

Writing and Publishing Your Family History

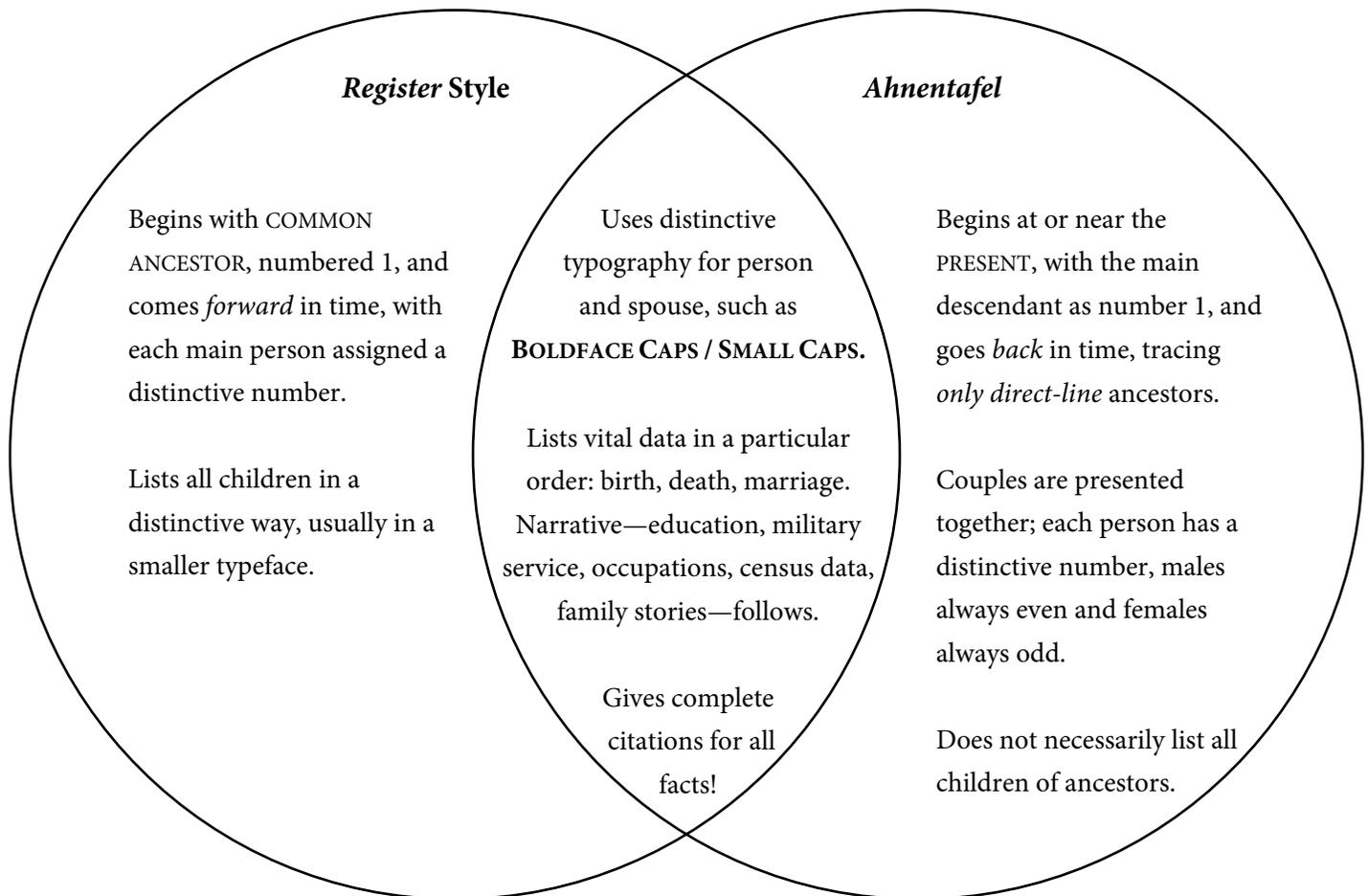
Session 2: Structure, Sketches, and Citations

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Keep In Mind

1. Audience
2. Table of Contents
3. Consistency leads to clarity!
4. What do you want to tell your readers?
5. Who do you plan to write about?

Genealogical Formats



Genealogical Sketches

Build genealogical sketches: names, vital data, dates, places.

- Born-died-married
- Place-date
- Blanks for unknown names
- Parentheses around maiden and previous married names
- Superscript generational numbers, starting with 1 for the immigrant

Ahnentafel

An *ahnentafel*, or ancestor table, begins at or near the present and follows a direct line of ancestors as far back as is traceable or for a certain number of generations. The subject whose ancestry will be traced is number 1, and each person is numbered in a particular order from there. The father would be number 2 and the mother number 3. Fathers are always even-numbered and mothers are always odd-numbered.

- Person x 2 = Father
- (Person x 2) + 1 = Mother
- Father / 2 = Child

Example of father-mother entry entry:

Distinctive style for name

Birth, death, marriage; place, followed by date

Father's number is always even and mother's is odd.

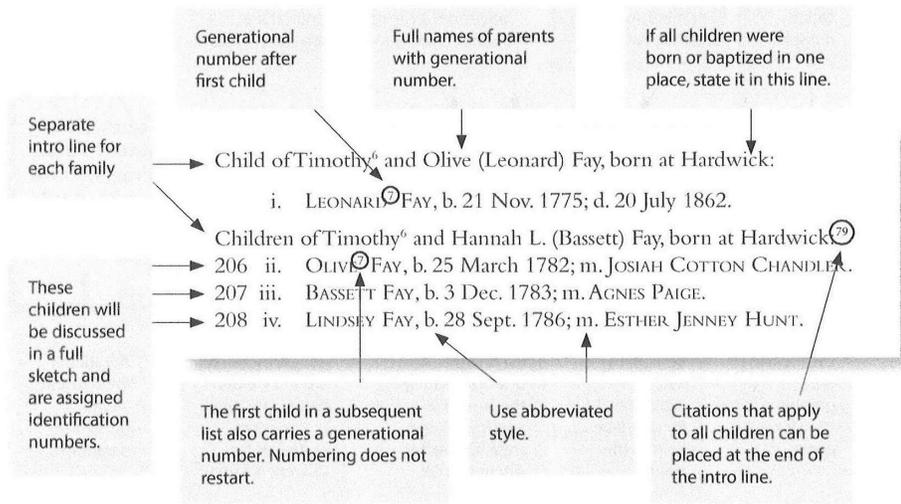
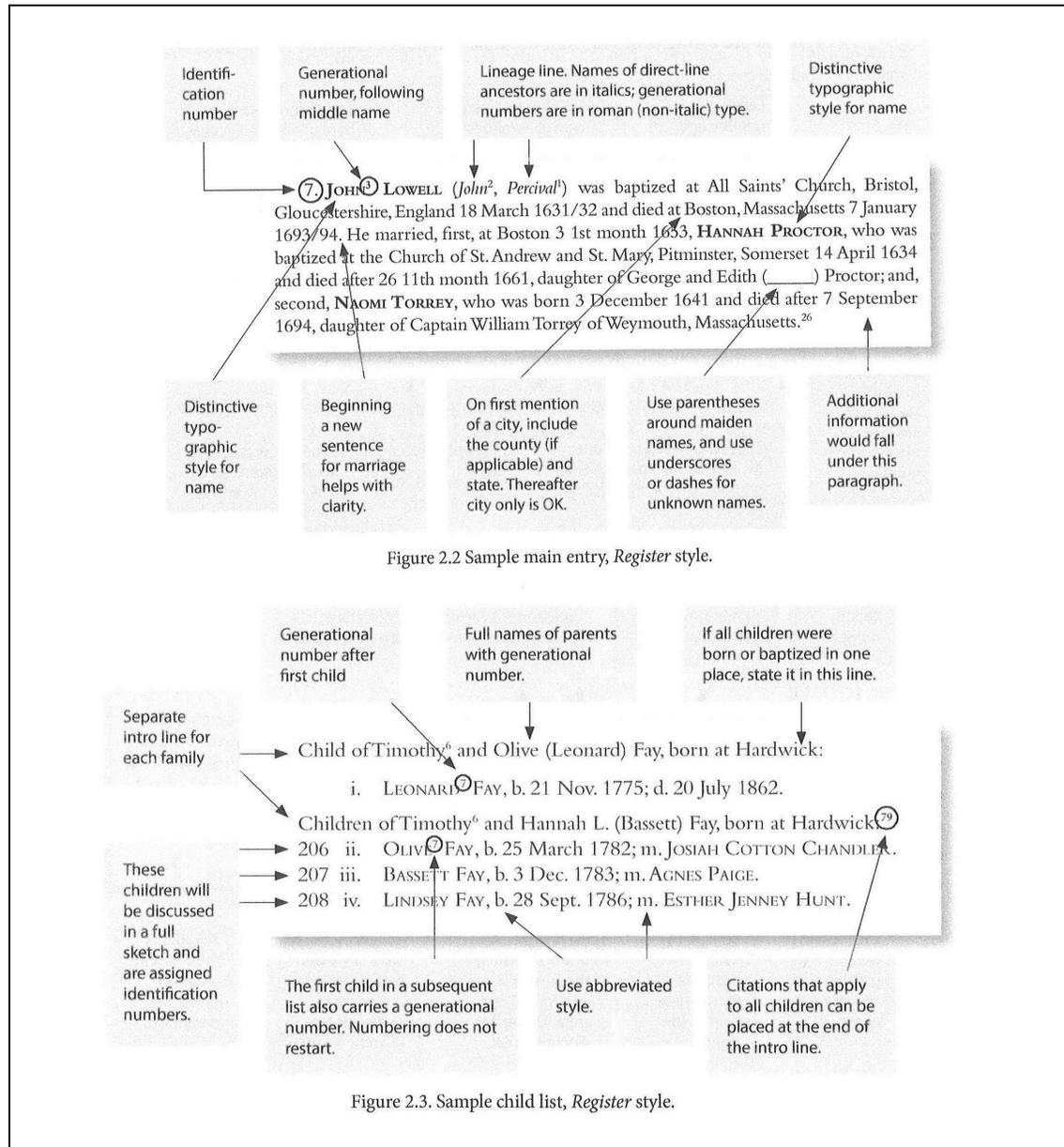
12. **ORVILLE WHIPPLE** was born at Clarkson, Monroe County, New York, 21 April 1841,⁶⁹ and died at Union Township, Harrison County, Missouri, 25 March 1890; he is buried in Allen Cemetery in Harrison County.⁷⁰ He married at Findlay, Hancock County, Ohio, 15 March 1866 **ADRIENNE HILL**.⁷¹

13. **ADRIENNE HILL** was born at Youngstown, Mahoning County, Ohio, 1 August 1846,⁷³ and died at Sharpsburg, Taylor County, Iowa, 29 January 1937.⁷⁴

Excerpted from Janice Morgan Seligman, So Proudly We Hail: Ancestors and Descendants of Harold and Elsie Cole (Whipple) Morgan (Newbury Street Press, 2011).

Register-style

The basic building block of *Register* style is the family sketch, which treats a couple and their children in a standardized way. With a numbering system that organizes the data and clarifies who is who, each main person has a distinct number.



Samples from Stratton and Hoff, *NEHGS Guide to Genealogical Writing*, 15-16.

Citations

Basics

The purpose of citing sources is to allow the reader to easily recreate the research “trail” the author used to determine a certain fact.

- ❖ Anything that is not common knowledge must be sourced.
- ❖ The important thing is to allow the reader to find the source you referenced.
 - Indicate the location of the data.
 - Inform readers of anything pertinent to the access and interpretation of the data.
- ❖ Aim for the best possible source. If a fact can be gleaned from multiple sources, we should choose to cite the most reliable source(s).

Best Advice

- ✓ Cite as you write!
- ✓ Always Be Consistent! – Pick a style and stick with it.
 - Base your preferred style on the recommended style guides. This adherence to standard practices will help the reader understand the different elements of the citation.

Reference Notes

- ✓ Use the footnote function in Word.
 - Work with footnotes and convert to endnotes later.
- ✓ Citations come in three styles: full reference note, shortened reference note, and bibliographic entry.
 - Use full citation in first reference, include: (hereafter *Short Title*)
 - Make a short list to keep track of the short titles.
 - For a source list, organize using broad categories and cite the master source (collection) rather than specific items within.
- ✓ Do not use *Ibid.*
- ✓ Use abbreviations – like for state names and months over five letters

- ❖ Choose between notes by fact or combined by sentence/paragraph.

Note for each fact	Note at end of sentence or paragraph
Source citation follows each fact.	Source citation follows a sentence or a paragraph.
Ideal for genealogical community.	Ideal for more narrative style.
Easy to see which reference goes with which text; very clear connection.	Must be sure to indicate within the citation which source applies to which fact.
Some people find it hard to follow text when note numbers appear frequently.	Consolidates footnotes and space, and decreases the number of notes.
	More time consuming; more room for error.

- ❖ Choose between footnotes and endnotes.

Footnotes	Endnotes	Combined System
Each source citation is a footnote.	Source citations appear at the end of the chapter or book (after appendixes, before bibliography).	Use endnotes for citations and footnotes for explanatory text. Use numbers for endnotes; letters or symbols for footnotes.
Works for all audiences, but gives the book a very scholarly look.	Works for all audiences.	Works for all audiences.
Page layout is difficult. A long footnote may not appear on the same page as its reference. A page consisting almost exclusively of footnotes is daunting to read.	Doesn't interrupt reading or cause layout problems. Can be difficult to locate a particular reference. If you place notes at the back of the book, include headings for chapters.	Puts important textual explanations on the actual page; source notes remain all together. In Word, select the appropriate command for that note: Insert Footnote or Insert Endnote.
Bibliography helpful, but not essential.		

- ❖ To build a citation, answer three questions for each of three potential layers of data to adequately inform readers how to find the source.

Record		Access		Secondary Access	
Data pertains to the record itself		Data pertains to how the record was accessed		Data pertains to how the record's original collection has been made accessible	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record citation. Source citation, citing Record. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record citation, in <i>Collection</i>, at Location. <i>Collection</i>, at Location, citing Record. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record citation, in <i>Collection</i>, format data, at Location. Record citation, in format data, citing <i>Collection</i>, at Location. 	
Answering: Who, what, when?		Answering: In what collection, at what repository/website?		Answering: In what format and how was the collection accessed?	
Who:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Author Creator Subject 	Collection:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manuscript Private owner's Database 	Format:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Microfilm/fiche Digital image
What:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record type Record title 	Repository:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Archive, library, society Website 	Access point:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Film/fiche number Database/website
When:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date Year/range Volume 	Repository location:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City, State URL/domain name 	Location:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repository Website

Resources

Download the *Register*-style template, the *ahnentafel* template, and a sample stylesheet from: <https://www.americanancestors.org/education/learning-resources/download>.

Penny Stratton and Henry B. Hoff, eds., *NEHGS Guide to Genealogical Writing* (Boston: NEHGS, 2014).

Portable Genealogist Compilation: Writing (Boston: NEHGS, 2017).

The Chicago Manual of Style, 18th ed. (University of Chicago, 2024), at www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/.

Elizabeth Shown Mills, *Evidence! Citation and Analysis for the Family Historian* (Baltimore: Genealogical Pub. Co., 1997) and *Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace*, 4th ed. (Baltimore: Genealogical Pub. Co., 2024).