



THE BIRMINGHAM GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Founded March 15, 1959

www.bgsal.org

<http://birminghamgenealogy.wordpress.com/>

THE PIONEER TRAILS NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2018

General Meeting for August: The Birmingham Genealogical Society will meet at 2:00 p.m. on **Saturday, August 25th** on the fourth floor of the Birmingham Public Library (in the Computer Lab next to the Arrington Auditorium). The Board of Directors will meet at 1:00 p.m. in the same room.

Please join us as Donna Cox Baker presents: "How to Use Pre-1850 Census." Donna Cox Baker is the blogger behind The Golden Egg Genealogist and the co-founder of the Beyond Kin Project. Donna has a PhD in history and is editor-in-chief of *Alabama Heritage* magazine. Her first book, *Views of the Future State: Afterlife Beliefs in the Deep South*, was published in January 2018. The earliest U.S. Census schedules, 1790-1840, furnish only the names of the free heads of family, not of other family members. These schedules totaled the number of other family members, without name, by free or slave status. Free, white individuals were also grouped by age and sex categories from 1790 through 1810 - a categorization that eventually applied to other persons. The age categories also increased each year, from two age groups for free white males only in 1790, to twelve age groups for free whites and six age groups for slaves and free colored persons in 1840. *Please join us!*

Research & Genealogical Tips

Witnesses vs. Heirs: Witnesses to a will cannot be beneficiaries named in that will and are generally not heirs. Witnesses should be disinterested individuals. And, as a reminder, beneficiaries and heirs are not necessarily the same group of people. Heirs have legal rights of inheritance under statute. Beneficiaries are named as the recipient of real or personal estate, usually upon the death of the owner of that property.

Service vs. Benefit Records: Records related to an ancestor's involvement in the military may take the form of service records or benefit records. Service records were those records created during the person's actual service and relate to their service, when they were mustered in, their physical description, when they were mustered out, where they were assigned, and other information from records created during their service. Benefit records are records typically created after service related to benefits that were given to or were due to the serviceperson as the result of their service. Those records, in the United States at least, are typically pension records and sometimes records of bounty lands that were awarded to the serviceman.

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The past is not dead. It isn't even past. --William Faulkner

Scott A. Martin, BGS Newsletter Editor

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Pre-1850 Research – The Hidden People Censuses

Contributed by Tricia Dingwall-Thompson

<https://www.recordclick.com/pre-1850-research-the-hidden-people-censuses/>

The U.S. Census has evolved over the years since its inception in 1790. According to the first Census, taken just seven years after the Treaty of Paris was signed, there were 3,929,214 people living in the United States. Unfortunately, not much information can be gleaned from the first six enumerations. However, as time passed, more and more questions appeared on the Census, but it wasn't until 1850 when individuals in a household were actually named. Professional genealogist and expert family history researcher Tricia Dingwall-Thompson chronicles the Census and provides helpful ancestor search hints for discovering your family, even though their names may not be listed. Join Tricia as she goes in search of your family treasures. Think of the missed opportunities — six times in 50 years, our government sent out enumerators to gather information about the U.S. population, but for some unfathomable reason, names, other than heads of households, were not deemed to be important. (It's enough to make a family historian want to reach through time, grab some public officials by their necks, and give them a good shaking.) The result is six censuses that too many genealogists ignore. Without all the names, how do we know who those hidden people are, represented simply by tally marks? If we have ancestors with fairly common names, how can we even be sure we are looking at the correct family? Worst of all, if the family moved, how do we find them?

What we have, however, is better than nothing, and we should make the most of these early enumerations. 1790 doesn't offer much, just three age categories: males 16 and up, males under 16, total number of females, and slaves. But how exciting to see our ancestors counted in the first-ever United States census! To be confident we have found the correct family, we may need other sources such as church, town, probate, and tax records to corroborate the enumeration. Or, we may simply wind up with two or three good possibilities.

By 1800 (and 1810, as the same form was used), we get additional age categories, making the family group more specific. And in 1820, although age categories are almost the same as in the previous two enumerations, important new questions were added. Don't fail to check out the four columns following the age fields:

1. Foreigners Not Naturalized
2. Persons Engaged in Agriculture
3. Persons Engaged in Commerce
4. Persons Engaged in Manufacture

Some pages don't have the headings, so keep blank forms, readily available on the Internet, for each census year beside your computer, and then count over the columns to each tally mark, and use your blank to see what information has been recorded.

By 1830, the government wanted to know more about the population (although not enough to ask for those coveted family names!), and ages are broken out by five-year groups. The same form was used in 1840, but it is important to know that both these enumerations have a Part 2. In 1830, this second part has information about slaves, with less specific age categories. Then, there are nine additional columns: for white people, five issues: deaf and dumb under 14, deaf and dumb 14-25, deaf and dumb 25 and up, blind, foreigners not naturalized (excuse the politically incorrect terminology). The remaining four columns ask the same questions of slaves, minus the "foreigners not naturalized."

1840 Part 2 is the best early enumeration. Specific questions, after the tallying of slaves by age and gender, go back to the 1820 focus on employment, adding new categories reflecting our growing nation: (1) Mining (2) Agriculture (3) Commerce (4) Manufacturing and Trades (5) Ocean Navigation (6) Canal, Lake, or River Navigation (7) Learned Professions and Engineers. The next two columns offer the first chance for a specific name other than head of the household, and a specific age. The focus is "Revolutionary or Military Service Pensioners in the Foregoing

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totals,” requesting the individual’s name and age. That person might be head of the household, but generally not, due to advanced age. The remaining columns ask the disability questions seen on the 1830 form, plus categories for “Insane and Idiots” — whether living at private or public charge — and three final columns inquire about students in various schools, plus a final question asking the number of white people older than 20 who cannot read and write. Overall, wonderful specific information is hiding behind those innocuous tally marks, if you just take the time to locate Part 2. If you are researching on Ancestry, click the next image for all questions. Some information is transcribed on the initial page, but not all.

Finally, if you are having trouble determining your correct family in the 1830 or 1840 enumerations, use a blank form to create a template of what the family group would have looked like, based on the 1850 census. My ancestor Alexander McMillen, his wife, and six children were living in Wisconsin in 1850, but I had not found them in 1840 when I knew they were living in New York, unfortunately along with many other Alexander McMillens. So, I subtracted 10 years from their 1850 ages and created an 1840 form that would represent the family then. I knew some children could have died or married, but at a minimum, those 1850 children and their parents should have been in the count. This way, I could eliminate other 1840 Alexander McMillens without the correct people in various age and gender groups, and *voilà*, I found them in Livingston County, New York.

Think of the missed opportunities — six times in 50 years, our government sent out enumerators to gather information about the U.S. population, but for some unfathomable reason, names, other than heads of households, were not deemed to be important. (It’s enough to make a family historian want to reach through time, grab some public officials by their necks, and give them a good shaking.) The result is six censuses that too many genealogists ignore. Without all the names, how do we know who those hidden people are, represented simply by tally marks? If we have ancestors with fairly common names, how can we even be sure we are looking at the correct family? Worst of all, if the family moved, how do we find them?

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Detective work can be rewarding, especially when it involves your personal genealogy. Don’t ignore these early censuses because of vague tally marks. If you reach a genealogical research obstacle, consider contacting a genealogy research service that can assist you in your ancestor search. The genealogists at RecordClick are ready to help you trace family history. These professional family history researchers will help turn *hidden* people into *found* treasures — your family!

The 1890 Federal Census

<https://www.familytree.com/research/1890-census/>

Working with the U. S. Federal censuses from 1790 to 1930 are wonderful sources for learning about one’s ancestors. You are fortunate if you can locate and follow an ancestor over decades. It provides real insight of occupations, family members, where they lived, if they served in the military or owned property. The U. S. Federal census was done every ten years at the beginning of a new decade. A few individual states did their own state census during the in-between years, like 1885 and 1895. On June 1, 1890, marked the official census date for that decade and all responses across the country reflected the status of the household on that date. This was especially important since it had been some 25 years since the end of the American Civil War and many had started receiving military pensions. This 1890 census had a question relating to those who had serviced in the military during the Civil War. The 1890 census also prepared a separate schedule for each family. The schedule contained information relating to race (white, black, mulatto, quadroon, octoroon, Chinese, Japanese, or Indian), if the head of household owned the home, if each person had the ability to speak English, when they immigrated, and the date of naturalization. Married women were asked for the number of children born and the number living at the time of the census. Some of these same questions would be asked again in the 1900 and 1910 census. For those who moved out of the country or died, the 1890 census would be their only record to such questions. There was a special schedule of questions also in 1890. It included questions about mortality, crime, pauperism and benevolence and with a special listing of classes (those who were deaf, dumb, blind, insane). Those special schedules and responses were badly damaged by fire in March 1896 and destroyed by Department of the Interior. By the early 20th century there

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was a need for a new archive building where all census schedules could be safely stored. In 1921, the censuses were still stored on pine shelves in an unlocked file room in the basement of the Commerce Building in Washington, D. C. On January 10, 1921 in the late afternoon, fire and intense smoke was coming from the Commerce Building. The arriving firemen finally gained access to the basement. While a crowd of ten thousand people watched, the firemen poured water into the building and flooded the cellar through holes cut into the concrete floor. The fire did not go above the basement. By 9:45 p.m. the fire was extinguished, but firemen poured water into the burned area past 10:30 p.m. With the blaze extinguished, despite the obvious damage and need for immediate salvage efforts, the chief clerk opened windows to let out the smoke with only a couple watchmen on patrol for the rest of the night. The next morning the damage was examined. There was ankle-deep water. The 1890 census was stacked outside the main vault and received the most water from the firemen. After first evaluating the damage, it was believed about 25 percent of the 1890 census was destroyed, with 50 percent of the remainder damaged by water, smoke, and fire. The investigators tried to come up with a reason why the fire started, no cause was ever determined. In May of 1921, the 1890 destroyed census records were still piled in a large warehouse. They were eventually transferred back to the census building, bound where possible and put in some order for reference. They sat there for years and were finally ordered to be destroyed by Department of Commerce in 1934. It would not be until November 1935 that the National Archives fire-safe building was opened. Too late for the 1890 census, where fewer than 6,160 names could be indexed on the surviving 1890 population schedules. A most important link to our ancestors was lost forever. Between the 1880 and 1900 censuses was twenty years. Many changes and events were now unrecorded, which made other sources such as city directories, tax rolls, and states censuses even more precious.

Using Funeral Home Records for Genealogy

Provided by Christine Woodcock @ www.geneosity.com, 15 June 2015

Once you have found the obituary for your ancestor's death, take note of the name of the funeral home that handled the arrangements. Then, contact them to see what information they have in their records regarding your ancestor. Funeral homes keep detailed records about the individuals that they provide service to and care for. Funeral home records can be a valuable resource. The funeral home will have a copy of the "funeral card" or the card given to those who attend the service, a copy of the death record they issued for the family and information on the next of kin. They will also have a list of all of the newspapers that the obituary for your ancestor was published in. If an autopsy was performed on your ancestor, the funeral home can supply you with the information for the name and address of the coroner as well, which will allow you to contact that resource for detailed information and details surrounding the cause of death. The funeral home can provide you with the name of the deceased's family physician, the name of the insurance company, (if the insurance company paid for any part of the funeral), the name of the clergy that performed the service, and often they can provide you with information about where to find a will for the deceased.

During the interview conducted by the funeral home at the time that the funeral arrangements were made, a number of details are provided. These may include: education, church affiliation, military service, membership in organizations. Plans for the service might include: the place, time and location; the names of any pallbearers (and perhaps their relationship to the deceased), music played, readings, prayers, speeches or eulogies.

You will learn whether there was a burial or a cremation, the date of the burial or cremation and if cremated, the disposition of the cremains (whether they were buried or perhaps given to a family member for safekeeping etc). Don't be shy. Start writing letters requesting the information you are looking for regarding your ancestor. This information will provide you with the details you need to help "flesh out" who your ancestor really was. Always

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include the offer of paying for photocopying and mailing of the information (most of these resources will not charge for this information, but will be pleased that you acknowledged their time). Include an e-mail address so that if possible, the records can be scanned and sent to you electronically. Also by providing this contact information, the funeral home can contact you with any outstanding questions that they would like clarified before they send out the final reports to you.

ALABAMA BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION HONORING DAVID LINDSAY, REVOLUTIONARY WAR SOLDIER AND SHELBY COUNTY PIONEER

DATE: September 9, 2018

TIME: 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Liberty Hall, American Village, 3727 Hwy. 119, Montevallo, AL 35115

WEBSITE: <http://www.alabama200.org/participate/events/events-calendar/>

David Lindsay, born in Pennsylvania, was a Revolutionary War Soldier who served in the Washington County, Pennsylvania Militia. David and his wife Mary Casey Lindsay moved to the Alabama Territory in 1818 and settled in Shelby County, Alabama where he is listed on the 1820 census. For the Alabama Bicentennial 2018 year to honor Alabama's people, the David Lindsay Chapter, NSDAR, along with the Cahaba-Coosa Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution, and Eagle Candidate Caleb Jones, Boy Scouts of America Troop 532, are renovating and remarking the David Lindsay Historical Cemetery Site on Highway 17 in Alabaster. The DAR and SAR are actively searching of descendants of David and Mary Lindsay and their 12 children to attend the David Lindsay Celebration. Event is free and the public is invited.



AGS (ALABAMA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY) FALL WORKSHOP

DATE: October 13, 2018

TIME: 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, AL

WEBSITE: <http://algensoc.org/main/seminars.html>

Speaker Mark Lowe will speak about the following topics: “Alabama Records & Migration— From Waldo Semon to Rosa Parks to Tallulah Brockman Bankhead”; “Selling Spirituous Liquor without a License and Other Wonderful Court Records”; “Finding Uncle John by Talking to Neighbors”; and, “Dower, Dowry, and Detinue— Women and their Men’s Property.” Please see our website for more information.

Officers & Directors

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