



Getting the Most from Your Family History Discoveries

PRESENTER:

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Vital Clues on Census Records

- Births
 - Obviously you'll want to use the birth dates and places that can be gleaned from census records to locate your ancestor's birth record wherever possible, but don't overlook the records of siblings. Their records may include details your ancestor's record does not.
- Marriages
 - 1900 and 1910 U.S. federal censuses asked for the "number of years of present marriage"
 - 1930 asked for "age at first marriage." (Do the math for both husband and wife for clues to prior marriages.)
 - The 1870 and 1880 U.S. federal censuses asked whether "married within the year," and if so, what month.
 - It can sometimes help to estimate, based on the age of the first child.
- Deaths
 - For women of childbearing age in 1900 and 1910, look for the number of children born and the number of children living in those census years to see if there are any unaccounted for children.
 - Look for gaps in the births of other children to try to narrow the search for the missing child.
 - Check for birth and death records for those children using estimates based on what you found.
 - You can estimate deaths based on when they disappear from the census, but do so with caution. They may just be living somewhere unexpected.

Clues to Military Service

- The 1840, 1910, and 1930 U.S. Censuses included questions about military service.
 - 1840 lists names and ages of military pensioners or their widows
 - 1910 asked whether a survivor of the Union or Confederate Army or Navy
 - 1930 asked whether a veteran of the U.S. military or naval forces mobilized for any war or expedition
- Some state censuses include military information
- 1890 Veterans' Schedule
 - Lists the residence, unit, and years of service of Civil War soldiers or their surviving widows.
 - Only part of Kentucky through Wyoming, Lincoln Post #3 in Washington, D.C., and selected U.S. vessels and navy yards are available.
 - Scroll down to the bottom of the page for the second part of the record.
- World War I Draft Registration Cards
 - Check birth dates on 1880 and early 20th century censuses. Men living in the U.S. (immigrant and native-born) who were born between around 1872 and 1900 may be included in the World War I Draft Registration Cards.

Immigration Clues

- 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930 U.S. Censuses all asked for year of immigration.
- 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930 U.S. Censuses all asked for naturalization status and 1920 also asked for the year of naturalization.
- List other records chronologically to zero in on the year of immigration, using birthdates and places of birth.
- Search immigration records directly through the link on the Search menu. This narrows the focus and customized fields for the types of information found in the records. Enter an estimated year of immigration in the arrival field.



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Significant Collections

- Vital Records
 - Best way to survey available collections is to visit the State Resource pages on Ancestry.com. Even if we don't currently have the collection, you can click on the Resources tab to see where the records are and find links to contact the agency.
- State Censuses
 - Check state pages to see what's available for the states you're researching. (<http://search.ancestry.com> See the map in the lower left corner of the page.)
- U.S. City Directories
 - Coverage varies by location, so explore what's available through the browse features.
- U.S. General Land Office Records, 1796-1907
- Immigration
 - Ancestry.com has passenger lists from all of the major U.S. ports and some smaller ports.
 - Border Crossings: To and from Canada to U.S. and from Mexico,
 - Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865-1935

Newspapers

- Search for the places your ancestor lived and enter a year range, specifying exact, to locate events that may have impacted your ancestor.
- Don't limit your search to local papers. News items were often picked up in other locations.
- When you find an event you want to learn more about, add the month it occurred.
- Historical Newspapers, Birth, Marriage, & Death Announcements, 1851-2003

Maps and Historical Reference Tools

- Maps
 - U.S., Indexed County Land Ownership Maps, 1860-1918
 - Historic Land Ownership and Reference Atlases, 1507-2000
- Illinois Public Land Purchase Records
- Seek out local histories in the **Stories, Memories & Histories Collection** on Ancestry.com.

Making Sense of Your Finds

- Project your targeted family members' ages in censuses and create a template you can use to compare as you browse through possible matches. Particularly helpful in pre-1850 census years.
- Create a timeline where you can layer all of the evidence you find in various records. This is a great place to analyze your findings and see your family's story unfold.
 - Including citations in your timeline will help you to resolve conflicting data.
- Extract details from your timeline to create profiles for individuals. Items to possibly include:
 - Occupation(s), residence(s), birth place and date, immigration and naturalization details (where applicable), names of family members, parents, siblings, spouse(s), children, known associates (sponsors, witnesses, business partners, in-laws, etc.), marriage date and place, church affiliation (names of all congregations)

Thank you for inviting me! 😊