South Central Pennsylvania Genealogical Society

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Our Name's The Game

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OUR NEXT MEETINGS

Sunday, January 6, 2019 — Tour of Christmas Putz at First Moravian Church

The tour will begin at 2:15 PM at the First Moravian Church, 39 North Duke Street, York.

The Moravian Putz (pronounced pouh-tss) celebrates its third decade as a witness at York First Moravian Church. Moravians brought the unique custom of their Saxony and German homeland with them to The Colonies in the 18th century, and the sight and sound presentation shares via twenty-one scenes the story of Christ's birth. Moss and natural greenery are placed each year, and the presentation is in detail created by members of the congregation. York First Moravian Church has served York since 1752. The church has been at 39 North Duke Street, Downtown York since 1868.

Sunday, February 3, 2019 — Tour of Goodridge House

The tour will begin at 2:15 PM at the Goodridge House, 123 East Philadelphia Street, York.

Goodridge Freedom Center at 123 East Philadelphia Street is a PA Museum & Historical Commission recognized site, recognizing the efforts of William C. Goodridge. Born the son of a Maryland slave, Goodridge arrived in York at age 6, and by age 21 was on his way becoming an entrepreneur on York's retail scene and a nationally recognized figure to the Underground Rail Road (URR). Goodridge used his properties as stops on the URR, his being a conductor and using his rail line cars to transport Freedom Seekers. The property shows the place where seekers hid until safety permitted, and in 1897, Reinhardt Dempwolf was alerted to the undercroft's importance, leaving it intact – until uncovered in 1994.

Terrence "Dutchie" Downs will be the tour guide for both the Christmas Putz and Goodridge House. He is a Creative Community & History Broker in York. Promoting York's vast historic, artistic and cultural assets, he serves the Wm. C. Goodridge Freedom Center, an adviser to Springettsbury Township Historic Preservation Committee, and member to York County Planning Commission's Heritage Advisory Committee. Dutchie currently works on the historic aspects re-branding York's Routes 462 & US 30 to former "Lincoln Highway" recognition. A strong interest to 19th and 20th century stained glass artisan, John Horace Rudy, whose works fill many churches, public buildings and private homes regionally, as well ongoing research to preparation of writing a second book on S. Morgan Smith – highlighting the efforts this York Industrialist family and its heirs have given to engineering works.

Parking is easily found along East Philadelphia and North Duke Streets as no meters are in effect on Sunday afternoons. Also a C.S. Davidson lot directly across from the Goodridge House is available free of charge.

Notice regarding winter meetings and inclement weather: To avoid placing speakers and members in potentially dangerous situations, SCPGS will cancel meetings if roads are snow covered or icy, or if there is the possibility roads will become snow covered or icy before those attending a meeting would be able to return home. Cancellations are made on the conservative side. To learn the status of a winter meeting that could be cancelled because of the weather, please call 717-848-1587 or check our Facebook page.

From the President

Richard Konkel

In my last article I outlined various indices and sources for locating York County deeds. This article will address reading and abstracting the deeds once you have found them so you understand the important information contained in these documents. First I would impress upon the researcher that it is important to make and label with book and page references a copy of the original documents, either by photo copy which you retain in hard copy in a file about your ancestor or ancestral family, or in digital form that it easily assessable. These records were created before the 1900s and are all recorded in hand written form. You may misread or miss something important, therefore it is really important to have a copy of the original to refer to at a later time. Most old deeds are not called deeds, but rather Indentures. The opening words in old deeds are usually: "This Indenture made this…" This has nothing to do with indentured servants, but rather to an old practice of cutting the top of the document in a unique pattern (indenting it) to show that it is a copy of the original that matches the same indenture.

Book and Page reference: This would be the deed book and page that the deed starts on in the deed book. It is important to write this on the copy as well as include it in your abstract.

Date of the Instrument: The date given in the Grantor/Grantee Indexes is *the date the deed was recorded, not the date of the actual transaction*. (the date of the deed is not in the index) Sometimes deeds were recorded years and decades after they were actually executed.

Parties to the transaction: This would be the Grantor(s) (sellers) and Grantee(s) (buyers). Often their place of residence is listed which can be a clue if a party is moving into the area, has already moved out of the area, or is an absentee land owner. With Grantors, the wife is almost always included, as she needed to sign off on her dower inheritance rights. Under the common law married women could not own real estate in their own right, they did however have dower rights in their husband's real estate to support them in the event of their husband's death.

Consideration: This would be the money or goods and services exchanged for the transfer of the land. In old deeds we often find money in pounds (£) or later dollars ($). Nominal consideration of a dollar or less is usually a sign of a close family/friend relationship.

Legal description of property: The county and township are always mentioned somewhere in the deed, and with rural tracts of land there is a detailed metes and bounds description with distances in perches (one perch being 5½ yards or 16½ feet (1/320 of a mile) with compass directions. Neighboring adjoining land owners are listed and a total amount of land in acres and perches is listed. When abstracting I do not abstract the metes and bounds, that's what I have the original copy if I want metes and bounds details. I do however abstract the adjoining land owners. In more recent times "now or formerly" language was introduced when naming adjoining land owners, and some are merely copied from deed to deed and have not lived there for many years.

It being clause: This part of the deed recites when, how, and from whom the Grantor(s) obtained legal title to the property. If the prior deed is recorded, it can help you trace the ownership of the property back further, if the prior deed is not recorded, the information about the owner prior to the Grantor may provide clues in tracing the further history of the property. Please be aware of language such as "it being part of a tract…" This indicates that the Grantor has either previously sold part of the land, or has retained part of the tract. In certain deeds there are "Wherefore" clauses toward the beginning of the deed which contain information about applications, warrants, surveys, or probate information about the prior owner who has died and their executor or administrator who is the Grantor.

Signatures and Witnesses: The signatures found in deed books are not the original signatures of the Grantors (Grantees do not sign deeds), but rather facsimiles of the originals as copied by the clerk in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds. They do usually show whether they could write their name or signed with a mark and what the mark was, and whether they signed in German or English script. Witnesses are important because they are probably neighbors, relatives or someone known to the parties.

Attestation clause: This is where the Grantor(s) acknowledge the deed to be their independent voluntary act. They were sworn or affirmed before a Justice of the Peace. In present times it is before a Notary Public.

… continued on page 3

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I offer here the abstract of a somewhat complicated older deed that does not follow the usual form very well:

York County Deed Book 2P page 2

Indenture dated January 16, 1800 between Col. John Kelley of Chanceford Township, York County, Pennsylvania and Capt. John Shaul of Piney Run hundred, Frederick County, Maryland. Witnesseth: Patrick McGee late of Chanceford, deceased in pursuance of a Warrant dated December 29, 1748 had surveyed 70 acres 20 perches on March 16, 1786. Patrick McGee also by application for 190 acres dated March 17, 1767 Number 2946 had surveyed in June 1767 261 acres 100 perches. The two surveys contain 331 acres 123 perches in Chanceford Township. Adjoining land owners include Rev. Jas. Clarkson, Charles Bradshaw, Capt. Willm Douglass, Alex. Turner Esqr, Alex Downing and others. Patrick McGee by his last will and testament appointed Col. John Kelley executor with power to sell the real estate after McGee's wife's decease. Now the land is sold to Shaul in consideration of 532 Pounds 10 Shillings legal money of Pennsylvania. Signed John Kelly. Witnesses: Robert Gemmill and Gorg Klöpfer (German script). "Cornal John Kelly Executor of the last will and testament of Patrick McGee, deceased" was sworn before William Smith, one of the Justices of the Peace for York County, Pennsylvania on January 18, 1800. Recorded June 6, 1800 by J. Barnitz, Recorder.

A few historical notes: the surveys for the two tracts indicate the larger tract was named "Gwins Town" and the smaller tract "Conquest". These names were not recited in the deed. Guinston Presbyterian Church may have derived its name from the tract of land called "Gwins Town". The Church's first pastor, Rev. James Clarkson is listed as an adjoining land owner.

My next article will address issues with unrecorded deeds and "after recorded" deeds.

I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2019!! May the New Year bring all of you lots of exciting genealogical discoveries.

Excerpts from …

How Not to Bore People With Genealogy

written by Amy Johnson Crow

If your relatives would rather wash all of the holiday dishes than listen when you're talking about genealogy, you might want to re-think how you're talking about genealogy. Here are some ways to NOT bore people with your genealogy.

Be honest with yourself. When you're talking about family history, are you talking about the stories of your ancestors or are you talking about your research? For someone who isn't doing genealogy, hearing the trials and tribulations of solving a research problem isn't all that interesting. Just because someone isn't interested in the process, doesn't mean that they aren't interested in the end result … in the stories that we find.

One of the first rules of storytelling is "know your audience." What would resonate with that person? Fit your stories to the audience. Are you going to be seeing Aunt Karen who loves to travel? Show her pictures of your ancestor's homeland. Do you have a niece who's getting married soon? Show her the marriage register for your Quaker ancestors and how everyone at the meeting signed as witnesses. Then you can compare how weddings today are different than weddings back then.

Remember, too, that you don't have to tell an ancestor's whole life story. Instead of trying to tell an entire life story over dinner, pull out individual stories. Tell about how hard it was for the widow of your Revolutionary War veteran to receive her pension. Tell about how your 3rd-great-grandfather's probate said that he owned 72 gallons of whiskey.

Show the photos you've found of people and places. If you want to show documents, show ones that are easily explained and easily understood. A 102-page Civil War pension file isn't easily explained. An ad for great-grandpa's general store that you found in a city directory is.

There's also another way to not bore people with your genealogy. Make them a part of it. Take the opportunity at family gatherings to gather stories. Pull out the photo album. Get people talking!

Our ancestors provide plenty of stories. It's up to us to share them.

To read the full article visit …

https://www.amyjohnsoncrow.com/not-bore-with-genealogy/?fbclid=IwAR0WqQovSwEXh72ss__LLFjfpS3oEFAErmrBbrB9rbwiPvN5LC8z5_NJ8oc

Using Land Plats to Solve Genealogical Problems

Gerald Smith was the presenter for our October meeting on land plats. A land plat is a drawing of a piece of land from a written description. It describes the physical layout of the land, and usually provides the owner's name, acreage, and survey date, and may also include neighbor's names and geographic features.

Pennsylvania generally used a metes and bounds written description that enabled a clerk to copy accurate text descriptions of the land and another surveyor to find the same "lines on the ground".

A common problem with a land plat is "change in meander" … the stream or road moved.

Land plats are tools to solve problems in …

- correlating property records over time
- distinguishing same-name individuals
- following land through probate, sheriff sale, and un-recorded transactions
- finding the maiden name for a wife
- understanding community and interactions
- locating land on a modern map
- understanding the physical layout of land holdings

Connected Tract Maps are drawings that contain a number of adjacent land plats. They are often done in the context of warrants/patents (the first private land owners in the area). Each step in the process to obtain a tract of land (application, warrant, survey, patent) creates records. Get all of the records in the process! These records interlock and you may be able to use them to connect to later local deeds.

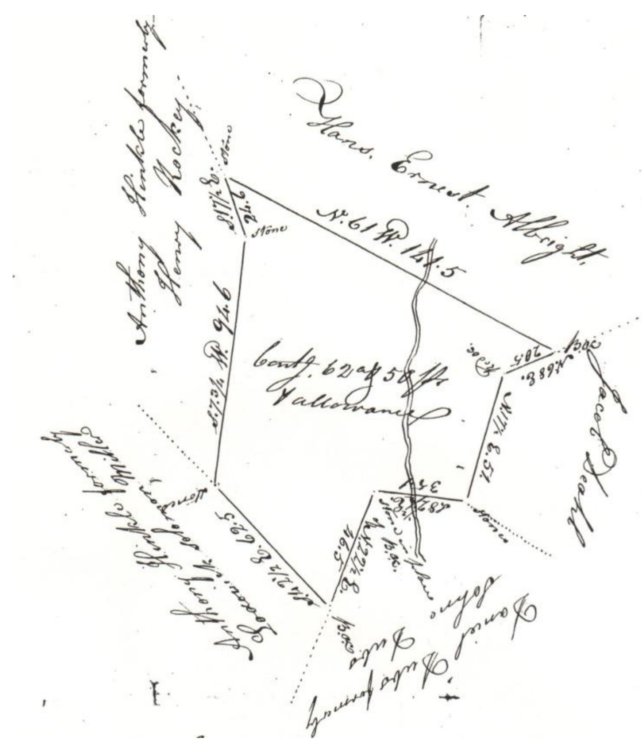
It is usually easier to overlay a cluster of tracts on a modern map than to place a single tract as many old boundaries are reflected in modern features. Neal Otto Hively published Connected Tract Maps for all of York and Adams counties. The maps for York County and the related "Index & Summary" for each township are available through the York County History Center. Mr. Hively also published *How to Plot Land Surveys: A Basic Primer for Drawing Deeds, Surveys, and Other Land Descriptions*.

The Pennsylvania Archives website www.phmc.pa.gov/Archives/Research-Online/Pages/Maps.aspx has Connected Draft Maps available online. Follow the links for Original Land Owners ("Warranty Township Maps") and Original Land Owners (Connected Draft Maps"). Connected Tract Maps are also available on www.ancestortracks.com.

Another York County resource is the Searchable Assessment Mapping and Database … yorkcountypa.gov/property-taxes/assessment-and-tax-claim-office/assessment-information/searchable-assessment-database-and-mapping.htm. Follow the link to "Property Viewer".

USGS Maps are also an important tool! And, it's not just because they include cemetery locations. The most versatile USGS maps for genealogists are the 7.5 minute quadrangle 1:24000 topographic maps. You can request the free *Index to Topographical and Other Map Coverage* for your state by calling 1-800-ASK-USGS. Also ask for the free price list and free *Topographical Map Symbols* booklet. You can also purchase these maps online at store.usgs.gov/map-locator. Use the small blue box on the right side of the screen to set the layers to "USGS Topo" and enter your area of interest in the Map Locator box.

If you find a connected tract map or historical map online, download a JPG/JPEG/TIFF/TIF image then you can overlay that map on GoogleEarth and locate your ancestor's tract in GoogleEarth. On the GoogleEarth toolbar is an "add image overlay" button … this will begin the process. Note: A PDF image will not work.



Using Pennsylvania's Real and Personal Property Tax Records

At our November meeting James Landis discussed Pennsylvania's tax records. Pennsylvania began taxing real estate in 1683 and added personal property in 1724. These records can be found in:

- The respective county government archive. They should have the original records.
- The respective county historical society. They possess transcripts, extracts, and (sometimes) the original lists.
- LDS Family History Center
- Pennsylvania State Archives: www.phmc.state.pa. us/bah/ dam/overview.htm
- Pennsylvania Archives, Third Series, Volumes 11-22 & Fourth Series, Volume 7 contain township assessment records for colonial era counties. Lists are dated between 1767 and 1788. Every-name indices for these lists are located in Third Series, Volume 27-30 & Fourth Series, Volumes 7 and 12.

The Process:

1) Legislature passes an act calling for the levy of a tax, and the County Commissioners are duly notified of this levy. Or – The annual fiscal meeting of the County Commissioners sets the collection process in motion.
2) Commissioners issue precepts to all township Constables to compile and return a list of all the residents of their township and taxable real estate and chattels belonging to each.
3) Once the Constables' lists are returned, the Commissioners assemble the Assessors. The Assessors interpret and apply the taxation statues and "assess" the tax due from taxable individuals.
4) Once the Assessor's lists are returned, the Commissioners set dates for appeals. They charge the Collector with the duty to notify each taxable person of their respective tax due. The Collectors are also responsible for informing all ratable within their balliwick of the proper date and place for appeals.
5) The County Commissioners convene as a Board of Appeals to hear appeals and award exonerations. After "strict" examination of the assessors and taxables involved, they render a decision to either diminish or add to the amount of tax due.
6) After the appeal hearings are complete, the Commissioners then charge the Collectors with the task of collecting the tax. The Collectors circulate among the taxables' homes and collect amounts due.
7) The Collector turns his receipts over to the County Treasurer.

The above procedure evolved in the early 1700s and was used from 1715 until well into the twentieth century. The system suffered slight modifications with various "board" groups over seeing certain duties.

In the early period, the tax records were hand-drafted and usually untitled. They are frequently just a collection of loose papers, and when examining these lists, it may be very difficult (or even impossible) to know which of several possible lists that record might be.

Pre-printed tabulation lists were not used until the early twentieth century (circa 1830s/1840s). At this time, several of the lists were combined, so this consolidation must be kept in mind. These later lists are frequently bond volumes which may contain one or more years.

The Commissioner's Minutes Book or the treasure's Records will contain references to persons owning delinquent taxes. They were responsible for hearing and deciding appeals.

from Mr. Landis' handout

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They were always playing with the tax statues, and many times simply backed into the assessment in order to achieve the "goal" for the county.

Look at what they are being taxed on.

An increase in acreage of 100 acres or more probably means that additional land was purchased. An increase of less than 50 acres probably indicates that they were renting additional land.

Keep in mind … if you lived on the land and/or benefited from it as if you owned it then you were responsible for the tax.

There is a lot of room for interpretation!

You need to include deeds and probate records into the analysis process.

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Classes of Tax Payers:

Before 1840 —			
	FREEHOLDERS	INMATE	FREEMAN
Age	Over 21 years old	Over 21 years old	Over 21 years old
Marital Status	Single or married	Single or married	Single
Real Property	Possesses a tract of land through title (owner), lease (renter), occupation (squatter)	Resides with a Freeholder <u>and</u> does not otherwise hold real propery	Resides with a Freeholder <u>and</u> does not otherwise hold real property
Personal Property	May or may not possess taxable personal property	Possesses a total value of taxable personal property greater than limit prescribed by statue	Possesses a total value of taxable personal property less than limit prescribed by statue
After 1840 —			
Age	Over 21 years old	Over 21 years old	Over 21 years old
Marital Status	Single or married	Single or married	Single
Real Property	Possesses real estate by title/deed	Resides on rented premises	Resides with an owner or tenant <u>and</u> does not otherwise possess any real property
Personal Property	May or may not possess items of taxable person property	Possess items of taxable personal property	Possess items of taxable person property

Types of Property:

<u>Taxable</u>: land, horses/mares, cows/cattle, sheep, pigs, mills, stills, servants, and carriages

<u>Non-Taxable</u>: chickens, goats, oxen, and wagons

<u>Exempt</u>: churches, ministers, schoolmasters, and soldiers

Classes of Taxable Property:

<u>Real</u>: real estate and buildings

<u>Personal</u>: horses/mares, cows/cattle, carriages, and watches

<u>Intangible</u>: stocks, bonds, mortgages, and loans

<u>Are All Your Cookie Necessities in the Fridge?</u>

from Michael John Neill's Genealogy Tip of the Day
December 3, 2018

Of course they aren't.

The eggs are in the refrigerator (unless a really fresh one from the henhouse is being used). The flour's probably in a cupboard somewhere along with baking soda, vanilla, and other dry ingredients. The bowls, spoons, pans, and the like are probably in their own separate places as well. And there's the oven and a cooling rack. Depending upon how many people have immediate access to your cookies, storage may not even be a problem.

You wouldn't limit your cookie preparation to things that were in the refrigerator. In a similar fashion, you shouldn't limit your genealogical research to the internet. You need things in other places in the kitchen and shouldn't look in just one place.

There are libraries, courthouses, cemeteries, and other repositories. Even for research done online, limiting yourself to one or two sites would be comparable to looking on only one shelf in that fridge. What you want may require looking on another shelf – after all people sometimes put things where they don't belong. That also happens in libraries as well.

It's not all online and it's not all on one site – no matter what the advertising or your cousin says.

More Conference Wrap-up

Becky Anstine

The General Genealogy tract offered four sessions – "Ins and Outs of Researching Your Family Tree" (presented by Becky Anstine), "Beginner's Guide to Ancestry" (presented by Gerald H Smith), "Resources of York County History Center Library & Archives" (presented by Lila Fourhman-Shaull), and "Evidence and Documentation" (presented by Gerald H. Smith). Afterwards, we realized that without any prior discussion or organization – our presentations built on top of each other – Gerald and Lila were able to incorporate information from Becky's presentation into their presentations. Each presentation flowed into the next presentation.

"Ins and Outs" talked about starting family researching, using the basic questions of who, what, when, where, why and how to start filling in the blanks on pedigree charts and family group sheets. Examples of available resources: where to find them, and how to access those resources were shown. The importance of using a variety of resources and the information that can be found in deeds, probate, census records, etc. were also explained. Also shown were various websites, and information about local research centers. Examples of combining resources, photographs, and family stories were shown to give participants ideas on how they could present their family's history and story.

"Beginner's Guide to Ancestry" showed how to get the most information from ancestry.com. Jerry explained the value and how to use the various research tabs available on the website. He showed how to use wildcards and phonetic spellings to expand results. He explained how to evaluate the data on the website in order to determine the accuracy of the information being presented – whether it was a family tree, DNA results, or a database and how to dig down to find the original source of the information. The various types of records sets available and information that could be found in the sets were also shown. How to use complementary websites such as fold3, newspapers.com, state and local resources were also discussed.

"Resources of the York County History Center & Archives" provided an in depth look at the wealth of materials available at our local research center. From family files, manuscript collections, to government records and some of the lesser known materials like photographs, drawings and postcards, school yearbooks were shown. There is large variety of information available in the library and the archives that many people are not only not aware of, but also of the value and information that these materials can add to a family's history.

"Evidence and Documentation" was the last presentation. Many people fail to understand that they need to provide information about where they found their facts. Family researchers need to be able to evaluate the information in order to determine its validity. The differences between primary sources and secondary sources was explained. Methods of determining if the evidence is factual were explained. If you are going to research your family's history, you need to be able to state where you found the information and how you determined if it was factual. The information that makes up a citation was also presented. Errors in family trees are being replicated and spread because researchers have accepted and not checked to make sure that the information is factual.

Are You Seeing the Shadows?

from Michael John Neill's Genealogy Tip of the Day
October 30, 2018

That one record you've found, a deed, a death certificate, a will, an estate settlement, probably was created because something else happened. For some documents it may be obvious what caused the document to have been created. But a deed? Why was the property being sold? Was the couple planning to move? Had they fallen on hard times? If a guardianship was filed and the parents were still alive, what was the reason? Was there an inheritance that someone didn't want a parent frittering away?

Always ask if what you are seeing or have located is just the shadow of a larger event. Records weren't created in isolation. And even if you know what caused a document to have been created ask yourself what other documents might also have been created.

OUR NAME'S THE GAME
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DATED MATERIAL—DO NOT DELAY

The Confusing Maze of Genealogy Mixups in Names

from Olive Tree Genealogy; July 2, 2018

Question: What do Sean Gough, Jean Lefevre, Giovanni Ferrari, Juan Herrero, Ivan Kowalski, Hans Schmidt, Jan Kowalski and Janos Kovacs have in common?

Answer: In Ireland, France, Italy, Spain, Russia, Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic, respectively, all are John Smith.

What a great reinforcer of the idea that as genealogists we need to look beyond what we are familiar with. We need to think outside the box. Coming from a North American culture we might assume if we find an ancestor named Janos Kovacs that it's an unusual name. Not so!

What about spelling? How often have you found a name in a census or other genealogy record that was close but not exactly the name you were looking for? Don't discard it! Look at other clues — spouse, children, ages, occupation, location — could it be your ancestor? Remember spelling didn't "count". Census takers and other clerks wrote what they heard (phonetically). Accents confused the ears.

My own ancestor's surname was Vollick. Sometimes it was rendered as Follick. Other variations I have found in documents are Valck, Volk, Valic, Falic, Folic. Why "V" and "F" interchangeably? Because the Dutch-German "V" can sound like "F" to English speaker's ears.

My immigrant ancestor's 'real' name was Van Valkenburg! How would I ever have found my ancestor if I hadn't kept an open mind and looked at other clues? And much to my initial surprise, Van Valkenburg is not an unusual name.

Another true example from my own ancestry — when Leonard-Tremi Le Roy left Quebec for New York, his name was misinterpreted by Dutch recorders as "Jonar" and then "Jonas". His surname Le Roy (pronounced Le Raw) was misinterpreted as Larrowa which evolved into Larroway.

So be aware that bad handwriting, inability to spell, accents, and other events can change an ancestor's name — and don't be so quick to assume, for example, that Leonard-Tremi Le Roy is not your 5x great grandfather Jonas Larroway. If both men have the same wives and children, same birth year, same place of birth, and name siblings who are identical, you can be pretty sure that you've just stumbled into the confusing maze of names in genealogy research.