

# WHAT DO YOU MEAN, “CITE YOUR SOURCE”?

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**WHAT?** Cite your source means, “detail the place where you obtained the information.” If the source was a book, there are five basic items plus the page that you need: author, title, place of publication, publisher and date. If it’s an obituary, you need name of newspaper, city, state, date of newspaper and page. If other than a book, include the format. Is the source CD? Microfilm? Fiche? Email? Photo? Letter? Bible?

**WHEN?** Write down the citation *at the time* that you find the research information. There will be *no better time* to get it right! Once you get in the habit, you will save yourself time and energy.

**WHERE?** Citations should always be placed on the front of the page. Avoid the edge of the paper because if a copy of the document is made, the edge may be cut off.

**WHY?** Citing the source gives credence to the information and puts the burden of proof on that source. Also, a detailed citation of the source allows the information to be found again by the researcher or by anyone else. Information printed on paper does not necessarily mean that it is true. Carefully analyze any source that is found, and compare a variety of documents as you search for the truth.

**HOW?** Sample citations:

1. *California Online Death Index 1940-2000*, <http://vitals.rootsweb.com/ca/death/search.cgi>
2. James A. Savage. *Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England* (Reprint, Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1998), 135.
3. Emmogean Sargent obituary, *Grand Rapids Press* (Michigan), Friday, 26 June 1925, page 30.
4. D. J. Lake. *Atlas of Barry County, Michigan, Rutland Township* (Philadelphia: C. O. Titus, 1873), 17
5. Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints. *National Index & Records 1880 U.S. Census*, CD-ROM (USA: Intellectual Reserve Inc., 2001), James Vanderheid [VanderHyde] household listing Henry Henderson, 11<sup>th</sup> ward, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan, page 365B, CD #31.
6. Western Michigan Genealogical Society. “The Grandfather I Never Knew.” *Michigana*, volume 50, no. 2 (May/June 2004): 60-61.
7. William Findore entry, Kent County Deaths, Liber 14:145, no. 1423, County Clerk’s Office, Grand Rapids, Michigan:
8. Julia McDowell household, 1900 U.S. census, Los Angeles County, California, population schedule, Pomona, San Jose township, enumeration district [ED] 129, supervisor’s district [SD] 6, sheet 11B, dwelling 269, family 269, National Archives microduplication T623, roll 92.
9. Letter from Lucy (Huff) Davis (Mrs. Ronald Davis, 451 Julia NE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49505) to Anna (Huff) Benson 31 May 1953; held in 2004 by Robert Benson (15113 Silver Lake Road, Gowen, Michigan 49326), son of Anna Benson. Lucy & Anna Huff were sisters.

**WHO?** Need more help? Consult the following:  
Elizabeth Shown Mills. *Evidence! Citation & Analysis for the Family Historian* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1997).