

# Reasonably Exhaustive Research (RER) Checklist

Reasonably Exhaustive Research is the first part of the Genealogical Proof Standard (GPS).

*“Reasonably exhaustive research ensures examination of all potentially relevant sources. It minimized the risk that undiscovered evidence will overturn a too-hasty conclusion.”<sup>1</sup>*

“A Genealogical Proof Standard component, requiring *research* thorough enough to meet five criteria...

- a) yield at least two sources of independent information items agreeing directly or indirectly on a research question,
- b) cover sources competent genealogists would examine to answer the same research question,
- c) provide at least some primary information and *direct, indirect or negative evidence* from at least one original record
- d) replace, where possible, relevant *authored narratives, derivative records and information* that is secondary or undetermined
- e) Yield, where possible data from sources that indexes and database identify as potentially relevant.”<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Board for Certification of Genealogist, *Genealogy Standards, Second Edition*, Ancestry.com Publishing, Nashville, TN, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Board for Certification of Genealogist, *Genealogy Standards, Second Edition*, Ancestry.com Publishing, Nashville, TN, p. 85.



## Does Your Research Meet the RER Checklist?

- Two Independent Sources.**
  - This is not an index and the matching record from the index, but at least two individual sources.
- Items Agree Directly, Indirectly, or Through Negative Evidence.**
- At Least One Original Record - Ideally More.**
- Replace, Authored Narratives, Derivative Records and Information that is Secondary or Undetermined.**
  - In other words, replace hearsay evidence with original records, whenever possible.
- Seek Original Sources from All Evidence Found in Indexes, Registries, and Databases that are Potentially Relevant.**
  - You may not always find originals. In some cases, indexes are all that have survived.
- Have You Found All You Can in a Reasonable Time and Search that Meets the Above Minimums?**

This does not mean you spend years researching, it means you have looked everywhere possible in a reasonable time. This is why we focus on one research question at a time.

- Have You Looked on All Major Online Locations?**
  - Ancestry
  - FamilySearch
  - MyHeritage (If Needed)
  - FindMyPast (If Necessary for UK & Ireland Research)
  - State Archives
  - County Library
  - Cemetery Websites
  - Newspapers

- Have You Searched On Location/In-Person?**

It is not always possible to research in person. However, you can contact the local repositories to ask if they have a type of record and what it would cost to obtain a copy. For Example, this is what State Archives do every day. While they won't do the research, if you provide them the call number from their online services, they often will pull and send you the record for a small fee.

Reasonably Exhaustive Research is the first component of the Genealogical Proof Standard (GPS) and is equally as important as the other components of the GPS. I highly recommend the GPS book. It is small and easy to read. I keep it handy for reference.

[GET THE GPS BOOK](#) (Affiliate Link)

**IF you can check this list off, you have met the first component of the GPS. The rest is easy.**