# FINDING AND INTERPRETING CENSUS RECORDS

## **Rosemary Meszaros**

Government Documents & Law WKU

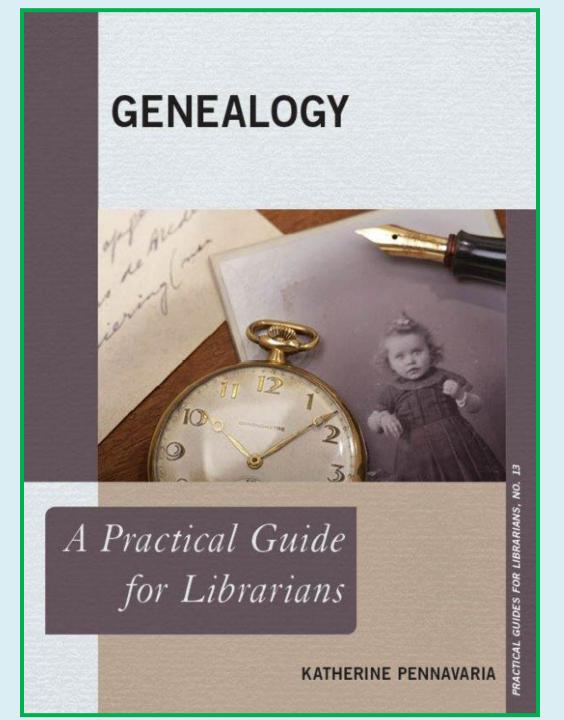
## **Katherine Pennavaria**

Visual & Performing Arts Library WKU



KDLA webinar July 26, 2016





Rowman & Littlefield PB, \$65
April 2015
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# OVERVIEW

→ WHAT INFORMATION IS IN THE CENSUS?

→ HOW CAN YOU ACCESS CENSUS RECORDS?

→ WHAT SEARCH STRATEGIES SHOULD YOU USE?

→ WHAT OTHER RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?

# CONDUCT:

# A REASONABLY EXHAUSTIVE SEARCH

"Without proof, it isn't truth."

# WHAT INFORMATION IS IN THE CENSUS?

# TAKEN EVERY TEN YEARS

# PAGES WITH NAMES AND OTHER PERSONAL INFORMATION RELEASED AFTER 72 YEARS



### [ 50 ] VIRGINIA.

Names of Counties	Names of Affifiants,	Free whitemales of 16 years and upwards	Fiec white males under 16 years.	Free white semales.	All other free perfons.	Staves.	Total.
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Principal Towns, the Inhabitants whereof being included in the general Return.

# [ 51 ] KENTUCKY.

Free white males of x6 years and wpwards, including heads of families.	ree white males wa-	ree white females, including heads of families.	Ul other free perfons.	Staves.	Total.
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The above numbers containing feventy-three thousand fix hundred and seventy-seven, is the amount of the Cen sus within the District of Kentucky.

SAMUEL M'DOWELL, Jun.

Marshal for the Kentucky District.

### 1790-1840

- only household heads named
- other residents, including slaves, just numbered
  - earliest of these done by U.S. marshals on horseback

Names of Heads of Families Soler Heft ... Henry Heft . Peter Heft Whileh Hering . Jacob Buch . Michael Hering & Paffer Horn. Botton Horn! Conrod Hafter . John Hayfler . John Keller. John Keller. Christopher Reller Henry Keller.

#### **POPULATION SCHEDULES:**

Every 10 years starting in 1790 (up to 1940 available)

## SPECIAL SCHEDULES (agricultural, mortality, slave):

1810, 1820, and systematically between 1850 and 1930

The special schedules for 1810, 1890, and post-1900 are mostly destroyed; the National Archives microfilm collection covers only 1850 to 1880.

# Generally speaking, the further back you go, the less information is available.

first to use printed forms

#### 1840

first to ask if person was a Revolutionary War pensioner or pensioner's widow

first to name every non-slave resident

first to use slave schedules

### 1860

has suffered the most damage and loss apart from the 1890

- first to ask whether parents were foreign- or native-born
- first to attempt a listing of everyone in the population

### 1880

first to list street names and house numbers, marital status, and how residents of a household were connected

- first to ask about Civil War service
- first to ask for racial self-identification
- only one to ask whether person was "defective" in mind, body, sight, hearing, or speech

The information was recorded by enumerators on preprinted sheets and shipped to Washington for copying to clean pages, which were used to tabulate results.

After copying and tabulation, the sheets and notes were boxed up and stored on open shelves in the Commerce Department basement.



No other copy of this record set existed.

# January 10, 1921

# Census Data of 120 Years Ruined by Fire and Water

Irreplaceable Records Stored in Basement of Commerce Building Destroyed—Two Firemen Overcome by Fumes.

#### **READ ALL ABOUT IT:**

# June 19, 1934



- only one to ask for month and year of birth
- first to ask how many children each woman had borne, and of those, how many were living
  - first to ask year of arrival, if not a natural-born citizen, and current citizenship status

## 1903: Census Bureau created

#### 1910

first to ask where in the naturalization process each foreign-born person was

asked whether individual was a Civil War veteran

#### 1920

asked year of naturalization for foreign-born

- only one to ask "age at first marriage"
  - only one to ask whether household possessed a radio

#### 1940

- only one to ask where people had lived five years previously
  - only one to ask highest level of school completed

# ALSO the only one that indicates <u>WHO</u> gave the information to the census-taker (look for an asterisk).

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Township or other division of county.....

Ward of city ..... Unincorporated place ...

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# STATE CENSUSES

source = https://www.census.gov/history/www/genealogy/other\_resources/state\_censuses.html

Illinois: 1810, 1818, 1820, 1825, 1830, 1835, 1840, 1845, 1855, 1865

Indiana: 1807, 1853, 1857, 1871, 1877, 1883, 1889, 1901, 1913, 1919, 1931

**Kentucky:** No state census records are known to exist

Tennessee: 1891

West Virginia: No state census records are known to exist

Virginia: 1782, 1783, 1784, 1785, 1786 (included both Kentucky and West Virginia)

# HOW CAN YOU ACCESS CENSUS RECORDS?

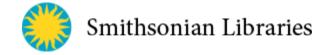
# ancestry.com

# Ancestry v. Ancestry

**ADVANTAGE:** personal subscription

# **BECAUSE YOU CAN:**

- upload/view family trees
  - contact other users
- shop, create photo books, hire experts, order DNA kits
  - view certain collections



# HERITAGE QUEST ONLINE

# New and improved interface!

More searching power!

# **FAMILY SEARCH**



# **FEDERAL**

STATE

INTERNATIONAL

# **REASONS TO LOVE THE FHL:**

1. largest genealogy library in the world!

2. millions of records on microfilm!

3. millions of records online for free!

# WHAT SEARCH STRATEGIES SHOULD YOU USE?

# Category 1:

Errors That Result From Incorrect Information Given by the Supplier

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## Category 2:

Errors Introduced by the Person Who Created the Record

#### **Actual names:**

## MIKE and MANDA DUNDOVICH

Dudandouries Mike Head

#### A BRIEF DETOUR...

## NOBODY'S NAME WAS CHANGED AT ELLIS ISLAND



## Category 3:

## Errors Created by the Person Who Indexed the Record

## SURNAME and FIRST NAME REVERSED BY INDEXER

Faso Gaetano (1940 Federal Census)

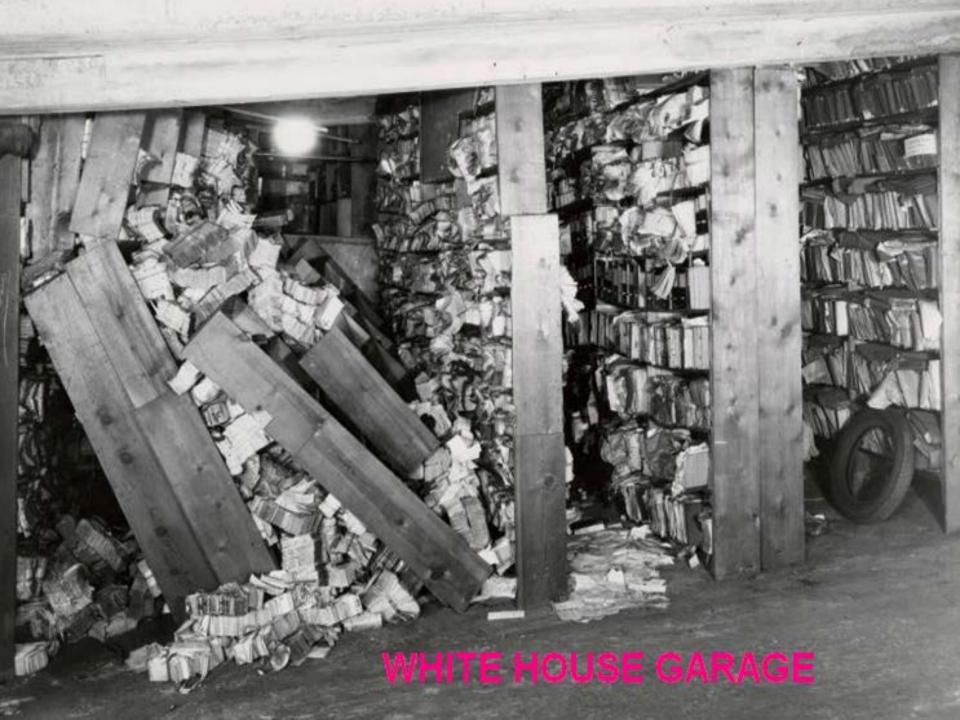
Zappia Anthony (1930 Federal Census)

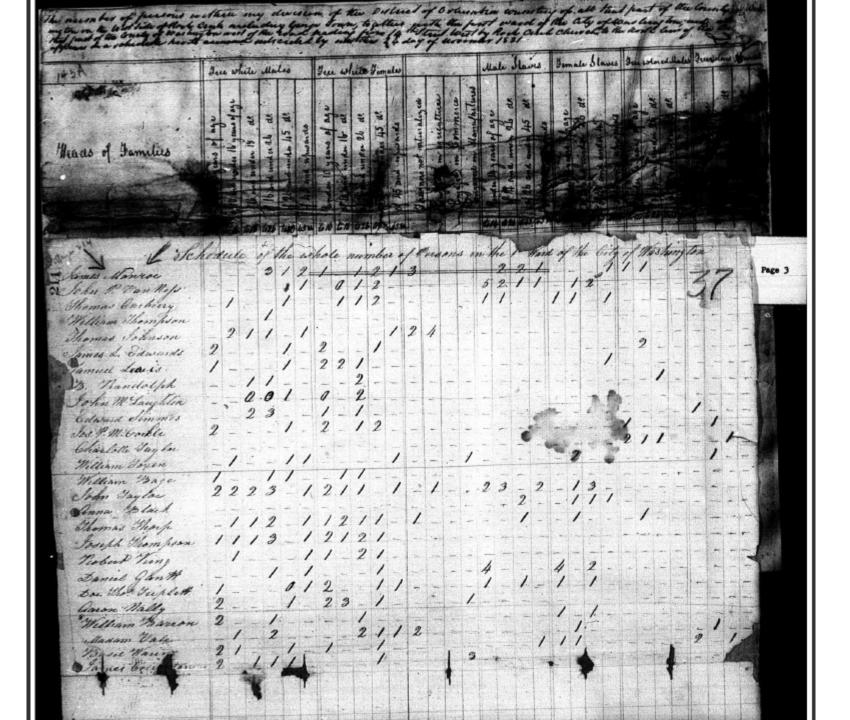
Nasca Nunzio (1920 Federal Census)

**Matteucci** Fabio (1910 Federal Census)

## Category 4:

## Lost Information Caused by Damage to the Record





HANK OF MILITARY OR MAYAL STATION, OR VESSEL.

Bollings - Elemenhandstand

COUNTRY - Elemenhandsy

SEAFORT

9-849

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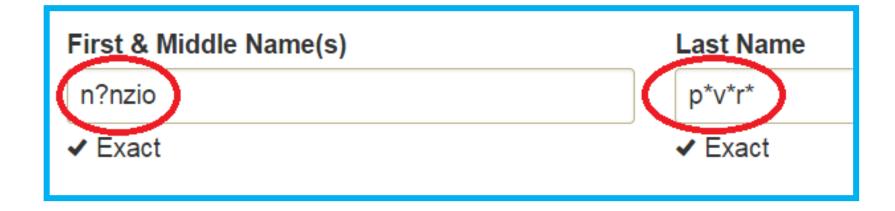
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## SO HOW CAN YOU WORK AROUND THOSE PROBLEMS?

#### **Use Wildcard Characters**

```
Politic* = Politcal
Politics
Politician
```



G?lbr\*th = results with any letter between G and L, and any combo of letters between R and TH:

Gilbraith, Galbreath, Gelbrith, etc.

#### **Use Search Terms Wisely**

#### **CASE STUDY:**

You want to find census records for John McKay, who was born in Philadelphia in 1904.

If you enter Philadelphia as birth place in the search form, you won't retrieve anything because the census only lists states and countries as birth places.

Bottom line: Know what data points are in the records you are searching.

#### Look Beyond the Target's Name

#### **BE CREATIVE!**

Pull up records for all the males born in Kentucky around 1902 to a mother named Emily, or for all females born in Tennessee around 1910 to a father who was born in Texas.

Ancestry and FamilySearch both let you do this kind of searching.

#### **Search for Relatives**

#### NAMES TO BE GRATEFUL FOR:

Winifred Henry

Merton

Loretta Florence

**Gertrude** 

**Epifanio Ephraim** 

## Search Using Abbreviations for First Names

Indexers used these instead of the actual name!

Jas.
Thos.
Wm.
Geo.

Looking for Elizabeth?

Try Liz, Lizzie, Eliz., Eliza, Liza, Betty, Betsy...

#### Reverse the Fields

James Smith indexed as "Smith James"

Name:	Smith James
Respond ent:	Yes
Age:	78
Estimate d birth year:	abt 1862
Gender:	Male
Race:	White

#### **BOTTOM LINE:**

Try the surname in the first name field and vice versa

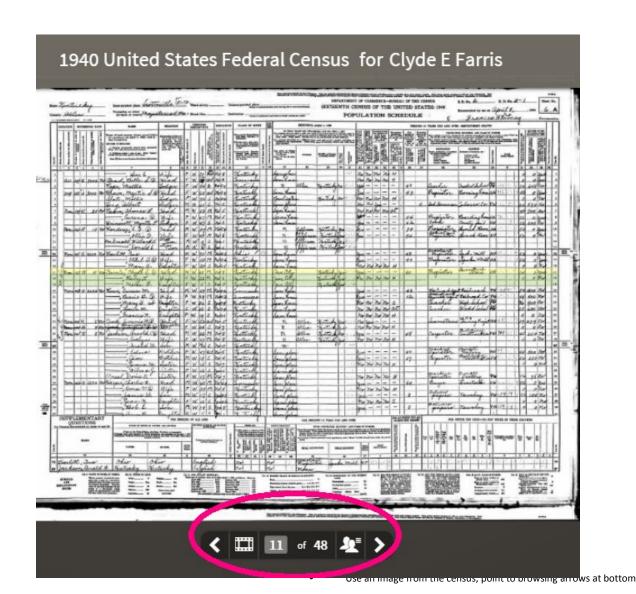
#### **Check Multiple Sources**

#### **FACT:**

Ancestry and FamilySearch indexed the federal census as separate projects.

#### **Use "Browse" Option in Ancestry.com**

(to see the whole neighborhood)



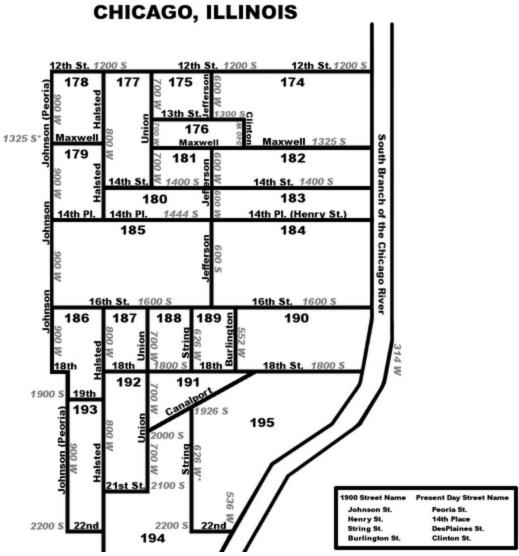
#### **CENSUS GEOGRAPHY**

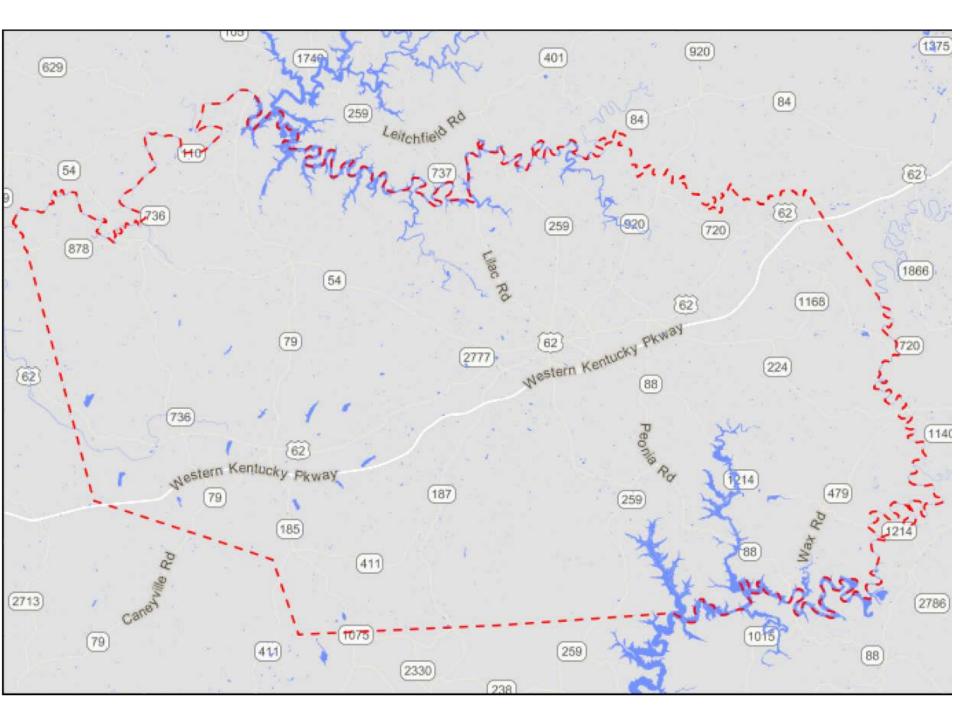


# BLOCKS TRACTS WARDS ENUMERATION DISTRICTS

→ CHANGES OVER TIME

## 1900 CENSUS WARD 7 ENUMERATION DISTRICTS CHICAGO, ILLINOIS





## WARD + ENUMERATION DISTRICT FINDER

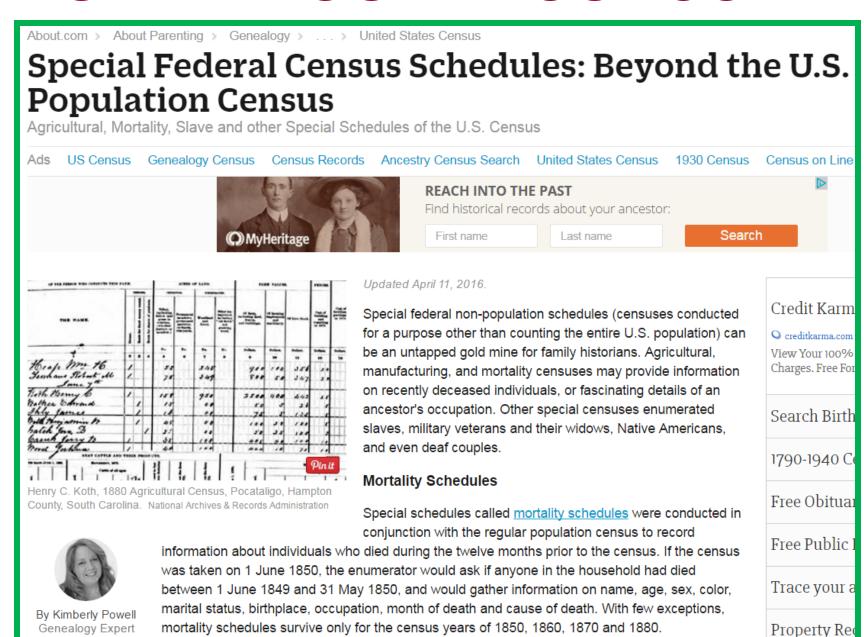
#### STEVEMORSE.ORG

One-Step Webpages by **Stephen P. Morse** 

<b>⊞</b>
Castle Garden years (1855-1891) plus other New York Arrivals
Other Ports of Immigration
■ US Census (1790-1940)
Phonetic Matching and Soundex
New York Census
Births, Deaths, and other Vital Records
Calendar, Sunrise/Sunset, Maps
Dealing with Characters in Foreign Alphabets
Holocaust and Eastern Europe
Genetic Genealogy (DNA)
Creating your own Search Applications and Viewers
Publications
Awards
Biographies and Interviews
Miscellaneous Miscellaneous

# WHAT OTHER RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?

#### **GENEALOGY.ABOUT.COM**



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#### **IRFANVIEW**

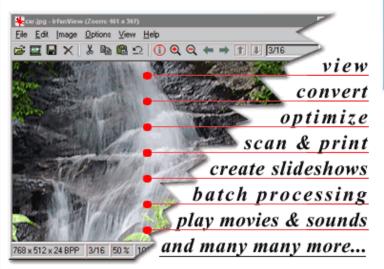
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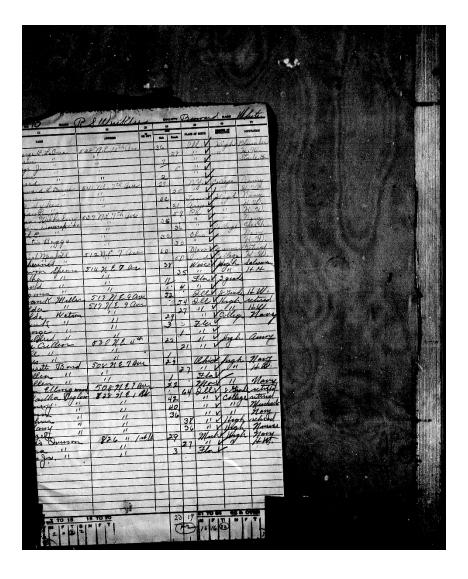
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#### **BEFORE**

#### **AFTER**



#### **BEFORE**



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#### THANK YOU!

### QUESTIONS?

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#### Thank you!

Katherine Pennavaria

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