

Level 3: The Final Project

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Purpose

- Distinguish the professional-level genealogist from the hobbyist and the amateur.
- Test your ability in data analysis, research planning, methodology, and report writing.
- Give you the opportunity to prove your expertise in producing high quality research in a limited amount of time, recreating a real world experience.

Elements of the Final Project

- **Set a research objective** from the provided pedigree problem
 - State the objective at the beginning of the report.
 - Include the complete names of individuals.
 - Use key identifiers such as birth, marriage, or death dates and place.
 - Keep the objective narrow enough to be completed in four hours.
 - Look for clues in the pedigree problem.
- **Create a research plan**
 - Include the five best sources for meeting the research objective.
 - Use records appropriate for the area and time period.
 - Be specific – state dates and places to be searched.
- **Conduct research**
 - Keep a research log with source citations; include enough information to allow others to find the same information.
 - Use original sources when available.
 - Online family trees cannot be used.
 - Complete family information on the supplied pedigree chart and family group record.
 - Make an electronic copy of the documents found. Number each document and put the corresponding number in the research log and research report.
 - Transcribe or abstract at least one of the documents.
- **Write a client report**

Elements of the Client Report

- **The research objective** - placed at the beginning of the report
- **Background information** – information about what was known when the research began
- **The research plan** - five or more sources prioritized for the best results

- **The body of the report** - research findings from the sources searched

- Use subheadings to organize the information.
- Explain the reasoning for using a record type.
- Include negative as well as positive searches.
- Use source citations for each genealogical statement – add document numbers for each document found after the report is completed.
- Present the evidence that supports your conclusion.
- Explain the significance of key findings
- Address conflicting evidence.
- Present findings clearly- use bullet points or a table.
- Transcribe or abstract at least one document found in the report.
- **A summary or conclusion** of the research that was conducted
 - Address the objective and how it was reached or needs further research.
 - Summarize the research findings
- **Recommendations for future research**
 - Include the sources that were not searched from the research plan and what is expected to be found in those sources.
 - Add any recommendations from the research conducted.

Elements to Turn in at the End of the Final Project

- The completed client report
- The completed research log
- The completed pedigree chart
- All of the family group records on which you recorded information
- Photocopied or electronic documents
- All notes you have written and scrap paper used
- The research problem and instructions

Preparation Tips

- Practice, practice, practice – create a research question from an online document such as a census or a will and do a full practice test.
- Print the grading rubric from the Guide to Becoming Accredited and evaluate your project at the end of the four hour testing period.
- Make notes about your shortcomings and how to improve.
- Create a checklist of all elements that need to be included and anything that you might forget.
- If possible, take a practice test at the Family History Library or your local library – somewhere out of your comfort zone, using two different computers: one for research and one to write the report.
- Prepare a source citation template for the sources commonly used in your region.
- Create a research log template and practice using it to quickly record search information.
- Create templates for census tables, practice using them in reports to highlight research findings.

Testing Tips

- Get a good night's sleep; arrive early to the testing location.
- Bring your printed checklist and Research Reference Guides printed, on a flash drive or both.
- Bring your research log, table template, and source citations template on a flash drive.
- You can use the provided printed log to handwrite source information.
- You may use a genealogical software database to record your data and print out the FGR and PC at the end of the project or use the provided printed FGR and PC. The report, research log, and database will be deleted immediately after printing.
- Make sure you understand all of the instructions before starting the time clock.
- Write out your objective and place in front of the computer – stick to the objective.
- Write the report as you research or start to write after one hour of research. Find 2-3 sources beyond the census and then start writing. Do not wait too long to begin the report.
- Keep a running list of future research suggestions as you research.
- Work methodically and carefully, take breaks to refocus your energy.
- Write a solid conclusion. Summarize each section of the research.
- Create the source citation on the research log, then copy and paste into the report.
- Download documents as you find them to a folder. Give each a descriptive name: date, record type, name of individual, location.
- When the report is completed, add document numbers after the source citations for documents found: Document 1. Correlate the document numbers on the research log, family group records, and add to the beginning of each document's file name.
- Allow one hour to proofread the report for consistent voice, grammar, punctuation.
- Double check that data corresponds between the pedigree chart, family group records, and report.
- Remember that the goal is to conduct research and report it properly. Do not get overly concerned about identifying multiple generations. It is not how far you get that is being evaluated.

Rating

Two raters who are accredited in the applicant's accreditation area evaluate this exam using the same grading rubrics. Criteria they consider include items such as the following:

- Were all expected items returned to the proctor (report, research log, pedigree chart, family group record, and documents)?
- Was the research objective stated clearly and completely (e.g., correct objective, name, dates, places, relationships)?
- Were at least five key record groups listed in the research plan, mentioned in the report, or outlined on the research log? (Sources not searched due to time constraints can be listed in the future recommendations section of the report.)

- Were all facts consistently supported by a proper standard of proof? (e.g., reasonably extensive research, careful evaluation of evidence, accurate evaluation, etc.)
- Were all facts consistently supported by footnotes?
- Did the applicant use a good research strategy?
- Did the applicant discuss all generations that were discovered?
- Did the applicant correctly interpret the research findings and properly evaluate the evidence?
- Were the suggestions for future research reasonable, pertinent to the objective, and detailed?
- Did the research log include the essential items?
- Were all sources discussed in the report found in the research log and on the family group records?
- Did the pedigree chart include the correct families and was all information found during research listed on the chart?
- Did the family group records include the correct family members and was all information found during research listed on these records?

Sample Problem 1:

	<u>David Almond</u>
	b. abt 1823
	bp. Ohio
	d. 1861
	dp. Nelson, Ohio
<u>Jesse Almond</u>	
b. July 1847	_____
bp. Nelson, Ohio	
m. 24 Oct 1873	
mp. Vermillion, Illinois	
d. 12 Aug 1902	
dp. Vermillion, Illinois	

The client wants to identify Jesse’s mother and siblings, and then extend the maternal line. A preliminary survey has been completed on this pedigree, and it is now time to continue research in original records. You are not allowed to search online trees such as Ancestry Trees, FamilySearch Family Tree, MyHeritage Family Tree, etc. To do so will result in failure of the exam.

Sample Problem 2:

In 1862, John Mann and his wife Amanda were living in Buffalo, New York. They had one daughter, Mary Ann, who was born about 1860 in New York. The objective is to identify the parents and siblings of Amanda Mann. Compile a family group sheet listing Amanda and her brothers and sisters as children. You are not allowed to search online trees such as Ancestry Trees, FamilySearch Family Tree, MyHeritage Family Tree, etc. To do so will result in failure of the exam.