



Placer County Genealogical Society

a member of the

Genealogical and Historical Council of Sacramento Valley



CODE OF ETHICS

The standards that should govern the behavior of researchers (genealogical and historical) concern five distinct and essential areas: (1) findings must be based upon accepted research methods; (2) interaction with other researchers and record custodial staff should be cordial and facilitative; (3) intellectual honesty must be impeccable; (4) claims regarding both self and service must be appropriately qualified; (5) research materials must be treated with care and made available to others when possible. Each of these categories is elaborated in outline form below.

- I. Bases of findings -
 - A. Base findings upon facts or valid inferences based in fact.
 - B. Accept a "preponderance of evidence" where direct proof is not possible.
 - C. Be prepared to explain your methodology.
 - D. Set out fully any conflicting data and use discretion in its interpretation.
 - E. Accept that conclusions are based upon a preponderance of evidence and logical extrapolations and, therefore, are never absolute.
 - F. Insist upon and support, by citing sources and documentation, the "chain of evidence" required for a given project.
 - G. Maintain reasonable accuracy in recording and reporting information by placing quality over quantity.
- II. Interaction with other researchers and custodial record staff -
 - A. Act with integrity, courtesy, and cooperation with fellow researchers and custodial record staff.
 - B. Support other researchers in becoming more competent.
 - C. Strive to broaden and deepen your research skills.
- III. Intellectual honesty -
 - A. Guard against dishonest or unethical practices.
 - B. Do not represent as your own the work of another.
 - C. Never knowingly misquote a document, nor cite as authoritative a questionable source.
 - D. Use whatever ethical means are available to guard against and to expose dishonest or unethical practices in research.
 - E. Avoid withholding or concealing any factual data which stands contrary to your personal desires.
 - F. Give full credit to sources and materials belonging to another.
 - G. Observe strictly the canons of copyright law.
- IV. Claims regarding self or service -
 - A. Do not represent yourself as competent beyond your training or experience.
 - B. Do not make exaggerated, misleading, or false claims about the benefits of genealogical or historic knowledge.
- V. Availability and care of materials -
 - A. Be supportive in the collection, preservation, and availability of appropriate books and records.
 - B. Support making all public records accessible.
 - C. Treat with greatest care and respect all public and private records and books made available to you.
 - D. Return all records, books, and materials to the proper or designated place in a timely manner.
 - E. Take responsibility in the preservation and care of archival and library materials.