



*Teaching
Genealogists AI™*
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Puerto Rican Slave Record Research

Module 3 – Extracting and Preserving Evidence

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Estimated Time: 30–45 minutes

Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, you will:

- Extract all genealogically relevant data from a 1872 registry entry
- Preserve evidence with a basic working citation
- Identify a “cluster” of individuals linked to the same owner
- Recognize what each field implies for your next research steps

Step 4: Extract and Preserve the Evidence

For every relevant entry you find, capture the following four elements before moving on:

1. Full transcription (Spanish as written)

Copy the entry exactly as it appears, including any abbreviations or unclear letters. Do not interpret yet – transcribe first.

2. Your interpretation (separate from the transcription)

Below the transcription, write your English reading of the entry: the name, origin, parents, marital status, owner, and any other details. Mark uncertain readings with a question mark.

3. Image reference

Record the FamilySearch film URL, image number, and page number. Example:

FamilySearch, “Registro central de esclavos, 1872,” District 4, Film 007529156, image 47.

4. A working citation

Even a simple citation now is better than none later. Use this format:

“Registro central de esclavos, 1872,” District [X], [Municipality]; NARA microfilm T1121; digital images, FamilySearch (familysearch.org/search/film/[number] : accessed [date]), entry for [Name].

Using the Registry Extraction Form

The Registry Extraction Form (Worksheet WS-01, included with this course) provides a structured grid with one row per person and columns for every field in the 1872 schedule. Complete one row per entry.

Key fields to fill in:

Column	What to Record
Name (<i>Nombre</i>)	Exactly as written
Origin (<i>Natural de</i>)	Country or region of birth
Residence (<i>Vecino/a de</i>)	Municipality of residence
Parents (<i>Padres</i>)	Mother’s and father’s names; note if “unknown” (<i>desconocidos</i>) is recorded
Sex (<i>Sexo</i>)	M or F
Marital status (<i>Estado</i>)	S (soltero/a), C (casado/a), V (viudo/a)

Column	What to Record
Occupation (<i>Oficio</i>)	Exact word used
Age (<i>Edad</i>)	As recorded
Description (<i>Descripcion</i>)	Physical details noted
Owner (<i>Amo/Ama</i>)	Full name of enslaver
Film / Image	FamilySearch reference

Building a Cluster

After recording one entry, scan nearby entries on the same page for:

- The same owner's name (entries are often grouped by owner)
- The same surnames (may indicate family units)
- People of similar ages with overlapping family details

Recording at least three people linked to the same owner frequently reveals family groupings or work communities that do not appear in isolation.

Practice Exercise 1 – One municipality scan (20–30 min)

Pick one town from your family's region. In the correct district film, find the town section, identify one complete entry, and record: name, parents, origin, age, owner.

Practice Exercise 2 – Build a cluster (20–40 min)

From that one entry, note the owner's name. Scan nearby entries for the same owner. Record at least three people linked to that owner.

GPS Application: Evaluating This Source

When you locate an entry in the 1872 registry, apply the Three-Layer Framework:

- **Source:** Original government document – high evidentiary value, but condition of original and accuracy of digitization affect reliability
- **Information:** Primary for facts the enslaved person could report (their name, origin, parents); secondary for facts reported by the owner or enumerator (age, physical description, marital status)
- **Evidence:** Direct for identity of the individual; indirect for family relationships; the owner's name as indirect evidence of community and location

What Is Next

In Module 4 – Building the Research Bridge, you will learn how to use what you found in the 1872 registry to move into civil, church, and notarial records.

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