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Genealogical Society,
Box 631, Edwardsville, IL
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NEWSLETTER

Volume 44 Number 1 Spring 2024

DUES! DUES! DUES! DUES! DUES! DUES! DUES!

Dues for 2024 are now being accepted. We would very much appreciate receiving your renewal checks ASAP. Send your renewal checks to:

***Ferne Ridenour, MCGS Treasurer
4814 Loop Road
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NEW MCGS WEBSITE

Last Fall, our website host, RootsWeb, informed us that early in 2024 our website would become static. This means that it will still be accessible to anyone, but we will not be able to make any changes. They stated that we if wanted to have an active website, i.e., one that we could modify and/or update occasionally, we needed to find another place to host our website.

We have found another website host. Almost 500 files make up our website. Since I had all those files on my computer, I checked them over and made the various pages more uniform in appearance and operation, and copied all the files to our new host. Some of the pages contain links to other sites and or e-mail addresses. Not all of the external links or email addresses have been checked out.

The new website can be reached at ***ilmadcogen.org***. Try it out and if you find anything that does not work like you think it should (including the external links and emails), please let me know at ***rwridenour566@gmail.com***; and I will see what I can do about things.

Happy Surfing!

NEXT MCGS MEETING

The Director of the Glen Carbon Heritage Museum has volunteered to present a program at the Glen Carbon Heritage Museum regarding the resources at the museum, the general history of the area, and some of the local families. However, since the museum is closed on Sunday, our meeting will take place on April 27, 2024, at 1 p.m. The museum has an elevator for accessibility. There is parking in front or in back of the building. Access to the elevator is from the back parking lot.

The Glen Carbon Heritage Museum is located at 124 School Street, Glen Carbon, Illinois.

Hope to see a lot of people there!

January 2024 Meeting

The Madison County Genealogical Society held a meeting at the Madison County Historical Museum on January 21, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. A program on **Using A FamilySearch Affiliate Library** was presented by Mary T. Westerhold.

Mary explained what a FamilySearch affiliate library is and how Affiliate libraries have access to FamilySearch's digital genealogical collections that are otherwise accessible only through a FamilySearch center. She covered the methods to be used to access these collections at a FamilySearch affiliate library.

She produced a handout that covered this information. This document is available to be down loaded from the NEW MCGS website. If you would like to obtain a copy of this handout, go to the new website: ilmadcogen.org, click on **Meeting Minutes** near the top of the first page. Then click on the January 2024 link on the next page. You can either read the document on the screen or download it.

Death Records – Useful Sources If Used with Caution

By the late Carolyn Barkley

([Editor's note: This article was taken from a monthly e-mail from Genealogical.com])

I had a dream the other night in which I was standing in front of a small group of individuals to whom I was saying, "Hi, I'm Carolyn and I'm addicted to indexing." While for several years I have enjoyed creating indices for authors as they complete their manuscripts, this year I signed up to be a volunteer indexer for familysearch.org. My addiction did not manifest itself immediately. I could index U.S. census records, starting and stopping, often letting a few weeks go by between sessions. But when "Massachusetts Death Records, 1905-1915" became available for indexing, I was truly hooked. In just a few weeks, I'd indexed about 5,000 death certificates and often found myself stealing time from other work in order to do just one more download of 25 certificates. I could sit down to do one download at 9:00 p.m. and suddenly, many downloads later, it would be midnight! What made this project so interesting? I have multiple family lines in Massachusetts. Vital record research in New England is always a joy when compared with other regions (like the South!), and while I have used "Massachusetts Vital Records to 1850" as well as the "Massachusetts Vital Records 1841-1910" database (both available on the New England Historic Genealogical Society's website) the familysearch.org project extends vital records access through 1915. Additional aspects draw me to these records, however. Normally, we are searching for a single death certificate for a specific individual. We may or may not locate a needed certificate and, if located, we may or may not find useful information in the record. In indexing a chronological series of death records for one locality, however, it is possible to glimpse a snapshot of a community at a specific point in time, to understand trends in such areas as immigration and health, and to uncover the dramas and stories that make up the fabric of a community.

Death records provide primary information for some data and secondary information for others and, as such, should be used with caution and analyzed carefully. While all information is not for all years, and not all clerks and informants provided all the information requested, here are the broad categories that it falls into:

1. Personal information: Name of individual, town or city in which the death took place, date of death, residence at the time of death, age, race, date of birth, and place of birth. Each certificate will include some combination of this information. Names can sometimes provide startling moments – if my name had been Tirzah Bagg, I think I might have considered changing it (my apologies if she is your ancestor)! Try to determine the relationship between the informant (the person providing the information to the clerk for the certificate) and the deceased individual. If the informant was the father, mother, or wife, the personal information provided will be reasonably correct – probably. If the information was provided by a neighbor, the doctor, a hospital or institutional record, or a more distant relative such as a nephew, grandson, etc., the information may be missing, incomplete, or at worst, incorrect. Whoever was the informant, consider the information carefully in light of other information you have documented about this individual. If the data is in conflict with your previous research, you will need to locate further documentation in additional primary resources.

2. Relationship information: A married woman's death certificate may contain her maiden name (if known) as well as the given and middle name of her husband (if known). It is significant that the death certificate of a married man does not include his wife's name, unless she is the informant and then she may be identified only as "Mrs. Harry Smith." Of particular usefulness (although subject to the same caveat about informant knowledge) is the inclusion of an individual's father, mother's maiden name, as well as the birthplace of both mother and father. This information provides clues to the identification and geographical location of an additional generation. You will want to compare the birthplace of the deceased and the birth places of his or her parents. In this time period, many of the deceased are members of the first generation born in this country, thus providing you with additional information. Sometimes you will be given the town or county of foreign birth, but more often the entry is simply "Russia," "Canada," "Ireland," "Finland," etc.

All such information can help you locate ethnic communities, churches and cemeteries, and newspapers in the area in which the individual resided at the time of death, thus leading to possible resources for additional information. It is sometimes disconcerting to realize how little is known (or how little an individual will provide to the clerk) about a deceased family member's mother and father. Often only one antecedent is known, which may mean that only that parent immigrated to this country.

3. Medical information: Medical history has become an important area of genealogical research in the past several years and the cause of death can provide an insight into family health issues. In indexing a series of certificates, I noted how many individuals, even then, suffered from cancer, stroke, and heart disease, although tuberculosis was clearly the significant disease of the time period. The number of still-births, premature babies, and children dying within a few months from "marasmus" and "inanition" – lack of nourishment – as well as pneumonia and other such diseases is a bit startling and underlines the lack of prenatal care and poor living conditions of the time. The prevalence of peritonitis after surgery would have made a person think twice about having an operation. Few homicides are reported, although several suicides are included. It was a decidedly more dangerous time in the workplace, as witnessed by the number of elevator, railroad, and automobile accidents.

Medical information is full of fascinating vignettes. There is the case of Annie L. Dixon, born in Boston, the daughter of James J. McGlenn and Mary Gibbons, both born in Ireland. She was the wife of Arthur B. Dixon, born in Rollo Bay, Prince Edward Island. They resided at 29 Dennis Street in Boston where, on 5 February 1907, Annie committed suicide by poisoning herself with illuminating gas "during [an] aberration of mind." Because I was indexing a series of certificates registered on the same day as Annie's death, I discovered that she had also killed her four children by the same method: 5-year-old Margaret, 4-year-old George, 2½-year-old Mildred, and 1-year-old Mary.

Felice Gulifa, a 34-year-old laborer, born in Italy; Morris Zackland, a Russian-born mason, aged 32; Meyer Arlook, a 56-year-old Russian-born carpenter; and Joseph Adler, a 32-year-old workman, all died in Boston on 25 August 1906, from multiple injuries after being buried beneath a falling wall.

On 24 January 1910, two Norwegian fishermen from the schooner *Paragon*, Olaf Abramson and Martin Nelson, drowned off the Quero Bank; six days later, Edward Severson of Sweden and Charles Edwards of Norway, fishermen on the schooner *Florence E. Stream*, drowned in the same location. A few days later, John Ribiero of Lisbon, a fisherman on the schooner *Thalea*, drowned off the Jeffries Bank. All of these drownings were documented in Gloucester death certificates.

These examples may have been significant enough at the time to prompt a newspaper report. Locate the newspapers in the town or city of the deceased. Read the paper for a few days before and after the death date to gain background information that might pertain to the deceased. For example, in the case of drownings, was there anything unusual about the weather that created the circumstances surrounding these deaths? A death can be puzzling, as in the case of a 30-year-old painter who died from accidental strangulation, having gotten his head stuck between the pickets of a fence, or may be work-related as in the case of a 58-year-old painter who died of acute lead poisoning. A death can be tragic, as in the case of a 72-year-old man who died of apoplexy just two days after his wife died of arterio-sclerosis, or in that of Patrick A. Daley, who drowned, presumably as a suicide, and was found in Boston Harbor near the Congress Street Bridge on Christmas Day 1908. In another episode, English-born Thomas Rawcliffe of Lawrence, Massachusetts, a 44-year-old widower, died of alcoholism about 26 April 1909, and was subsequently found dead in a freight car in Olneyville Station, Rhode Island. Regardless of the circumstances, the causes of death point to human drama and tell a story.

4. Miscellaneous information: A death certificate may also provide additional helpful information or clues leading to further research. If the individual died in an institution (tuberculosis sanitarium, state hospital, etc.), the certificate may indicate how long the deceased had been institutionalized prior to his or her death and whether or not the disease was contracted in the institution, as well as the location of the deceased's former or usual residence. One interesting certificate reported an individual who died in the state infirmary in Tewksbury, Massachusetts, where he had been living for 2 years, having been in the state for 2 years and 10 days. Clues abound in this record as the individual, a linotype operator, had been born in Illinois, his father in Pennsylvania, and his mother in Virginia. In addition, the place of burial or removal and the name of funeral director/company may also be included. I was surprised to find that a number of patients from the Bridgewater State Farm were sent to the Tufts Medical School following death. In some cases the cemetery name will suggest a specific religion and/or church and, therefore, lead to additional records. For example, in Springfield, burial in St. Michael's Cemetery would prompt contact with St. Michael's Cathedral (Roman Catholic) to determine if other records are available. In addition, funeral homes and cemeteries may also provide additional background information.

Death records, when analyzed with care, can be important documents for genealogical research. Several web sites provide access to online death records: www.vitalrec.com/deathrecords/ and ancestry.com. "Cyndi's List" also provides a series of links to death record information. If you are researching death records in earlier time periods, a category search for "vital records" on genealogical.com will yield a list nearly 300 titles covering a variety of time periods and geographical locations, most of which contain death records.

Marriages are Made in Heaven—But Where Are They Recorded?

by the late Robert Barnes

[Editor's note: This article was taken from monthly e-mails from Genealogical.com]

Part One: Direct Records of Marriage

PARISH REGISTERS

I have discovered that there are many sources of information for the marriage record, a basic building block of family history. They include civil and religious sources, as well as some perhaps unsuspected sources. Of course, an ecclesiastical parish register contains the entry that a marriage between two parties took place on a particular day. Usually, no information was given beyond the names of the parties and the date of marriage. Occasionally one finds more data, as in the following example:

William Jacob of the City of Annapolis & Province of Maryland, son of Zachariah Jacob of Anne Arundel county, m. Mary Monk, dau. of Rinaldo Monk of the City of London, in that part of Great Britain called England, by Rachel his wife (who was the widow and relict of Edward Riston of Baltimore county, deceased). William and Mary were married 19 July 1772 in Rangers Forest in the county aforesaid, on Sunday 19 July 1772 by Rev. William Edminston at about 3:00 p.m. (St. Paul's Parish Registers).

In Maryland, Catholic Church records often gave a great deal of information on the birthplaces and parents of French immigrants. Anglican records usually did not give such information unless the parties were very prominent, or, in the latter 18th century, the man or woman was a freeborn immigrant. Records of the Society of Friends usually gave the parents of the parties and also the birthplace, especially if one or both parties were from a different Quaker meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS OF A CHURCH

In addition to the usual parish register of marriages, Presbyterians and other denominations recorded baptisms, marriages, and funerals in the Session Minutes or other records of the church. Vestry minutes of the Anglican parishes are also helpful. Consider the following:

Thomas Phelps, on 26 Aug 1738, with Mark Ford, was summoned to the vestry of St. George's Parish to declare that they both had been married to her who is now called Rose Phelps. She was first married to [-?-] Swift, and she eloped from him and Phelps declared he married the said Rose on 18 May 1710 (HAGE:104).

On 11 April 1737: George Farmer, Church Warden, was ordered by the vestry of St. George's Parish to inquire whether Godfrey Vine and Sarah Beddo cohabit together still. On 6 June 1737 Vine and Beddo were summoned to appear at the next vestry and answer their contempt. On 5 July 1737 Vine and Beddo appeared but could not prove their marriage. "The vestry was pleased to give them until the last Saturday of the month to produce a certificate." On 4 Oct 1737 Godfrey Vine and Sarah Beddo produced a certificate to show they had been married on 14 Feb 1733 by Rev. James Cox, minister of St. Paul's Parish in QA Co (HAGE:104).

PASTORAL REGISTERS

These are registers kept by the ministers themselves for their own records. From time to time, new pastoral registers come to light. Peter Wilson Coldham discovered the marriage register, covering the years 1764 to 1777, of Rev. David Love, at one time rector of All Hallows Parish in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, who returned to England when the Revolutionary War started. Love filed the register with other papers at the Public Register Office in London to support his claim for compensation of lost income due to the revolt of the colonists.

OTHER TYPES OF OFFICIAL MARRIAGE DOCUMENTS

The following categories of marriage records are more commonplace in some colonies/states than others and at one point in time than another. If your research takes you around America and/or back to Europe, you are likely to encounter most, if not all, of them. In Maryland, we are familiar with marriage licenses, but there are also marriage banns, bonds, marriage license applications, civil marriage records, and nuptial contracts. In England, there are documents called Marriage Allegations, and in some places there are Marriage Intentions. Following is an overview of the major categories.

BANNS: First ordered by the Lateran Council of 1215, banns were notices of intended marriages, repeated three times at weekly intervals at the parish churches of both the bride and groom. If the parties didn't want to wait three weeks, they had to obtain a marriage license. Banns might be recorded in the records of the church, but in Maryland they were sometimes recorded by the county courts. In England, separate banns books were maintained regularly from 1754 on. In Maryland, couples married in churches that published the banns did not have to obtain a license. This practice lasted until the 1940s.

Here is an example of a bann with an added note: On 14 March 1670/1, banns of matrimony were published for George Hamblin and Margaret Pepper. A certificate was issued on 5 April 1671 (SOJU DT#7:122). On 10 April 1671 John Pepper wrote: "Mr. Beauchamp this is to let you understand that I do give my free Consent that George Hammell Shold take my Daughter to wife & therefore I pray doe that favour as to Send y Certificatt by the Bearer hereof In wittnes hereof I doe hereunto Sett my hand the tenth day of Aprill this note may be your discharge to keepe you harmless" /s/ John Pepper (SOJU DT#7:160).

LICENSES: Couples who did not want to wait for three weeks, or well-to-do people who did not want to invite every Tom, Dick, or Harry in the parish to have a chance to protest their marriage, would obtain a license. In England, licenses were obtained from an official of the diocese; in America, they were granted by the clerks of the county courts.

ALLEGATIONS: These were formal statements made, under oath, by one of the parties, usually the groom, that there was no legal impediment to the marriage. Consider this example: On 6 Dec 1617 a marriage license was granted to William Crowmer, Gent., of Ockham, Surtrey, bachelor. Age 23, son of George Crowmer of the same place, Esq., AND Margaret Neale of St. Clement Danes, spinster, age 22, dau. of John Neale, Esq., of Northants, dec., 7 or 8 years ago, with the consent of her mother, Mrs. Grace Prythero, widow, and the consent of George Crowmer. The consent of Mrs. Prythero was attested by Raphael Neale, Gent. (Allegations for Marriage Licenses Issued by the Bishop of London, 1611-1828. Vol. II. London: The Harleian Society, 1887. 26:56).

MARRIAGE INTENTIONS: These were statements that a couple planned to be married. They are found in the records of Monthly Meetings of the Society of Friends and in some New England colonies.

MARRIAGE BONDS: These were sums of money posted by one of the parties, or a relative of one of the parties, to guarantee that there was no legal impediment to the marriage or that an under-age child had the permission of his or her parents to marry.

PRE-NUPTIAL CONTRACT: This is a contract executed between a man and his bride-to-be that describes the property rights of one or the other. Such agreements are usually made prior to a second marriage and are often for the purpose of securing certain properties for the children of a former union. In Maryland, many of these contracts were recorded in the county land records. See the following illustration:

Sep 19, 1737: Charles Carroll of Annapolis, son of Charles "the Settler," and his cousin Elizabeth Brooke, had a son, named Charles. Charles and Elizabeth were not formally married, and would not marry until 1757, when their son was almost 20 years old. At the time of their marriage, Charles and Elizabeth signed a pre-nuptial contract by which she waived all claims to Carroll's property, and accepted an annual stipend of 100 pounds sterling, about one-tenth of Carroll's wealth.

CIVIL MARRIAGE RECORDS: Unlike Maryland, where, until recent times, marriages had to be performed by a clergyman, some colonies/states allowed marriages to be performed by a Justice of the Peace. In Pennsylvania, notarial records (records kept by notaries public) might contain records of marriages.

Part Two: Indirect Records of Marriage

[NOTE: All counties named in this article are found in Maryland, except where specifically stated otherwise.]

INDIRECT SOURCES

In addition to the direct sources of marriages, such as church records, ministers' returns, ministers' private registers, and marriage licenses, there are many indirect sources, proving that a marriage had taken place at some previous, unspecified date. These clues may be recorded in land, court, or probate records. When using these sources, researchers should remember to check the records of surrounding counties or even adjacent states.

LAND RECORDS are the largest single type of record found in a county courthouse. A deed may state that a husband and wife sold property on a certain date, which the wife had inherited from her father. From time to time a marriage contract between a man and woman may be recorded there. I have seen an example in Dorchester County Land Records, where the date of the marriage and the name of the church were recorded. Sadly, the records of that particular church have not survived, but the land record provided the date and the name of the minister.

A deed in York County, Pennsylvania, of 11 July 1761, shows that John Rester [Reister?] of Baltimore County, tavern keeper, was married to Margaretta, daughter of the late George Sohn of York County, Delaware. (who had kept a tavern). A deed of 28 April 1762 shows that Dr. Charles Frederick Wiesenthal, of Baltimore County, practitioner of physick, had married Elizabeth, another daughter of George Sohn.

Land Records sometimes contain ante-nuptial contracts. In 1701, Thomas Scantlebury of Talbot County, had a marriage contract with Sarah, daughter of George Fey, late of the Parish of St. David. The contract was written in Latin, and Scantlebury died by 6 June 1719 (From Talbot Co. Land Records 12:366).

PROBATE RECORDS can also be helpful in establishing the fact that a marriage took place. A testator may mention his married daughter in his will, sometimes even mentioning her husband's name. The testator may mention grandchildren with a surname different from his or hers.

After a man died, his widow might post an administration bond. If she remarried, she and her new husband would have to post another bond. Maryland genealogist Vernon Skinner suggests that when there were two "sureties" or bondsmen when the bond was posted, one may have come from the husband's side of the family and the other may have come from the wife's side of the family.

When the estate is being administered or in the final distribution, there may be a phrase stating that such and such a sum was paid to "John Smith" for his wife's filial share of her father's estate.

States and counties usually had specific courts that oversaw probate matters. Maryland had its Prerogative Court until 1777, and its county Registers of Wills offices after 1777. In addition to the wills, inventories, and administration accounts being filed in these courts, there were often petitions, which disclosed the details of family disagreements over the settling of the decedent's estate. Married women and/or their husbands would be mentioned here.

COURT RECORDS may go by a variety of names: Judgment Records, Judicial Records, Proceedings, Minutes, or Dockets. Many kinds of legal disputes are recorded there, and they might well involve a remarried widow and her new husband.

Courts may exist at the County or State (or Provincial) Level. Colonial Maryland had several courts: the Provincial Court, the Prerogative Court, and the Chancery Court. Each of these courts bequeathed us several series of records, all of which should be checked for marriage clues and other biographical data.

The Provincial Court had a series called Judgment Records, and another called Provincial Court Land Records. Judgment Records contained many petitions and other documents, which provide marriage clues.

The Prerogative Court series included wills, administrations, inventories, and distributions. The day-to-day activities of this court are found in the Testamentary Proceedings, which contain information not found anywhere else. In 1721, Martha Bullock, widow of Francis Bullock, renounced her right of administration on the estate of Francis Bullock and recommended her son John Kersey. Since no marriage of Francis Bullock to a widow Kersey has been found in the surviving church record, this item represents an important clue.

The Chancery Court dealt with disputes concerning wills, estates, and contracts. The depositions and petitions are filled with references of interest to the family historian. In 1713, Henry Tanner of Charles County deposed that 26 years earlier he had lived as a boarder in the house of Elizabeth, mother of William Glover, son of Giles Glover. Elizabeth was the widow of Kenelm MacLoughlin, and the son William Glover was in the care of Francis Meek, who married William's sister.

COUNTY COURTS contain records of civil and criminal cases, which are also a fruitful source of marriage references. Talbot County Judgment records for January 1697 reveal that Timothy Lane married the widow of Henry Alexander, who had died leaving two children, John and Katherine. In March 1690/1 John Williams petitioned the Dorchester County Court that his wife Elinor had borne a son by her former husband, and the child was kept from his mother by the child's grandfather, Humphrey Mould.

This item in Dorchester County Judgment Records for June 1744 provided an exact date of marriage: Neil McCallum, minister of Dorchester Parish, was accused that on 10 September 1742 he joined in marriage John Anderson and Ann McHill or Ann McKell, and that Ann was the sister of John Anderson's wife's mother's sister. In other words, Anderson married the aunt of his first wife. The minister was found not guilty.

Beginning in 1777, Maryland's county courts began to issue marriage licenses. A minister was supposed to report to the court any marriages he had performed. In the Baltimore County Marriage License Record Book, there was a space for the minister's name. If he returned the report and his name was filled in, you can be sure that the marriage actually took place. If his name is missing, you cannot be sure, unless you find confirmation elsewhere. There are several reasons why the minister's name may be missing. The minister may have performed the marriage but neglected to return the list to the court. He may have returned the list to the court but the clerk of the court never recorded the minister's name in the space provided.

THE MARYLAND STATE PAPERS contain the marriage returns of persons married by license by Rev. John Bowie for April 26 to Nov. 10, 1778. These are noted in the “Calendar of Maryland State Papers: The Black Books,” item 1549.

THE SCHARF PAPERS, deposited at the Maryland State Archives, contain several “certifications of marriage,” most of them filed by members of the Beall Family. These papers also contain many marriage license returns that ministers returned to the government showing the dates of marriages they had performed in a given time period.

COURT REPORTS may contain data pertaining to marriages or other data. See Stephenson, “Extracts from Maryland Court Records,” *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* 53 (3) 201-202. Depositions in various court cases indicate that there is a missing register from St. Paul’s Parish in Baltimore County.

While this article has concentrated on the records of Maryland, researchers should investigate the archives and libraries of their own states to track down those elusive clues.

Part Three: Marriage Laws

This concluding segment of my essay on researching marriage records explains why it is important for researchers to familiarize themselves with the specific marriage laws of the state or country they are exploring. For instance, in England, in 1653, under the Cromwell Protectorate, marriage was a civil contract performed by a Justice of the Peace. With the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, marriage was once more a sacrament of the Church. The only legal marriages were those performed in parish churches, and the only burials were in parish churchyards, so many Catholics had their marriages recorded in Church of England church records.

In Maryland, with whose marriage statutes I am most familiar, there were a number of laws pertaining to marriage and the recording of marriages.

In October 1640, the Assembly of Maryland enacted a law stating that no one could be married unless the banns had been published three days earlier in a chapel or some other public place (Archives of Maryland [hereafter ARMD] 1:97).

In the 1650s, the General Assembly of Maryland passed several laws requiring the clerks of the various county courts to keep registers of births, marriages, and deaths. Only a few of these registers – from Charles, Kent, Talbot, and Somerset counties – have come down to us.

In April 1658, the Lord Proprietary ordered, “by and with the consent of this present General Assembly,” that the clerks of each county court were to keep a register of all persons born, married, or died, and any person who waited more than two months to register such an event should be fined 20 pounds of tobacco. The act was to continue in effect for three years. Another act of the same session said that any persons desiring to be married should publish their intentions at any session of court, church, chapel, or meeting house at a time when the meeting was full (ARMD 1:373, 374). At the session ending May 1666, the Assembly described the form the marriage ceremony should take (ARMD 2:148).

At a meeting of the Council held in September 1685, it was ordered that “anyone, magistrate, priest, or minister, qualified to marry or join in matrimony should not perform such a ceremony to any persons, strangers from Virginia or elsewhere, without a license or certificate from some Magistrate or other person within this Province thereunto legally authorized and empowered of having past due Examination, and that the parties desiring the same may lawfully be joined together” (ARMD 17:399).

At the session ending June 1692, it was enacted that all persons intending to marry could apply to a minister, pastor, or magistrate. Clerks were to keep a register of births, marriages, and burials in a fair and legible hand (ARMD 13:450, 530).

On a more somber note at that session, the Assembly enacted a law directing that if “any freeborn English or white woman should marry with any Negro or other Slave or any free Negro she should lose her freedom and become a servant during the term of seven years to the use and benefit of the Ministry or the Poor of the same Parish at the discretion of the Vestry men of the Parish to which the said Woman at the time of Marriage did belong, and if the man was a free Negro, he should forfeit his freedom and become a Servant to the use aforesaid during his natural life” (ARMD 13:547).

On 12 June 1694, Thomas Lawrence, Secretary of the Province, announcing an Act of Assembly “to keep records of all births, marriages and deaths,” wrote the following to Mr. John West, Clerk of Somerset County, to be read in Court June next:

“Whereas according to an Act of Assembly of this Province entitled an Act for the Registering of Births, Marriages & Burials, it is enacted that within two months after the birth of any Child, person married or the death of any person within this Province, that

the Birth of the Child born by the Parents & the time of the marriage of any Person married, & the time of the death of any person dying by the Extr or Admnr be entered upon Record by the Clerk of the County Court. And whereas the inhabitants of the several & respective Counties are very slack & negligent in entering the same according to the tenour of sd act these are to will and require the inhabitants of the several and respective Counties to bring in a just & true account of the Children born, the persons married and the persons deceased and to enter the same upon record with the Clerk of the County Court in which they doe inhabit & dwell & for the future to enter the same within the time limited as by the sd act is required whereof they are not to fail under the penalty in the sd Act mentioned & for default to be prosecuted accordingly whereof every person by their Ma'ties Special Command are to take notice. Given under [my?] hand this eleventh day of May Anno Domini 1694" (SOJU LD:97).

In July 1696, it was enacted by the "Authority aforesaid by and with the Advice and Consent aforesaid That if any Minister priest or Magistrate shall join in Marriage any persons Contrary to the Table of Marriages by this Act appointed to be Set up in every parish Church within this Province he or they shall forfeit the sum of five Thousand pounds of tobacco" (ARMD 19:430).

By May 1704, the registrars of the parish were to keep a register of all births, marriages, and burials within the parish (ARMD 24:268).

Again, in Maryland until well into the 20th century, marriages had to be performed by an ordained clergyman. Nowadays, clerks of the county courts may perform civil marriages.

[Editor's Note: Robert Barnes was one of Maryland's leading genealogists and an expert on marriage records. He is the author of a three-volume series on Maryland marriage records spanning the period 1634 to 1820.]

Use Naming Books to Put Your Research Back on Track

[Editor's note: This article was taken from a monthly e-mail from Genealogical.com]

Onomastics is the fancy name applied to the study of names — all kinds of names: first names, surnames, place names, nicknames, pet names, titles, and on and on. While the field of onomastics is somewhat tangential to family history, genealogists would do well to borrow some concepts from this academic field when they run into dead ends in their research.

George Jones, the late author of the third edition of ***German American Names*** emphasized that the German origin of many family names has been anglicized over the years. For instance, some names were garbled through faulty record keeping or through an effort to preserve the sound of the name rather than its original spelling. Similarly, many German immigrants changed the spelling of their names to avoid the stigma created by World War I.

According to Dr. Jones, "When a German-American line seems to come to a dead end, the search for an origin may be solved by finding a simple spelling change." A prominent family named Kapp, for example, could trace its family back to the mid-1800s, when all records abruptly ceased. The records soon continued, however, but under the spelling 'Capp.' Other name changes include Becker to Baker and Zimmermann to Carpenter. The informative Introduction to ***German American Names*** discusses the development of German surnames in this country, while its comprehensive dictionary gives the meanings of names and their variants.

If your ancestor is Hispanic, you may have to reckon with common misspellings in the records, such as Fracisco [Francisco], DeLoen [De Leon]. Or, as Lyman Platt, author of ***Hispanic Surnames and Family History*** has noted, "Compounds — such as Zayasbazan and Poncedeleon, which are never spelled together but are spelled Zayas Bazan or Ponce de Leon, respectively — may cause confusion especially in records that have no upper-case first letters. There are many de, de la, del, and de los prefixes which should be separated in the records but sometimes are not."

When it comes to the anglicization of Italian names, Joseph Fucilla, author of ***Our Italian Surnames***, explains that "where there are two names (an Italian and a non-Italian) that closely approximate one another in pronunciation, the former will not infrequently be completely changed into the latter. Thus a Bonfiglio will become a Bonfield; a Camilli, Campbell; a Canadeo, Kennedy; a Cestaro, Chester; a Cosenza, Cousins; a Marsala, Marshall; and a Zicaro, Seeger."

The anglicization of Swedish names since the 19th century displays another trend in naming practices. The esteemed reference work, ***American Surnames*** by Elsdon Smith, not only explains the origins of U.S. surnames but also contains a listing of the 2,000 most common American surnames. Smith points out that the Swedes have combined two words together to manufacture family names to take the place of their common patronymics ending in -son. "These words are not just any words but are usually nature words combined for easy pronunciation without reference to meaning." Common nature words include "berg" (mountain), "gren" (branch), "lund" (grove), "strom" (stream), and "wick" (bay), as found in the compound names Berglund, Dahlgren, Lindstrom, Grandquist, and Wicklund.

In short, if your ancestor's name has suddenly disappeared from all the records, it is entirely possible that a name change is the explanation. If so, one of these excellent works on names — several of which are written by genealogists — may heat up the trail to your forebears.

- *The Name Is The Game*
- *German-American Names. Third Edition*
- *German-English Genealogical Dictionary*
- *Hispanic Surnames And Family History*
- *Our Italian Surnames*
- *American Surnames*
- *Dictionary Of English And Welsh Surnames*
- *The Scottish Surnames Of Colonial America*
- *What's In A Name? Everything You Wanted To Know*

“So You Think You Can’t Read German” **by Ernest Thode**

“You, the family genealogist, have a dilemma. You have discovered that your ancestry is German. Those old family letters in your possession are written in some kind of hen scratching that no sane person could possibly interpret, even though you have a vague feeling that those Germans of a century or two ago may have been successfully communicating with one another. To top it off, now you have researched back to your German-speaking immigrant ancestor couple. You can’t even read the pre-printed part of that form you found in the attic that you think might be a passport, let alone the hand-written words that fill in the blanks. Why, for all you know, that passport might not be a passport at all, but a graduation certificate or a marriage license.

“What do you, the designated family historian, do now? You don’t know German other than “Gesundheit” and “Auf wiedersehen.” You face a daunting task, probably an impossible task, or so it would appear to any reasonable person. Even though you have traced your English lines back to the 1600s with much satisfaction at your genealogical prowess, you are practically ready to abandon your German immigrants prior to the moment they set foot on American soil at Castle Garden in 1881 because of the “language barrier.”

“Actually, if you have half as much courage as that immigrant whose genes you so proudly bear, you are about to embark on an adventure into a new and different world, just as your ancestors did. After all, they had to learn a foreign language, an unfamiliar way of writing, and a new set of customs. If they were willing to take the plunge, you should be at least half as willing to learn how to read the documents that chronicle their lives. Believe it or not, you will learn to read German!

“Fortunately, there is help. Even though I had the advantage of at least knowing the German language as I did my research, I became frustrated by the many different reference books I had to look through to find explanations of the words I found in genealogical documents. I had surname books, given-name books, gazetteers for place names, German genealogical guides and word lists, Latin word lists, French word lists, lists of weights and measures, lists of diseases, and guides to the old script. With such a plethora of aids, I saw the need for a “one-stop” German-English genealogical dictionary that could be used in conjunction with a basic German-English dictionary.

“For nearly a decade, I pored through records that I had translated, genealogical periodicals, passenger lists, village chronicles, and historical documents, gleaning words and definitions, exhausting numerous German genealogical word lists. Finally, I compiled a reference book that I actually still use myself. (You should see the notes in my desk copy!) My reference book, the ***German-English Genealogical Dictionary***, includes the genealogy-related words that regular dictionaries either miss or don’t define in a way that applies to genealogy. There are no etymologies, pronunciation guides, parts of speech, etc. – just pure meanings for somebody translating, literally, word by word. It is just what someone needs to make sense out of a German genealogical document.”

If you have German ancestors, you need to check out these excellent source record books by Ernest Thode, including his famous ***German-English Dictionary***:

German-English Genealogical Dictionary
Genealogy at a Glance: German Genealogy Research. Updated Edition
Historic German Newspapers Online. Second Edition
Swiss Pioneers of Southeastern Ohio