing all we find.

More intentional focus must be placed on finding and analyzing all available evidence. We need to more fully embrace the mindset of a detective in both sleuthing-out as much evidence as possible and in evaluating the discovered evidence.

Genealogical Proof Standard's five elements:

1. Reasonably exhaustive research has been conducted.
2. Each statement of fact has a complete and accurate source citation.
3. The evidence is reliable and has been skillfully correlated and interpreted.
4. Any contradictory evidence has been resolved.
5. The conclusion has been soundly reasoned and coherently written.

The histories of locales may provide enormous clues to both records & context.

- o WorldCat ([www.WorldCat.org](http://www.WorldCat.org))
- o Internet Archive ([www.Archive.org](http://www.Archive.org))
- o FamilySearch Digital Library ([www.familysearch.org/library/books](http://www.familysearch.org/library/books))
- o Google (!)
- o Allen County Public Library Genealogy Center ([www.GenealogyCenter.org](http://www.GenealogyCenter.org))
- o Public libraries in the towns & counties of our research focus
- o Historical societies in the towns & counties of our research focus
- o State libraries & state historical societies in the states of our research focus

Newspapers are the chroniclers of the lives and times of our ancestors. They have already published our stories.

- Chronicling America (<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>)
- Newspapers.com
- NewspaperArchive.com
- State libraries and historical societies
- Local, state and regional memory projects
- School newspapers
- Other organizational newspapers

Find all the evidence, analyze everything you find, do the history, build the context.