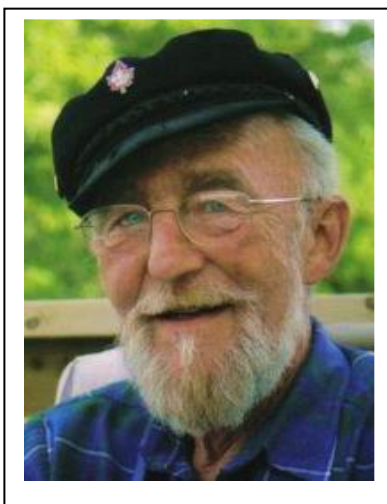


Place Name Confusion



Having trouble locating a place name on a map to see where your ancestor came from? You are not alone. Certainly they can be badly scrambled by language differences between your ancestor and the recorder or wrongly read by a transcriber, but place names also changed over time because of boundary and political changes.

The city we know as 'Munich' is actually 'München' in German and is 'Monaco' in Italian. I live in a place that was once known as Corkery, but almost everyone calls it Upper Huntley and officially it is Ottawa. All of these are correct designations but they do create some confusion.

Janco Pavsic of the Société généalogique canadienne-française has sorted out a number of mysterious place names. "Kenisperg" appeared on a baptismal record in 1750. Its German name was 'Königsberg', but you will find it on some maps as 'Kaliningrad' because it was renamed by the USSR after the Potsdam Accord in 1946. Bratislava and Celouck are the Slovakian names for places that are known as Presburg and Klagenfurt in German. The town of

'Tourla' in a marriage contract of 1760 was actually 'Durlach' in Baden. 'Endic' in a marriage record of 1729 turned out to be 'Andech' in Bavaria.

Another problem can be the number of places in a country that have the same or very similar names. I found eight Hollymounts in Ireland. An Irish friend, David Clyde, explained to me that typically Irish place names are descriptive of the locale. Since there can be many similar locales, you will find a number of places with similar names.

My gazetteer lists twenty-six places in the U.S. called Liberty and sixty-two Lincoln's. Occasionally immigrants, especially if they had been rural people, gave the region they were from on passenger lists, etc.

It sometimes helps to know something of the history of the area you are researching and an historical atlas, that you can find in most libraries, will have maps from different periods that might help you to pin down your mystery place. My father was born in Büdelsdorf, a hamlet in Schleswig. In 1815 it was part of Denmark. It later (1866) became a Duchy in the North German Confederation, and later still (1871) part of the German Empire. It is now joined with Holstein. Gazetteers of the world or of individual countries can also be a great help.

Fortunately for us, governments also have the same problem and have had to develop tools to help them sort out the problem for purposes of census, taxation, and postal service. The most important tool for Ireland is the *General Alphabetical Index to the Townlands and Towns, Parishes and Baronies of Ireland* (1851). Like so many other great but hard to find resources, it is available on microfilm through your Family History Centre (FHC). For Germany there is: *Meyers Orts- und Verkehrslexicon des deutschen Reichs*. It goes back to the German Empire of 1871 and was republished in 2000. Canada and the United States have census and postal indexes that are of inestimable help in locating a place. We will explore the resources for finding places in various countries in later issues of the column.

Missouri Births and Deaths

The Missouri State Archives has made its Birth and Death records available in database format on a very easy to use web site at: <http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/birthdeath/>.

There is a search form for each type of record. The Birth Record includes: Name, Date/Place of Birth, Father's Name, Mother's Maiden Name. If you click on 'Details', you will get a little further information including the occupation of the Father.

The Death Record lists the Name, Age, Sex, Color, Date and County of Death. 'Details' includes how long the person was in the State, the Place/Cause of death, Duration of illness, Place/Date of burial, Undertaker, Physician.

The site also provides a form you can use to order a certificate of the vital event for a cost of one dollar American.

This is a very clean and intuitive site. If you have relatives who were or may have been in Missouri, it is well worth checking out.