



Getting It Right

Effective Research

Recording Conventions



Interior of the record room at the New Zealand Army Recruiting Station
in Victoria St West 1917

– [Auckland Libraries](#)

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This is part of the "Effective Research" series. These notes should be read in conjunction with the accompanying video which can be found on the [NZSG website](#).

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Interior of the record room at the New Zealand Army Recruiting Station in Victoria St West 1917
– [Auckland Libraries](#)

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Recording Names

- always be consistent, whichever method you choose!

	Family Tree Program	File names	Stories
Name <ul style="list-style-type: none"> initials unknown surname in CAPS 	First, middle, surname (often a separate field for surname) Leave as initials Not necessary (unless surname looks like first name)	Whichever order makes sense Leave as initials Not necessary (unless surname looks like first name)	First, middle, surname Leave as initials Whatever works Optional, but often used in genealogical magazines for first mention of surname
Women's names <ul style="list-style-type: none"> surname unknown 	First, middle, maiden name Blank or [--?--] or Mrs Married Surname eg Mary Mrs Smith	Can put maiden name in brackets if using married name Eg Mary (Smith) Jones Mrs Married Surname eg Mary Mrs Smith	Can put maiden name in brackets if using married name Use maiden name Mrs married name eg Mary Jones Mrs John Smith Mrs Married Surname eg Mary Mrs Smith
Nicknames	" _ " eg John "Jack" Smith AKA field if available	Inverted commas cannot be used eg John Jack Smith	" _ " eg John "Jack" Smith
Spelling variations	Notes or AKA		

Recording Locations

Locations should be recorded like you're addressing a letter. Start with the smallest part of the address and work up to the biggest. For example:

Town/City, County, State, Country

There may be more elements to the address. There may be less.

It is a convention in the United States to leave a placeholder if any of the information is missing eg Town, , State, Country. You do not need to do this unless you wish to.

Changed Names

Locations should be recorded using the details as they existed when the record was made. This can be difficult at times when borders are shifting around, but try to be as accurate as possible.



Recording Dates

Use the format dd mmm yyyy eg 10 Jan 1910. This reduces confusion with American dating.

Most genealogical computer software will give you the option of inputting the date as numbers, if you prefer this method.

Double Dating

Have you ever wondered why September isn't the 7th month, October not the 8th? If you go back far enough in your family's history, you'll discover it was! When you get back into the mid 18th century, you'll start to find the dates go a bit funny. They start being recorded as 10 Jan 1731/32.

This is because until countries converted to the Gregorian Calendar, they used the Julian Calendar. In the Julian Calendar, New Year's Day is Lady Day - 25 March.

So, for example, in England, 10 January 1731 as recorded in a parish register (or other document) can be recorded as 10 January 1731/32. This is to prevent confusion and is called Double Dating (occasionally Dual Dating).

Dates from 25 March onwards are recorded as normal eg 25 March 1732.

The switch to the new calendar depends on the country of the record. In doing the switch, a number of days were lost from the calendar to get the calendar back in sync with the astronomical events like the solstice.

Year of Switch	Country	Days Removed
1582	France (most areas), Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain	10 days
1583	Austria, Germany (Catholic states)	10 days
1587	Hungary	10 days
1610	Prussia (Germany)	10 days
1752	United States (most areas), Canada (most areas), United Kingdom (and colonies)	11 days
1872/1873	Japan	12 days



Year of Switch	Country	Days Removed
1916	Bulgaria	13 days
1918	Estonia, Russia	13 days
1923	Greece	13 days
1926/1927	Turkey	13 days

For more information: www.timeanddate.com/calendar/julian-gregorian-switch.html

Different Calendars

There are estimated to be around 40 different calendars in use around the world at the moment. Some use the Gregorian calendar but are in a different year. Others are completely different. For more information see:

www.webexhibits.org/calendars/calendar.html

There are a number of converters out there which can calculate to/from the Gregorian Calendar we use here in New Zealand. Here are some examples:

www.hebcal.com/converter/ - Jewish calendar

calcuworld.com/calendar-calculators/islamic-calendar-converter/ - Islamic calendar

www.mandarintools.com/calconv_old.html - Chinese calendar + Gregorian/Julian from 1582

calcuworld.com/calendar-calculators/persian-calendar-converter/ - Persian/Iranian calendar

Regnal Years

Occasionally you may come across a document which is dated "the tenth year of the reign of our gracious King William IV" or simply 10 Wm IV. This is a Regnal Year and dates from the official date of accession for a monarch. Wikipedia has more details:

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regnal_years_of_English_monarchs

Recording Alternative Dates

You should record the date as per the record. However, you can record alternative dates, but be consistent and be clear which date is for which calendar!



Glossary

Terms used in this presentation:

Gregorian Calendar - the calendar used in New Zealand. It has 365 days, except every 4 years (leap years) where there are 366. Years divisible by 100 are not leap years except those divisible by 400.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gregorian_calendar

Julian Calendar - proposed by Julius Caesar, it was the calendar for many centuries. It too had leap years, but included those where the year was divisible by 100, leading to the calendar "slipping" over time.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_calendar

Where to next?

This is part of the *Effective Research* series in *Getting It Right*. Have a look at our other resources at genealogy.org.nz/Getting-It-Right/10915/

Getting It Right:

- **Starting Your Genealogical Journey**
- **Effective Research**
 - Genealogical Proof Standard
 - **Recording conventions**
 - Getting Help
 - DNA Basics
 - Searching Newspapers
 - Other People's Trees
- **Sharing Your Family History**

