



## Research Wiki

### Guiding Principles

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#### **FamilySearch Research Wiki: Six Guiding Principles**

##### **Purpose and Scope.**

In conjunction with the mission of FamilySearch, the Research Wiki is a collaborative, shared-knowledge project designed to encourage and eventually enable all people to find their ancestors. The Research Wiki uses collaboration tools to form a community for sharing knowledge from which users may gather needed information to help locate and use records about ancestors. Ancestral research requires extensive knowledge of cultures and historical sources specific to each region, and each ethnic, religious, or political group. Such information is often written in a foreign language. Expertise on those various cultures and historical sources may be widespread and varied. Through collaboration, sharing, open-edit, and forums the community can build enough high-quality knowledge to help more family history researchers.

##### **Free.**

As a not for profit entity FamilySearch fundamentally requires that all products and services be free of charge to everyone. All content on the Research Wiki is covered under a Creative Commons license, which states that anyone can use this content, with proper citations, on any other creative commons site. Additionally, there will never be a charge to the user to have access to any of the content on the Research Wiki, and the Research Wiki may not be used to advertise or drive users to other sites that charge for services. Links to “for fee” sites must be limited to information that is freely available to the general public. The Research Wiki cannot be used for spamming or advertising teasers.

##### **Sources and Delimiters.**

Articles should cite authoritative, verifiable sources whenever possible. Any un-sourced material may be challenged and removed. Limit discussion of religion, politics, ethnicity, culture, and history to those aspects which affect

family history research or record keeping. The Research Wiki does not have copies of the source documents themselves (except a few pages as examples). Do not include details about specific ancestors, or individual biographies (except as examples on a record, or as case studies to illustrate a process or principle).

## **Neutral Point of View.**

The Research Wiki must be written from a neutral point of view, representing fairly, and as far as possible without bias, all significant views of family history related topics that have been published by reliable sources. This allows those who will come to use and depend on the knowledge contained within the Research Wiki to see and try all techniques and suggestions for finding records about their ancestors. Neutral point of view also requires the citation of sources that are authoritative and verifiable. Avoid unduly personal points of view, personal opinion, personal experiences, or arguments. The Research Wiki is not a soapbox, a place to include personal testimonials, or stories of research success, or an advertising platform. Avoid being dogmatic. Overly religious, political, ethnic, cultural, historic, and nationalistic discussions tend to be biased, one-sided, and rarely apply to family history research, records, or instruction. The best way to avoid being personal or dogmatic is to write with a neutral point of view and cite authoritative sources for the ideas you express. Strive to fairly explain any competing points of view that differ from your own. Even though this site is sponsored by a religious entity, it is neither reviewed nor correlated for doctrinal correctness, and therefore, should not become a forum for doctrinal discussions or discourses—even ones that are purely informational in nature. Other sites may exist for this purpose, especially <http://lds.org> and may be linked to from within the Research Wiki.

## **Code of Conduct.**

The FamilySearch Research Wiki has a code of conduct similar to that of Wikipedia. It includes respect for all of your fellow users, even when you may not agree with what they say. Those who contribute content or edit existing content must be civil and avoid conflicts of interest, personal attacks, labeling of others, broad sweeping generalizations, stereotyping, etc. They should seek for consensus and avoid edit wars—follow the three-revert rule(link). Assume good faith on the part of others, be warm and open in your speech. Profanity or profane slang will not be accepted in any form or language.

## **Be bold.**

Do not wait for permission to make a change that you feel will be beneficial to those who use the Research Wiki. If you see something that needs to be done, do it. Don't make a suggestion, make a change. However, remember that when making changes don't do anything that would prevent those who disagree with your changes from reverting back to the original version while civil discussion happens to reach an acceptable compromise. Don't let the possibility of disagreement stop you from making the changes. If you feel the change is needed then make it. Don't take edits or changes as a personal affront. Contributors and editors are encouraged to work with the community to make the Research Wiki a superior site for family history research information.

- modified, 9 August 2008.