

Genealogy Rocks!

Finding Grandpa in Census Reports

I know grandpa was living in Shawano, Wisconsin during the 1900 census. Why can't I find him? One reason is his last name was spelled differently than it is now. The surname "Wojciechowski" has been spelled Wachowski and Wancehojski among others. The census takers, called enumerators, often wrote what they heard and spelling was not important. They were not authorized to request proof, such as birth, marriage or property records.

Perhaps neither parent nor head of the household was home when he called. An older child or even a neighbor gave the information



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and not been fully accurate. This explains differences in age and place of birth from one census to the next.

The first census was in 1790 and is taken every 10 years. But it cannot be made public for 72 years for privacy of living persons. The 1940 census becomes available in 2012. The 1890 census was lost in a fire. Many states complete census reports five years after the Federal ones. The 1900 census gives the most genealogical information, and includes month and year of birth, current age, number of years married, year of immigration, if naturalized, and for women, the number of children they bore and the number still living.

With a Fort Collins or Loveland library card, you can access census reports from home on the library website under the Heritage Quest genealogy database.

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Our next program, "Researching a Missing WWII Pilot" is at the Fort Collins Harmony Library on November 19 at 6:30 pm. Estes Park Genealogical Society presents "Cheapskate Genealogy: Research your Family History without breaking the bank" at the Estes Park Public Library on November 12 at 4 pm. ❖

Kathy Patrick is Publicity Chair for the L.C. Genealogical Society. For information, visit our website at www.lcgsc.org.