

# Genealogical Standards

## Standards For Sound Genealogical Research

Recommended by the National Genealogical Society

Remembering always that they are engaged in a quest for truth, family history researchers consistently—

- \* record the source for each item of information they collect.
- \* test every hypothesis or theory against credible evidence, and reject those that are not supported by the evidence.
- \* seek original records, or reproduced images of them when there is reasonable assurance they have not been altered, as the basis for their research conclusions.
- \* use compilations, communications and published works, whether paper or electronic, primarily for their value as guides to locating the original records, or as contributions to the critical analysis of the evidence discussed in them.
- \* state something as a fact only when it is supported by convincing evidence, and identify the evidence when communicating the fact to others.
- \* limit with words like "probable" or "possible" any statement that is based on less than convincing evidence, and state the reasons for concluding that it is probable or possible.
- \* avoid misleading other researchers by either intentionally or carelessly distributing or publishing inaccurate information.
- \* state carefully and honestly the results of their own research, and acknowledge all use of other researchers' work.
- \* recognize the collegial nature of genealogical research by making their work available to others through publication, or by placing copies in appropriate libraries or repositories, and by welcoming critical comment.
- \* consider with open minds new evidence or the comments of others on their work and the conclusions they have reached.