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Genealogical Society,  
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# NEWSLETTER

*Volume 45 Number 3 Summer 2025*

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***DUES! DUES! DUES! DUES! DUES! DUES! DUES!***

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***Dues for 2025 are now being accepted. We would very much appreciate receiving your renewal checks ASAP. Send your renewal checks to:***

***Ferne Ridenour, MCGS Treasurer  
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***Death of a Life Member – Lynn Haller***

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Lynn Grace Haller, age 83, of Highland, Illinois, passed away peacefully on Sunday, July 6, 2025, at HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital in Highland.

Born on April 9, 1942, Lynn was the beloved daughter of Alvin and Grace (Zobrist) Knabel. She was deeply rooted and involved in her hometown throughout her life.

On April 4, 1964, Lynn married her childhood friend and lifelong love, Terry O. Haller. Their extraordinary bond began in Sunday School when they were just two years old and blossomed into a loving marriage that spanned more than 61 years.

Throughout their life together, they shared countless memories, adventures, and quiet moments of joy. Terry lovingly describes Lynn as “priceless” – a word that perfectly captures the depth of their connection and the immeasurable value she brought to his life.

Lynn graduated from Highland High School in 1960 and earned her nursing degree from Deaconess Nursing School in 1963. With a deep and abiding compassion for others, she dedicated her life to healthcare. She began her career in the emergency room at Highland Hospital, working alongside respected physicians including Drs. Chaney, Wilson, Heidegger, Heineman, Fulton, Schuler, and Cantrell. For a brief time, Lynn explored the corporate world, serving as executive secretary to the Vice President at Purina Mills. Yet her true calling remained in caregiving, and she soon returned to the medical field, continuing her lifelong mission of service and healing.

Lynn's devotion to her husband, Terry, was unwavering. For the past 25 years, she was his tireless and extraordinary caregiver as he lived with Parkinson's disease – supporting him with strength, grace, and fierce love until her final hours...

A dedicated member of the Evangelical United Church of Christ, Lynn was also deeply involved in her community, participating in a local bowling league and golfing with friends.

She embraced life with enthusiasm and a spirit of adventure, traveling with Terry to all 50 states and 24 foreign countries. Many of these journeys were made in their beloved vintage Shasta Motorhome and 1948 Willys Jeep, which became symbols of their shared love for the open road. Of all the places she visited, Colorado held a special place in her heart, where she found joy in camping, painting, and canoeing amid the natural beauty. Lynn had a deep appreciation for the arts. She studied oil painting under renowned artist Ted Blaylock and found joy in working with pastels – a talent she lovingly shared with her grandchildren. Her artwork earned numerous awards over the years, and she became especially well known for her charming and detailed St. Nicholas paintings.

Lynn had a lifelong passion for genealogy; she was a Life Member of the Madison County Genealogical Society. In her genealogical work, Lynn demonstrated remarkable dedication and skill. She was proficient in reading and writing Old German, which allowed her to translate many historical documents. Over the years, she compiled extensive research and a rich collection of photographs tracing the various branches of her family tree. Her meticulous work is being donated to the Madison County Historical Society, where it will continue to preserve and share her family's legacy for generations to come.

She is survived by her loving husband, Terry O. Haller of Highland; her children, Tad (Lisa) Haller of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and Amy (Steven) Frohn of Aviston, Illinois; her grandchildren, Abigayle (Benjamin) Hahn, Cody (Makayla) Frohn, Catherine (Nicholas) Osborn, Kristen Haller (partner Emme McElveen), and Zane Frohn; and great-grandchildren Braylon, Leni, and Noah Frohn. She is also survived by her sisters-in-law, Donna (Ralph) Korte and Cheryl (Stephen) Porter.

Lynn was preceded in death by her parents, Alvin and Grace Knabel, and her granddaughter, Mary Grace Haller.

Rev. William E. Kapp officiated at a funeral service on Saturday, July 12, 2025, at Evangelical United Church of Christ, in Highland, Illinois. Lynn will be laid to rest at Highland City Cemetery.

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### ***“Census Mistakes”*** **by William Dollarhide**

Census records provide researchers with a primary source of genealogical evidence. The fact that names of people and relationships are listed in certain census schedules is all that is needed to make these records our most important source for finding our ancestors. But, too often, genealogies are prepared just from census records and no other source.

As important as census records are, the real importance should be the clues they provide to access more records concerning our ancestors. For example, a census record may be the only way a genealogist learns of the county of residence for an ancestor; however, with that information, much more can be learned about a person from county records located in a courthouse, such as birth, death, marriage, probate, or land records. The census records lead us to the place on the ground where more genealogical evidence can be found. That is the most trustworthy aspect of census records—they are place finders.

Many genealogists use only census records in preparing their ancestry, but census records, unfortunately, are prone to errors. This condition raises the question, “What information from census records can we trust?” As we shall see, if all you have as evidence of a family is what you have found in a census record, have you really proven your family connections?

Here are some things to consider when using census records and some areas where mistakes are prevalent.

#### **Spelling Errors**

Probably the most common problem with census records is the misspelling of names. It is estimated that less than 20% of the U.S. population in 1790 could read or write. Thus, the spelling of a person's name in a 1790 census record may have an 80% chance of error. The census taker (who presumably could read and write) wrote down the names of the heads of household based on what he heard them say. If the spelling of a name is terribly important to you, don't expect census records to be very useful because you may never find the name spelled the way you think it should be.

The fact that names were spelled phonetically by early census takers means you have to think of ways to misspell a name before ruling out someone as the right person. Therefore, I accept any spelling of the name Dollarhide, such as Dolarhide, Dalerhyde, Dollorhite, Delerhide, Dollahay, Dilerhyte, and perhaps a dozen or more variations. But I have come across some strange spellings of surnames that caused all kinds of problems finding a specific family in a census record. A particularly telling example was looking for Needham and stumbling on to the family by accident when I found the name spelled Kneedham.

Spelling Bees began in the U.S. school system in the 1880s. Before that, American schools taught spelling as phonetics--that is, spelling a word by how it sounds. A good example of this can be found in the early writings of Abraham Lincoln, who, as an attorney, often spelled the name of his client three or four different ways in the same document. Each time he spelled the name, he sounded out the phonetics of the name and spelled it accordingly. So, in census records before 1900, the names were spelled by census takers educated in phonetic spelling, not letter-by-letter spelling.

### **Wrong Names, Wrong Ages, Etc.**

There are many instances where a family was enumerated more than once in the same census. There are cases where census takers crossed over their appointed boundaries and visited the same house. When we find these examples in the census, it is always interesting to see how two different census takers wrote down the names, ages, and nativity of the members of a family. Here are two examples from the 1860 federal census for Wythe County, Virginia:

Enumeration #1: (18 Jul) p. 899, fam. #1349:

Name	Sex	Age	Nativity
George Jones	m	44	VA
Sarah	f	44	NC
Catharine	f	9	NC
Calvin	m	16	NC
Jane	f	4	NC
George	m	11	NC
Williams	m	5	VA

Enumeration #2: (19 Jul) p. 901, fam. #1361:

Name	Sex	Age	Nativity
George Jones	m	45	VA
Sarah	f	45	VA
Calvin	m	16	VA
Margreat	f	14	VA
George	m	11	VA
William	m	6	VA

This was clearly the same George Jones and family. However, two different census takers recorded slightly different information. From one enumeration to the next, taken one day apart, ages changed, names changed, and, in one case, a person--Catharine--appeared in one but not in the other. If two enumerators recorded the information differently, how do we know the information is correct when there is only one listing?

Here is another example from the 1850 federal census for Illinois:

Enumeration #1: (13 Nov) Adams Co., IL, p. 295, fam. #129:

Name	Sex	Age	Nativity
Joseph L. Sharp	m	45	TN
Malinda S.	f	45	SC
Neil J	m	17	IL
Ewing S.	m	15	IL
Illisume	f	13	IL
Emily E.	m	11	IL
Joseph G.	m	7	IL

Enumeration #2: (25 Dec) Fulton Co., IL, p. 133, fam. #120:

Name	Sex	Age	Nativity
Joseph L. Sharp	m	45	TN
Matilda	f	46	SC
Johnson	m	16	IL
Ewing	m	14	IL
Illisiania	f	12	IL
Eliza E.	m	10	IL
Joseph	m	7	IL

Again, this was the same family, although it appears that they moved from Adams County to Fulton County, Illinois, between 13 Nov 1850 and 25 Dec 1850, which resulted in a duplicate enumeration. Two different census takers recorded different things about this family, including names and ages that do not agree. It is possible that some of the family members had birthdays between the two enumerations, but how a child could lose a year in age from one to the next is inexplicable.

### **Who Answered the Questions?**

The above examples of duplicate entries for families listed in a census raise questions, such as: Who was the person answering the census taker's questions? If it was the male head of household, would he have the correct answers for ages and places of birth for his children? If it was the female head of household, were these questions answered identically? The above examples may indicate that the differences reported may have been because Dad answered the questions in one enumeration, while Mom answered the questions in the other.

It always amazes me how a woman found in one census can be only five years older in the next census taken ten years later. But, if Dad answered the questions in one census year and Mom gave the information in the following census, these age differences might be explained.

### **What Is Important?**

What is important to remember about census records is that they are full of mistakes. And, if you are preparing a genealogy from census records alone, you are almost certainly repeating at least some mistakes.

The unfortunate fact is that census records cannot always be trusted for accuracy. The solution is simple: find other documents about the people you are researching. After finding a family listed in a census, confirm the names and ages from residency records such as land records, court records, family Bibles, cemeteries, etc. *Good luck in your hunting!*

***Editor's Note: One of the best tools available for census research is the Map Guide to the U.S. Federal Censuses, by William Thorndale and William Dollarhide.***

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## **U.S. Naturalization History**

Christina K. Schaefer's magnificent reference, *Guide to Naturalization Records in the United States*, is a complete accounting of the location of U.S. naturalization records. Since the vast majority of original records are retained by local courts, the book provides a state-by-state and county-by-county inventory of naturalization records for all 50 states, U.S. territories, and Native American records.

The volume's Introductory chapter provides a splendid overview of American naturalization. It describes the process, the various kinds of surviving records, how wars have influenced the naturalization process, other records such as voter registration and military records that can point to naturalization, the impact of prejudice upon naturalization, and much more. Ms. Schaefer also includes a brief history of naturalization in America, a portion of which follows below...

### **History of Naturalization in the United States**

Naturalizations in the colonial period were infrequent, as the majority of the early colonists were British subjects. English law forbade aliens from holding land. Europeans that were not considered British citizens wanted the right to acquire, convey, and inherit real estate. This was the main reason that individuals changed their allegiance to a new European country.

Oaths of allegiance were sworn to the British Crown simply by signing a list. An example of such records can be found in *Our Early Citizens: Names of Those Taking the Oath of Allegiance from 1715 to 1773*, by Lyle Frederick Bellinger (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1972, film 0889468).

Another record of early naturalization is *Naturalization of Foreign Protestants in the American and West Indian Colonies* by Montague S. Giuseppi (1921. Reprint. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1964, film 0908978). These records also include "persons professing the Jewish religion." This includes the localities of Jamaica, Maryland, Virginia, South Carolina, New York, and Pennsylvania, and contains all the returns sent from the colonies to the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations. The original records are at the Public Record Office, London, England.

Letters of denization were letters patent from the King, and – until 1700 – by colonial governors. In 1776, all free white male residents of the colonies who were not British citizens were naturalized in toto by the Continental Congress. British subjects in the

colonies were automatically considered citizens of the new republic. In 1790, this was extended to indentured servants who were residents during the Revolution.

#### Dates of Important Naturalization Laws

There have been many laws affecting naturalization over the years, and the requirements have varied from a simple oath of allegiance to an eight-year residency. Important laws affecting the process of becoming a U.S. citizen:

1790. Citizenship required a two-year residency in the U.S. and one year in the state, to be of good character, and to be performed in a court of record (1 Stat. 103 1).

1795. Additional requirements were added of a three-year residency to file a declaration of intention, a five-year residency requirement (with one year in state of residence) to file final papers, and required renunciation of titles of nobility and foreign allegiance (1 Stat. 414 1). This act provided derivative citizenship for wives and minor children.

1798. Additional requirements stated that a copy of the return was to be sent to the Secretary of State, and the residency requirement was increased to fourteen years (1 Stat. 570). This was repealed in 1802 (2 Stat. 153).

1804. Widows and children of an alien who died before filing his final papers were granted citizenship.

1824. The residency time between filing a declaration and final papers was shortened to two years (4 Stat. 69 2).

1855. An alien female who married a U.S. citizen was automatically naturalized (10 Stat. 604 2). This was repealed in 1922.

1862. Aliens over twenty-one who performed military service in the Army could become citizens after one year's residence (12 Stat. 597 21)

1868. African Americans became citizens by passage of the Fourteenth Amendment.

1872. Alien seamen serving three years on a U.S. merchant vessel could be naturalized without fulfilling a residency requirement (17 Stat. 268 2).

1882. Chinese were excluded from becoming citizens (22 Stat. 58). This was repealed in 1943 (57 Stat. 600).

1891. The Office of Immigration was established. Polygamists, and those convicted of certain crimes, or who carried certain diseases were excluded from citizenship (26 Stat. 1084).

1894. Aliens serving in the Navy or Marine Corps could be naturalized under the same conditions as the 1862 law (28 Stat. 123 1).

1906. The Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization was established. Alien registration was required. Residency requirements were changed to two years to file intent, and five years for final papers. Derivative citizenship was still practiced (34 Stat. 596 3).

1907. A female U.S. citizen who married an alien lost her U.S. citizenship and took on the nationality of her husband (34 Stat. 1228 3). This was repealed in 1922, but citizenship was not restored until 1936.

1918. Aliens serving in U.S. forces during World War I could be naturalized without any residency requirement (40 Stat. 542 1).

#### Description

Comparable in many ways to census records, naturalization records are a mine of priceless information and include such items as place and date of birth, foreign and current places of residence, marital status, names, ages and places of birth of other family members, occupation, port and date of entry into the U.S., and more. Since any court of record can process naturalization papers, records relating to naturalization can be found in a bewildering variety of courts; until the appearance of this guide, however, there was no practical means of locating these widely scattered records, nor any reference tool that even made an attempt at centralizing information.

State by state, county by county, city by city, the Guide to Naturalization Records identifies all repositories of naturalization records, systematically indicating the types of records held, their dates of coverage, and the location of original and microfilm records. The Guide also pinpoints the whereabouts of federal court records in all National Archives facilities. But perhaps the most unique

feature of the Guide to Naturalization Records is that it identifies every single piece of information on naturalizations that is available on microfilm through the National Archives or the Family History Library System, including the call numbers used by each institution. Records that are available on microfilm through other facilities have also been included.

Other special features of this work include an overview of the history of naturalization and citizenship, a special appendix on Native American tribal citizenship records, hard-to-find information on the records of Japanese and Chinese Americans, and records of internment of American citizens by the U.S. Government.

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***“Land Records—More than Mere Conveyances of Real Estate”***  
**by Robert Barnes**

Researchers who take the time to go beyond an index to land records may find many items of interest in a particular volume that may have not been indexed by the clerks of the county court. For example, some indices may omit some references, such as depositions and ‘posted wives,’ but one should double check to be sure.

As the population of a county grew, some of these items were later included in a separate series of records. Some counties may have separate record series for Land commissions and Valuations of Minors’ Estates. Apprenticeship records may later appear in ‘orphans court proceedings’ or ‘Indentures,’ or both. Other types of records may appear in records with names like ‘county court proceedings,’ ‘judgment records,’ or ‘minute books.’ in some areas they may be called Judicial records or Proceedings. Pennsylvania uses the term ‘Court of Quarter Session records.’ There is no consistency within a county, or between counties, or from state to state. What applies in one jurisdiction may not work in another. The bottom line is that researchers should leave no stone unturned.

Following are some examples of valuable findings buried in land records. Most of my illustrations come from Maryland land records, but no matter where you may be searching, consider checking land records page by page for possible nuggets of information.

Certified copies of entries from English parish registers. In 1709 Anthony Workman of the City of Gloucester stated in a Queen Anne’s County, Maryland, land record that he was the nephew and heir of William als. Anthony Workman of the Isle of Kent, Maryland, dec. (deceased). There followed a certificate from the Churchwardens of the Parish of Newland, County Gloucester, setting forth the names of the children of William Workman of Cliford, dec. (deceased). , and certifying that Anthony Workman was the heir of his uncle William who had come to Maryland.

**Chains of title within the deed:** A deed always contains a statement such as, ‘A,’ the grantor, for a valuable consideration, is conveying property to ‘B,’ the grantee. Modern deeds usually, additionally, contain the “Being Clause” which describes the property being conveyed as the same property that “Z” conveyed to “A.” Eighteenth century deeds may trace the ownership back to the original patentee, and, in doing so, state family relationships of previous owners or of the current grantor. Such chains of title present relationships among others who are not shown in deed indexes.

**Children being apprenticed** by their parents might have their indentures of apprenticeship recorded in the land records.

**Depositions:** When people testified, either in a land commission or some other court activity, they usually identified themselves by name, age, and sometimes occupation. These depositions often contained references to other relatives of the deponent. These depositions may be found in land records.

**Individuals registering the livestock marks for themselves or their children.** The first 74 pages of Liber B of Frederick County land records contain marks of cattle registered by thirty individuals.

**Land commissions:** Land grants in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were laid out by metes and bounds, and generally started with phrasing like ‘bounded red oak’ or a ‘bounded white beech.’ These beginning trees would fall down, decay, or otherwise become invisible, and it would become necessary for land owners to petition the county justices to appoint commissioners to take testimony from neighbors as to the location of these original trees. When any interested or knowledgeable parties had testified, the commissioners would determine what the beginning point of the land was and thus the land could be resurveyed. Most counties had a separate series of records called ‘Land Commissions,’ but from time to time the proceedings would be recorded in the land records. Many of these land commissions were recorded in Dorchester County, Maryland, land records, for example.



**Lists of convict servants.** I have found these lists in the land records of Baltimore and Queen Anne's Counties in Maryland.

**Oaths of office and appointments to office:** An early Frederick County land record book contains the oath of office taken by Reverdy Ghiselin when he swore to uphold the Act for amending the staple of tobacco. Talbot County land records record the fact that in 1668 Charles Calvert appointed William Hemsley, Gent., to be clerk and keeper of the records for that county.

**Petitions:** Usually found in county court proceedings, petitions may appear in land records. In 1698, eight inhabitants of Cecil County recorded their petition to register their meeting house in Cecil County Land Records.

**Posting of errant wives:** In the days before newspapers, husbands whose wives had left them would often record a statement in the land records that they would not be responsible for the debts of their wives, who had 'eloped from the husband's bed and board.' Sometimes we might read that a couple had agreed to live apart.

**Powers of attorney:** Individuals living somewhere else would give a local inhabitant or someone planning to move to the locality a power of attorney, giving them the authority to transact business for the grantors.

**Prenuptial contracts (sometimes called ante-nuptial contracts):** A recent article in a Baltimore newspaper told how many couples planning to marry in 2010 are drawing up prenuptial contracts. These documents are found in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, especially when one or both of the contracting parties had been married previously and may have had children by a previous spouse. These contracts were designed to protect the rights of the existing children.

**Protecting the rights of orphans:** In March 1711 David Richards, Nathaniel Stinchcomb, and Henry Waters, were bound to Robert, Ralph, Thomas, and Edmond Moss, orphans of Ralph Moss, late of Anne Arundel County, dec. That land record stipulated that each orphan would be paid £68.16.2 when he came of age.

**Servants and their indentures.** Indentures (Contracts to work for someone who would pay one's passage to America), were usually recorded in the country of origin, but land records can shed light on what happened to the servant once he or she arrived in the New World. A volume of Anne Arundel County land records in 1699, recorded that several servants of one Edward Rumley had been taken up by them as runaways and they expected to be reimbursed. In a 1674 Cecil County volume of land records, David Jenkins bound himself to work for a term of four years from his arrival in Maryland, if William Saunders would pay for his passage to America and provide him with meat, drink and apparel. Sometimes native-born settlers agreed to serve someone else for a specified term.

**Ship captains registering their cargo:** Both Annapolis and Baltimore were designated as colonial ports of entry. In 1705 two ships' captains published their rates for tobacco in the Anne Arundel County land records. Benjamin Phillips, commander of the ship John and Margaret published a rate of £16 per ton. James Bradby, commander of the ship Ursula published a rate of £15 per ton.

**Valuation of the estates of minors** give a detailed description of the improvements on an estate, including physical dimensions and structure of the house, what crops were planted in the fields and the amount of livestock.

**Wills:** Wills were usually recorded in the county will books and in the Prerogative Court will books. From time to time a will was recorded in the county land records. In 1700/1 Rachel Kilbourne, widow of Anne Arundel County, recorded her will in just such a volume.

Sometimes it is necessary just to go through each volume of land records, page by page to discover these hidden treasures, especially if the items are not included in the index prepared by the clerks of the court.

Researchers using Maryland land records have two advantages. First are the many series of abstracts of county land records published by various individuals or societies. Among these may be counted the abstracts of land records for Anne Arundel, Cecil, Dorchester, Frederick, and Prince George's Counties.

The second advantage is that all original county land records from the founding of a county to the present day have been scanned and are available at the Maryland State Archives' excellent series known as MdLandRec.net. There is no charge for the use of these records, but researchers who are not actually in the Archives search room or the county court house must register for a password. Go to <https://msa.maryland.gov/>, click on the tab "Family Historians," and on that page click on MdlandRec.net. The instructions are easy to follow.

**Land records contain many treasures, indeed!**

## *Unsurpassed Tool for German Research*

If you find a ship's passenger record for a German ancestor, will you automatically know where to look for your ancestor's records in Germany? If you cannot find the passenger record, does this mean that you will never learn where your German ancestor came from? According to the authors of the book, *Ancestors in German Archives: A Guide to Family History Sources*, by Raymond S. Wright III, Nathan S. Rives, Mirjam J. Kirkham, and Saskia Schier Bunting, the answer to both of these questions is "No!" To learn why, please read on.

First some background: the German Territories, and later the German Empire, provided more emigrants to America than any other European national group. When they came to America, German immigrants left behind a trail of records familiar to everyone in genealogy, from births, marriages, and deaths to citizenship and census records, and from land and tax records to emigration records. The key to German genealogical research, of course, is to find out where these records are located, but since there are more than 2,000 national, state, and local repositories in Germany, to say nothing of church repositories and other private archives, such an undertaking is daunting, if not downright impossible. We know there are records, but what good are they if we can't find them? And these records stretch back to the Middle Ages, encompassing family history sources so vast in number and so scattered that the mind reels.

To overcome this challenge, in 1996 Brigham Young University (BYU) launched its German Immigrant Ancestors project. The principal mission of this undertaking was to identify the records of German emigrants and to create Internet-accessible databases describing emigrants' birthplaces, occupations, spouses, and children. *Ancestors in German Archives* is the direct outgrowth of that ambitious project.

Under the supervision of Professor Raymond Wright, BYU mailed questionnaires to approximately 2,000 national, state, and local German government archives, as well as private archives. The questionnaires asked archivists to identify their archives' jurisdictions and to describe the records housed in their collections and the services provided by their staff. The questionnaires asked specifically for information about each archive's collections of vital records, religious records, military records, emigration records, passport records, censuses, and town and county records. Archivists were also asked to describe any published guides or inventories to their collections. The returned questionnaires, supplemented by Internet searches, were used to create summaries of each archive's jurisdictions, holdings, and services.

The result of this massive survey is an exhaustive guide to family history sources in German archives at every level of jurisdiction, public and private. Anyone searching for data about people who lived in Germany in the past need only determine which archives today have jurisdiction over the records that were created by church or state institutions. The Locality Index at the back of *Ancestors in German Archives*, moreover, makes this task even easier because it identifies every town with an archive, no matter what kind.

To return to the questions posed above, if you find a passenger record that states when and from where in Germany your ancestor came, you still have to figure out what German state, city, parish, or other repository has control of his/her records. If you cannot find a passenger record but have a rough idea of your German ancestor's origins (e.g., from Heidelberg after the U.S. Civil War), you may be able to skip over the missing passenger list and go directly to German vital records for your ancestor. Whichever the case, *Ancestors in German Archives* will make your task far easier than ever before. Why? It is a one-stop guide to genealogical sources in Germany, and, most importantly, it answers the fundamental questions about the very existence of genealogical records in Germany and paves the way for successful research.

*Ancestors in German Archives is now available from Genealogy.com in a two-volume paperback edition.*



## **A Field Guide for Genealogists, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition**

**By  
Judy Jacobson**

What is the genealogist to do when the information he's looking for is not online or in a genealogy book? Short of finding another hobby, it usually means venturing beyond the comforts of home. It may be as simple as going to the local library or archive, but in many cases some overnight travel is required.

Packing for a genealogy research trip requires anticipating — within reason — to pack to support the effort. Pens, notebooks, blank genealogy forms, a laptop to be sure — but what else? Obviously, there's going to be an outside limit on how much you can pack, and that's why Judy Jacobson's paperback, *A Field Guide for Genealogists, 2nd Edition*, could be the best extra pound you take with you. Here are a few illustrations:

Let's say you're looking for a Bartholomew Jones in the 1900 census for Maryland. You found a Bat Jones, but could that be your Bartholomew? You would learn from Jacobson's *Field Guide* that Bat was a common nickname for Bartholomew. In fact, the *Field Guide* has a table with hundreds of male and female nickname/given name equivalents. And that's just one kind of tip you'll find in the book.

In another scenario, you run across a photograph of one of your ancestors, but there is no date attached. So how might you narrow down the timing of the picture? *A Field Guide* contains a decade-by-decade list of the dominant men's and women's hair styles and a similar chart of clothing styles for children and adults. These clues could point you to the correct decade for finding more about these family members in the federal census, a tax record, or any number of official documents.

Fact is, you cannot appreciate just how many tips and safeguards you'll find in *A Field Guide for Genealogists* unless you examine the book, or, at the least, study the detailed Table of Contents. To download a PDF version of the Table of Contents, go to: [genealogical.com/2025/01/13/field-guide-like-a-portable-encyclopedia-for-genealogists/](http://genealogical.com/2025/01/13/field-guide-like-a-portable-encyclopedia-for-genealogists/)

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### ***Thomas MacEntee Describes Uses of Artificial Intelligence in Genealogy***

All the world is abuzz about the applications and potential uses of Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI is widely used in education (personalized learning), healthcare (diagnosis and treatment recommendations), transportation (self-driving cars, optimizing traffic patterns), marketing (generating Internet content based on individual tastes.), entertainment (scriptwriting and simulation of living and deceased actors), and many more applications. AI experts and prognosticators are telling Generation Zers that AI will be a commonplace feature of their work life and time away from work. And, as a reflection of the interest in AI, the value of AI company stocks like NVIDIA are through the roof.

But what are the current and future applications of AI to genealogy? You'll find the answers in the latest installment of "Genealogy at a Glance" research aids written by author Thomas MacEntee. Thomas is the owner of the popular blog, *Genealogy Bargains*. He is also one of the leading genealogy educators in the country, having taught over 1,000 in-person and virtual genealogy lectures since 2010, and organized a group of over 1,000 genealogy bloggers.

"Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Genealogy Research is Thomas MacEntee's overview of the status of AI for genealogists. Mr. MacEntee starts with general information about AI and gradually drills down to its application to genealogy. First, comes a discussion of different AI platforms, such as ChatGPT, which can produce human-like text based on mere fragments of information. AI capabilities can also significantly enhance genealogical research by providing detailed and accurate family histories, streamlining the research processes, and improving the overall family history experience. Other AI applications currently in use involve Automated Record Matching, Optical Character Recognition, and DNA analysis. *Genealogy at a Glance: Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Genealogy Research* also includes a glossary of terms used in AI designed to help newcomers become conversant with the language of this critical technology.