Basic Records & Indexing

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Discover strategies used by researchers when your family is not where they should be in the Census Schedules and other Indexed Lists. Often finding the original record based on a reference or an index will require a concentrated effort and logical thinking skills to find that record.

U.S. and Canada, Passenger and Immigration Lists Index, 1500s-1900s

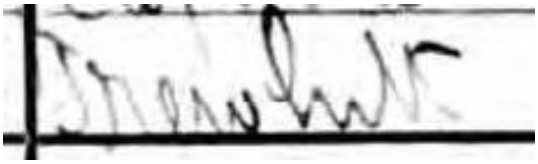
Name:	Cornelius Noel
Arrival Year:	1766
Arrival Place:	Virginia

"Source: Naturalizations and Denizations in Colonial Virginia", Lloyd D. Bockstruck. *NGS Quarterly*, 73:2 (June 1985) pp 109-116. **Where did Noel originate?**

What causes the name to be misplaced or misindexed? It may be a misspelling, a typographic error, a misunderstanding of the name sound, or other simple misstatement. If you use an index to find your families, be sure to check every spelling variant and sound variant in the index. Surnames are often missed because of a different initial letter or first vowel, or maybe they are hidden by an h as the second letter, which throws the surname into an unexpected place in the index. Sometimes, the problem is the computer's sorting of names due to spacing. For example, McGee, Magee, Maghee, McGhee, and Mc Gee will be different surnames indexed, just as Smith,John (no space after the comma) will be listed after Smith, William (as a separate surname).

Check name variants
Consider spelling errors
Consider misreads by transcriber

Surname	Given Name	Age	Sex	Race	Birthplace	State	County	Location	Year
DIEROHITT	WAYNE D	38	M	W	TN	CA	KINGS	LUCERNE TWP	1900



Our individual was indexed as DIEROHITT, not TREWHITT.

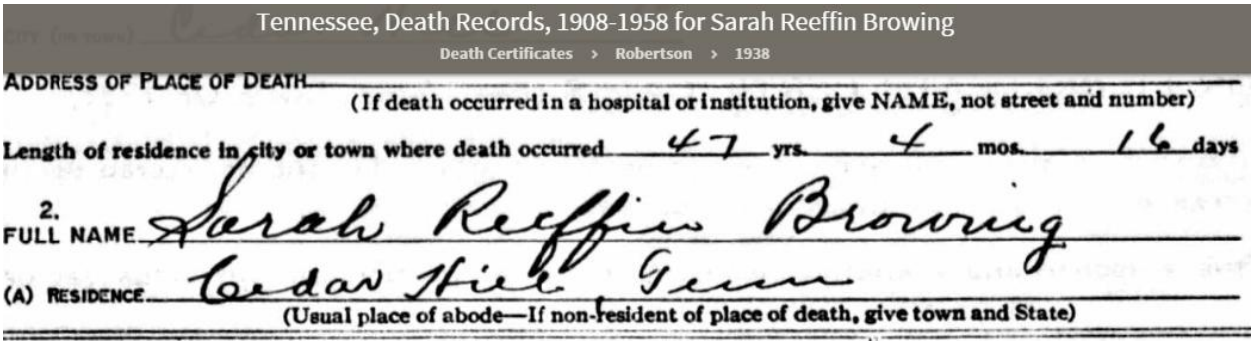
The basic order of characters is:

- spaces, punctuation marks, and symbols other than letters and numerals: All characters in this group have equal sorting value and are placed before any numeral or alphabetic letter. All are treated as if they were a space. Multiple consecutive spaces and their equivalents are to be considered equal to a single space.
- numerals (O through 9): Numbers expressed in numerals are arranged according to ascending arithmetical value (see also 9.8, Numerals).
- letters (A through Z): Lowercase and uppercase letters have equal sorting value. Modified letters are treated like their basic equivalents in the English alphabet.

Word-by-word [left] versus letter-by-letter arrangement In accordance with the basic order specified above, index headings should be arranged by the word-by-word method, in which a space comes before a letter or numeral. This order, which is standard in library catalogs, will cause headings beginning with the same word to be placed next to each other: N.Y.S.E. constitution and rules [title]

New, Agnes	New, Agnes
New Brunswick	Newark
new journalism	New Brunswick
new moon	Newfoundland
New, Thomas	new journalism
New York	new moon
Newark	news
Newfoundland	news agencies
news	news (journalism)
news agencies	newsletters
news (journalism)	newspapers
news-letters see newsletters	news photography
news photography	New, Thomas
newsletters	New York
newspapers	NEXIS (information retrieval system)
NEXIS (information retrieval system)	N.Y.S.E. constitution and rules [title]

Indexed as Sarah Reeflin Browing Should be Sarah Ruffin Browning


Tennessee, Death Records, 1908-1958 for Sarah Reeffin Browing

Death Certificates › Robertson › 1938

ADDRESS OF PLACE OF DEATH

(If death occurred in a hospital or institution, give NAME, not street and number)

Length of residence in city or town where death occurred 47 yrs. 4 mos. 16 days

2. FULL NAME Sarah Reeffin Browing

(A) RESIDENCE Cedar Hill, Tenn

(Usual place of abode—If non-resident of place of death, give town and State)

A well-prepared index can greatly enhance the usefulness of a resource to readers and researchers. An index should be considerably more than a concordance of words and phrases. A good index records every pertinent statement made within the body of the text. For further information about the process of indexing, see The Chicago Manual of Style

Data-entry errors:

Hellmann, Jmaes L / Xtiller, Marcus P. / Osporne, Charles

Compound Family Names/ Prefixes

Morris-Head, Robert T. / D'Arcy, Auguste / Del Toro, Belmont

van der Warrden, Jaacob Vender-Oscar Mary

Strategies to find missing individuals

Transcribe from original or close

Copy exactly as found

Using alternate name finders

Wrong name

Misspelling – Consider Alternate Spelling

Misunderstood

Use neighbors and friends

Search page-by-page

Documenting steps to answer

Jordan Almond Theory

Determining Index Type

Choosing example pages

Analysis of text

Tabular pages

What's New

Once you begin converting physical documents to digital records, indexing is the next step toward a comprehensive document management solution. Indexing makes this information usable. Originally, the only way to index information was by manual entry of metatags. Today, we use advanced techniques to achieve the same results including: Intelligent character and optical recognition (ICR & OCR); Robotic process automation (RPA); and AI-power machine learning

Resources

Steve More – One Step Websites https://stevemorse.org/

Steve Morse – Reverse Soundex - https://stevemorse.org/dl/reversesoundex.html

U.S. and Canada, Passenger and Immigration Lists Index, 1500s-1900s

https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7486/

Index to American Genealogies (Durrie)

https://archive.org/details/indextoamericang00durr/page/401/mode/2up

American Genealogical Biographical Index (AGBI)- https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/3599/

"Genealogical Periodicals: A Guide for Research: Key to Indexes" , Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/rr/genealogy/bib_guid/genperiokey.html

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