Genealogy 102: Census Records Online
I. Census Records and Social Security Death Index
   A. Census Records

The U. S. government has conducted a census of each state and territory every ten years since 1790 for the purpose of apportioning representatives to the lower house of Congress.

To protect the privacy of those listed in the census, the records are restricted for seventy-two years after the census is taken. Records cannot be released to anyone except the named individuals, their heirs (on proof of death), or their legal representatives. The 1930 Census is the most recently available Census, and the 1940 Census is to be released in 2012.

B. Social Security Death Index

The Social Security Death Index (SSDI) is a database of people whose deaths were reported to the Social Security Administration (SSA) beginning around 1962. It was created from the Social Security Administration's Death Master File. You will not find everyone who died from 1962 to the present, but it does list many deaths in that time frame, especially in more recent years (particularly from the late 1980s to the present). It is close to being a national death index for the United States. If you find someone listed in the Social Security Death Index you can usually order a copy of the form they filled out when they applied for a Social Security Card (SS-5 form) for a fee.

- You can search the Social Security Death Index through Ancestry.com, and print a letter to request an official copy of the individual’s Social Security application. You can also electronically request and pay online by going to this site: http://genealogy.about.com/od/online_records/a/ss5_request.htm and choosing “Request for deceased individual’s social security record SS-5.”
II. Genealogy Databases through GALILEO

*Ancestry Library Edition* and *HeritageQuest Online* are two of the most popular genealogy databases, especially for census and death records. **You must use GALILEO to gain access to them.** GALILEO is discussed in Part III.

A. Ancestry Library Edition

*Ancestry.Com* is a commercial genealogy database whose website requires a paid subscription to use. However, Ancestry Library Edition is a special version of *Ancestry.Com* for libraries and other institutions of learning, and accessing the database is free, through GALILEO. The database contains:

- the 1790-1930 U.S. Federal Census
- birth, marriage, and death records
- immigration records such as passenger lists, and emigration records
- military records such the Civil War service records
- directories and member lists
- court, land, and probate records
- slave narratives
- American Genealogical Biographical Index
- Daughters of the American Revolution Lineage
- more than 1,000 historical maps
- reference and finding aids
B. HeritageQuest Online

This database is the marriage of ProQuest's *Genealogy & Local History Online*, a collection of over 25,000 family and local histories, and content from *HeritageQuest* ©, the largest genealogical data, products, supplies and equipment provider to consumers and institutions in the United States. HeritageQuest Online is designed specifically for patrons in public libraries who are just beginning their family research.

The database contains:

♦ 1790-1930 U.S. Federal Census images

♦ Genealogy and Local History Collection
  ▪ Over 20,000 fully digitized books of family and local histories, city and business directories, collective biographies, vital records, church records, military records, and more

♦ Periodical Source Index (PERSI)
  ▪ Index of more than 6300 genealogy and local history periodicals
  ▪ How-to articles that describing tips, techniques, and methods of research

♦ Revolutionary War Pension/Bounty Land Warrant Application Files
  ▪ More than 80,000 pension files of American who served in the war, with information such as names of veterans as well as age or date of birth; rank, unit, and period of service; state of residence; information about spouse and/or children.
III. GALILEO

GALILEO (Georgia Library Learning Online) is a Web-based virtual library that provides schools and public/academic libraries access to resources like databases, magazines and scholarly journals, encyclopedias, government publications, and business directories. **You must use GALILEO to access Ancestry Library Edition and HeritageQuest Online.** If you are at home or at another non-library computer, you will need to type in the GALILEO password. You can call or stop by the library anytime to get the password. *The password changes quarterly.*

Ancestry Library edition can only be used within the library (i.e. any branch of the Athens Regional Library System, including the Oconee County Library), but Heritage Quest Online can be used from any computer regardless of location.

► Enter GALILEO from the Library’s website: www.clarke.public.lib.ga.us.
► On the library’s homepage, click on the “Research and Homework” icon:
Then click on the “Genealogy and Georgia” in the green box: Once you are in GALILEO, click on Databases A-Z in the green bar:

Choose “Ancestry Library Edition” from the alphabetical list:
IV. Ancestry Library Edition
This is the home page of Ancestry Library Edition; it also the main search screen:

It’s best to start with a broad search without including any places or dates. If you get too many results you can refine your terms and search again.

Click on + Add Life events to create entry fields for adding things like births, deaths, marriages.

Click on + Add family members to create entry fields for relatives associated with the person you are searching for.
A. Searching Census Records

► Step 1: To begin, we want to only search census records. The default setting on Ancestry’s homepage is to search all of their records, so we need to tell the website that we only want Census Records. To do so, Go to “Search” at the top of the page, and choose “Census & Voter Lists.”

► Step 2: Choose U.S. Federal Census Collection from the box on the right-hand side:
Example 1: Enter **Thomas** and **Dodson** as first and last names, respectively. In the box for “Lived in,” begin typing **Kingsport**. The system will automatically give you a couple of choices. We want **Kingsport, Hawkins, Tennessee, USA** so click on that one. Click on the orange search button.

A list of hits will be displayed. The right hand column gives thumbnail data to help you weed out irrelevant records without having to view each one in full.

Click on the 1930 Census for Thomas E. Dodson to see the full record.

Note: when searching for your ancestor, you may have to dig through many pages of hits before you find the right record.
You will see the following screen:

This information has been extracted from the original census record. You can see that Thomas Dodson was 14 at the time of the 1930 census. You can also see his relationship to the head of the household (son) and the names and ages of the other household members.

Note the father’s name: Romas. If you look at the census record (next page), you will see that the father’s name is actually Thomas. This is a case of transcription error: you will encounter this kind of thing frequently in genealogical research.

► To view the actual census record, click on the big orange sunburst in the top right corner. On the next screen that appears, click on the button that says “No, just show me the image.”
Viewing the actual census record
Once you reach the actual form, you will be able to manipulate the image by zooming in and out and scrolling up/down and left/right.

As you see in the truncated version of the record, the father’s name is actually Thomas and not Romas.

This example dwells only on the names of the household members. But as you read across the form you’ll find information about each member that can help you in your search, such as place of birth, occupation, citizenship status, and more.

Having a copy of the blank census record form in hand at the same time is very helpful: instead of scrolling up and down or zooming in and out to read column names, you can refer to the blank form.

Keep in mind: the families listed above and below your ancestor were his or her neighbors. Years ago, neighbors were more involved in each other’s lives; in fact, a neighbor is sometime the informant listed on a death record. Neighborhood children often married each other when they grew up, which means neighbors of your ancestor could actually be relatives as well. If you hit a brick wall with your ancestor and have no idea where to go next, consider researching the neighbors’ records – there’s a chance you might find a lead you can work with.
Alternate Spellings, Nicknames, Middle name, Initials
If you can’t find a record of your ancestor, consider an alternate to the full name.
► Example 2: Go back to the search screen and enter Tom instead of Thomas.

This hit doesn’t seem to be correct, yet it has some matching information (location).
► Click on it to view the record summary:

Enough information is similar to warrant a look:
▪ Location
▪ Date of birth
▪ Mother’s name
▪ Sister’s name.
► Click on the orange sunburst to view the census record.
In this truncated view of the census record, you can see that the handwriting is questionable. This is a case in which older handwriting is difficult to decipher, something you’ll definitely come across.

You may have to use information from other sources to prove that a record like this is the correct record for your ancestor.

Note: this is the 1920 census, and you can see an additional member of the household, Bettie Ligon, the mother of Ruth. She did not appear in the 1930 census we just examined. If we were looking for her and had no death date whatsoever, this record could be a clue that she might have died in the intervening decade.

Other hints for searching

● Use truncation and wildcard characters. The asterisk (*) is a wildcard that matches zero or more characters. For example, a search on sam* will bring back results that include 'sam', 'samantha', 'samuel', etc. You can also search alternate spellings with the asterisk (*), which represents 0 to 5 unknown characters. The query Johann* will search for Johann and Johannes. A query for Smel*er will search for Smeltzer and Smelzer, among others.

● The question (?) mark acts as a single-character wildcard. For example, a search on eli?abeth will yield results that include 'elisabeth' or 'elizabeth'.

Note: You cannot use a question mark as the first character of a search term.
B. Records from the Social Security Death Index


Enter Thomas and Dodson in the name fields, and Kingsport Tennessee in the location field for “Any Event.” Then click Search.

Click “View Record” by the name circled below.
This is information on file at the Social Security Administration. It is not a death certificate. However, as you can see in the example below, more information is yielded, including the full dates of birth and death, as well as the Social Security Number.

You can request a copy of the original application for your relative’s social security number from the Social Security Administration by clicking on the entry marked by the red arrow and following the instructions. The original application form (SS-5) contains a wealth of information about the individual including:

- Full name
- Age at last birthday
- Date of birth
- Place of birth (City, county, state)
- Father's and mother’s full name

Note the panel to the right, “Suggested Records:”
You can see Georgia Death records and U.S. Veterans Gravesites records related to this name. Click the first one to view it.
This is the official record for Georgia, with the certificate number.

Go back and click on the Veterans gravesites entry:

Here you see information about his years in the armed forces, as well as the cemetery he is buried in.
Something to consider:

The entries we just looked at are for the same person: Thomas Dodson. The census records lists him as *Thomas E Dodson*, whereas the SSDI lists him as *Thomas A Dodson*.

It is logical to assume that one of the names is a typo. However, this man legally changed his name, from Thomas Elliot Dodson to Thomas A. Dodson, Jr. In fact, the veterans gravesites record reflects the full name change.

Thus, all entries are correct even though they seem to contradict each other.

Keep in mind that people do change their names, for various reasons: some personal, some practical, some illegal. If you hit a brick wall with a relative, consider the slim - but possible - chance that he changed his name.
V. HeritageQuest Online

A. Census Records

► Click on the first entry…

HERITAGE QUEST ONLINE

- **Search Census**: Find ancestors in the complete set of U.S. Federal Census images from 1790-1930, including name indexes for many years.
- **Search Books**: Find information on people and places described in over 25,000 family and local histories.
- **Search PERSI**: Find information about people and places from this index of over 2.1 million genealogy and local history articles.
- **Search Revolutionary War**: Search selected records from the Revolutionary War Era Pension & Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files.
- **Search Freedman's Bank**: Search for individuals in Freedman's Bank (1865-1874), which was founded to serve African Americans.
- **Search U.S. Serial Set**: Search the Memorials, Petitions, and Private Relief Actions of the U.S. Congress in the LexumNext® U.S. Serial Set.

► to reach the census search page:

Not all Census material is available on this website. The decades listed in the left margin represent the decades available to search by name. Other census decades that have not yet been indexed by name are also available by browsing by locality. Click the "Browse" button (in blue print) to see additional content.
Important! For census records, HeritageQuest Online is not as user friendly as Ancestry Library Edition. The records are indexed by head of household information only; thus wives, children, and other family members cannot be looked up directly unless they are the head of the household.

Also, HeritageQuest Online does not give you a list of names similar to your entry: it’s an all-or-nothing search. Remember to search using spelling variations, shortened names/nicknames, middle names, and initials.

► Example 4: Enter Bettini in the surname field:

You’ll see the following list of hits in the different census records:

The “Census Results” page shows you how many times your entry appears in each census decade. When searching for your relatives, you will want to be as thorough as possible and look through all records that show at least one result.

► In this example, however, click on the 1910 Census.
This truncated list shows the people named Bettini in the 1910 census.

► The **Bettini** we want was named **Peter Frank** and lived in North Carolina.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surname</th>
<th>Given Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BETTINI</td>
<td>ALEXANDER</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>ITAL</td>
<td>CT</td>
<td>NEW HAVEN</td>
<td>4-5D NEW HAVEN</td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BETTINI</td>
<td>ANDREA</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>ITAL</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>MARIN</td>
<td>SAN RAFAEL TWP</td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BETTINI</td>
<td>MARGARET</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>ITAL</td>
<td>NY</td>
<td>NEW YORK</td>
<td>4-5D MANHATTAN</td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BETTINI</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>ITAL</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>SAN FRANCISCO</td>
<td>SAN FRANCISCO</td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BETTINI</td>
<td>F F</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>AUST</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>OUILFORD</td>
<td>MONROE TWP</td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BETTINI</td>
<td>PETER</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>ITAL</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>CONTRA COSTA</td>
<td>7-TWP</td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BETTINI</td>
<td>PIA</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>ITAL</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>MIDDLESEX</td>
<td>8-WD NEWTON</td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BETTINI</td>
<td>UMBRETO</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>ITAL</td>
<td>NY</td>
<td>WESTCHESTER</td>
<td>4-5D NEW ROCHELLE</td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P. F. Bettini is the last entry on this page of the census record.

► To see the rest of the household, click on the “forward” arrow.

As you can see, some records are extremely difficult to read.
► Example 2: Go back to the search page and type in **Bettini** with an *m* (not *n*).

► Click on the 1920 record.

We saw **P.F. Bettini** in the last example, and here’s a **Frank**. The state and county also match the last record, so this looks like a possible hit.
Yes, it’s the same family as in the last example. You can see that the name in the record does look as though it’s spelled with m instead of n. It could be that when the family member spelled the name for the interviewer, he heard m instead of n; it could be that the interviewer wrote a sloppy n that look like an m. In other words, any number of reasons are possible.

Something else to think about:
Peter Frank Bettini came from Trieste, a small town northeast of Venice, in Italy. So why is his place of birth listed as Austria? Is this a mistake?

Actually, no. Here’s a case in which historical research can shed light on findings in genealogical research:

- Peter Frank Bettini came to the US in the late 1880s, more than two decades before World War I.

- From the 1300s until after WWI, the town of Trieste was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. As a result of WWI, that empire was dissolved and the borders of many nations were redrawn, bringing Trieste into the Italian nation.

This means that anyone searching for Peter Frank Bettini prior to his emigration may need to consult Austrian records and well as Italian ones.

Consulting the federal census records can bring you lots of information about your ancestors and point you in the right direction for further searching. As with all genealogical research however, you will always want to corroborate your census findings with other documents.

Using the census records often requires patience and detective work, but the results are worth it!
VI. Other Helpful Sites

A. Through the Oconee County Library’s Website:

By following the steps laid out on pages 5 and 6 of this packet, you can see other helpful genealogical sites. Some are free for anyone to use and others are free for Athens Regional Library Cardholders.

The Digital Library of Georgia is a gateway to Georgia's history and culture found in digitized books, manuscripts, photographs, government documents, newspapers, maps, audio, video, and other resources. The Digital Library of Georgia connects users to a million digital objects in 110 collections from 60 institutions and 100 government agencies. Though this represents only a fraction of Georgia's cultural treasures, the Digital Library of Georgia continues to grow through its partnerships with libraries, archives, museums, government agencies, and allied organizations across the state.

Fold3 History and Genealogy Archives combines original historical documents and personal histories. The collection features millions of digital images of records preserved in the National Archives and other regional archives. This archive features documents relating to the Revolutionary War, Civil War, WWI, WWII, U.S. Presidents, historical newspapers, naturalization documents, and much more. Some other very notable material includes the Matthew Brady collection of Civil War photos and UFO documents from 1947 - 1969. For Athens Regional Library cardholders only.

New Georgia Encyclopedia Authoritative resource for information about the state of Georgia.

Sanborn® Fire Insurance Maps for Georgia Towns and Cities, 1884-1922 consists of fire insurance maps created by the Sanborn Map Company that depict the commercial, industrial, and residential areas of Georgia cities. The highly-detailed, color-coded maps document the changing face of Georgia cities by depicting not only the community but also each building, block, and neighborhood. The maps detail building construction, sizes, and usage as well as city services such as water and fire services.
B. Other Sites:

**FamilySearch** (www.familysearch.org) A project of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, FamilySearch is the largest genealogical organization in the world. Their website contains a combination of searchable records, microfilm, and books. Searching under “records” allows you to find census records, marriage records, military records, and more. Often these records are transcribed but there is no image of the original available to view.

Under “Catalog” you can search by place names, last names, call numbers, etc for records of books or microfilm. Those on microfilm can be ordered and sent to your local Family Search Center and books can be obtained through inter-library loan at your public library. There is also a “Books” section which allows you to search digitized books from Brigham Young University.

By selecting “Learn” at the top of the webpage, you will be taken to the wiki, video tutorials about doing specific types of research, and discussion boards. The topics covered in the online tutorials range from beginning genealogy to deciphering foreign scripts.

The online genealogies under Family Trees (Ancestral File and Pedigree Resource File) from this and other sites should be viewed as clues not as documents, proof, or true.

**Cyndi’s List** (www.cyndislist.com) Cyndi’s List is a free site which attempts to index all genealogical websites. You can browse topics alphabetically and find a list of sites related to that topic. Topics represented include “Germans from Russia,” “Births and Baptisms,” and “African American.” This site is a great place to start exploring the wide range of internet resources available.

*End of Genealogy 102*