

Hugh Dugan of Ireland, Pennsylvania, and New York: Historical Context Helps Link Generations



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Historical context enhances narratives, presentations, and other projects—whether our own family or another’s. The 2020 NYG&B Record article on Hugh Dugan, his family, and his hotel uses context to turn scholarly articles into other family histories, presentations, and projects.

Genealogical Proof Standard Components & Context

- **Reasonably exhaustive research ensures examination of all potentially relevant sources. It minimizes the risk that undiscovered evidence will overturn a too-hasty conclusion.**
- Complete and accurate source citations
- Critical tests of relevant evidence through processes of analysis and correlation
- Resolution of conflicting evidence
- Soundly reasoned, coherently written conclusion

Genealogy Standards Relevant to Context:¹

- **Planning Research:** 12. Broad context
- **Collecting Data:** 24. Understanding meanings
- **Reasoning from Evidence:** 41. Evidence scope
- **Genealogical Proofs:** 60. Selection of appropriate options
- **Assembled Research Results:** 64. Background information
- 66. Proofs included
- 73. Biographical information
- **Special-Use Genealogical Products:** 74. Reports
- **Knowledge and Skill Development:** 89. Development goals

“Crafting Family Histories, ”Professional Genealogy – Why Context

“When done properly and well, context can greatly enhance an understanding of ancestral lives.”²

Why Historical Context is Important

- Research Phase
 - Laws & history inform us about events that shaped subjects’ lives
 - Clues help solve difficult cases of identity and kinship
- Writing [& Presentation] Phases
 - Add human interest
 - ***To encourage and invite audience interaction & feedback***

¹ Board for Certification of Genealogists, *Genealogy Standards*, 2nd Ed. (Nashville: Turner Publishing, 2019), 12.

² Michael J. Leclerc, CG, “Crafting Family Histories: Standards and Best Practices,” Elizabeth Shown Mills, ed., *Professional Genealogy: Preparation, Practice, and Standards* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2018), 533.

When Historical Context is Used Effectively

- Connected directly to ancestors' lives
- Shows how events, social structure, laws, & customs shape activities
- Woven into the narrative rather than footnotes

Context Increases Flexibility of Research Projects

Why Share Research?

- Developing relationships with repositories and staff
- Developing relationships with other researchers
- Developing relationships with potential clients
- Developing relationships with . . .

Contextual Research Leads to:

- Articles → Presentations & Client Work
- Presentations → Client Work
- Projects → Articles & Presentations

Finding Context for Subject of Interest, Including Friends, Associates, Neighbors

- County & local histories/gazetteers
- City directories
- Google
- JSTOR
- Locally authored books
- Local repositories
- Newspapers
- Periodical Source Index (PERSI)
- Personal letters & journals/diaries
- And so much more . . .

Context Checklist

- Activities, Memberships
- Culture, Customs
- Economic Factors
- Education
- Entertainment
- Ethnic Groups
- Friends, Neighbors, Associates (FAN)
- Genetics
- Geographic Boundaries & Changes
- Governance, Laws, Regulations
- Health & Medicine
- Historical Era & Events
- Lifestyle
- Linguistics
- Migration Patterns & Routes
- Military Service
- Occupations
- Paleography
- Politics
- Populations
- Religion
- Science, Technology
- Social Mores
- Sports
- Time Periods
- Transportation
- Other Factors . . .

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The Hugh Dugan Family

