RESEARCHING YOUR FARMER ANCESTORS
Cass County Public Library, Genealogy Branch

THE BASICS

This guide covers various different types of records to use when researching your farmer ancestors:

- Census Non-Population Schedules
- Land Records
- Property & Financial Records
- Resources in Newspapers
- Additional Miscellaneous Record Types

CENSUS NON-POPULATION SCHEDULES

What are Non-Population Schedules of the Federal Census?

Non-population schedules or “special schedules” of the census were designed to gather statistical information on a specific group within the overall population. They are referred to as “non-population” to distinguish them from the decennial (once every ten years) Federal Census that enumerates the entire population of the United States. The schedules covered in this handout include:

- Agricultural
- Manufacturing
- Mortality
- Veterans
- Indian Population Inquiries
- Slave
- Dependent, Defective, and Delinquent Classes
- Social Statistics

Many of these schedules feature questions that focused on answering demographic or statistic questions that the government had at the time and not with future genealogists in mind.

- Because of this, these schedules may not provide detailed vital information, but they will add context to your pre-existing information and might even open up new directions for your research.
- Also, if you cannot find an ancestor on the Federal Census, but you have a schedule record for the same year, you might be able to use the information the schedule provides to locate the census record.

The Benefits of the Schedules for Farmer Ancestors

Some examples of when a schedule might help you with your research:

- If your ancestor was enumerated on the Federal Census as a farmer, the Agricultural Schedules may help build a clearer understanding of how large the farm was and what he or she grew on it.
- If your ancestor’s occupation was enumerated as a “farmer” on the Federal Census, but they had a side-business as a cooper (making casks and/or barrels), the Manufacturing Schedules may help you learn how lucrative their business was.
- If your ancestor owned slaves, the Slave Schedules will show how many they owned and manumitted, along with general information on each slave.

Agricultural Schedules, 1850-1880

This schedule of the census focused on enumerating the value of and production on farmland on a farm-by-farm basis. The information recorded is for the twelve months prior to the date of enumeration.

The 1850-1870 schedules consist of two pages; 1880 is one page. Questions asked by these schedules include:

- Proprietor of the farm
- Cash value of the farm; amount (in acres) of land; value of farming implements
- Number of livestock by type, and total value; value of animals slaughtered
- Number and value of crops, by-products, and manufactured goods produced in the last twelve months
Not all states were enumerated and not all states that were enumerated were enumerated every year between 1850-1880. Records for these schedules are available for the following states:

- Alabama
- California
- Connecticut
- Georgia
- Illinois
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Maine
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Nebraska
- New York
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Virginia
- Washington Territory

Example: 1860 Agricultural schedule of Jefferson Township, Polk County, Iowa

Exclusions from the Agricultural Schedule
Not every farm was enumerated on this schedule. For 1850 and 1860, small farms that produced less than $100 worth of products, including crops, livestock, and by-products like sugar, molasses, honey, etc., were not enumerated. For 1870 and 1880, the criteria was: at least 3 acres of land and $500 worth of products.

Note: If you are searching for a farmer ancestor who lived in a state that was enumerated in this schedule, but are unable to find them, this could be due to a typical spelling variation or transcription issues you sometimes have when searching the census. Or it could be because your ancestor's farm was too small to meet the requirements outlined above.
Nonresidents Present on the Schedule
Individuals enumerated on the agricultural schedule in a specific location may not actually have been a resident of that area. The owner of the farm may not even live in the same town, county, or state.

i.e. a farm may be located in southwest Walnut Township, Bourbon County, Kansas as enumerated on the Agricultural Schedule, but the proprietor (which can include the owner, agent, proprietor, or manager) of the farm may live over the county line in Allen, Neosho, or Crawford Counties

Search Tip: Remember to check the manufacturing schedule too!
You might also want to cross-reference the Agricultural schedule with the Manufacturing schedule for the same year. If your farmer ancestor had a "sideline" business, you might find that they were enumerated on both.

- For example, a dairy farmer might also have a lucrative cheese-making business:

Example: 1880 Federal Census; Mill Creek Township, Wabaunsee, Kansas

Christian Kuenzli
Age: 38
Occupation: Farmer
Born: Switzerland

Example: 1870 Agricultural Schedule; Alma Township, Wabaunsee, Kansas

Name: Christian Kuenzli
Land: 60 acres (improved), 300 acres (unimproved)
Value of Farm: $2,500
Livestock: 11 horses, 19 milch cows, 2 working cows, 32 other cattle, 14 swine (total value of livestock: $1,600)
Crops: 290 bushels of wheat, 200 bushels of rye, 600 bushels of oats

Research Note: It is family lore that Christian, while a farmer by trade, also briefly operated a Swiss cheese-making business. The second page for this schedule, detailing his by-products (including cheese) is not available. However, the business can be found on the 1880 Manufacturer's schedule [next page].

Manufacturing Schedules, 1850-1880
These schedules, also referred to as "Industry" or "Industrial" schedules, recorded statistical information regarding the value and production of manufacturers, both small businesses and large companies alike.
• This schedule is readily available in most online databases for the years 1850-1880, though the schedule was also taken in 1820 and some manufacturer’s annotations were included on the pages of the 1810 Federal Census (both held at the National Archives).
• To be enumerated on this schedule, the business had to produce at least $500 worth of manufactured goods and the information provided is for the twelve months preceding the date.

Questions these schedules asked include:
• Name of corporation, company, or individual; name of business (or type, i.e. “baker”)
• Capital invested in the business; type, quantity, and value of raw materials used; type of power (i.e. steam)
• Number of employees by gender, and their wages
• Annual products manufactured, their quantities and value

Like the Agricultural schedule, not all states are enumerated by this schedule and not all states that were included were enumerated every year. The amount and detail of information included in this schedule varies from year to year as different questions were asked.

Records for these schedules are available for the following states:
- Alabama
- California
- Georgia
- Illinois
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Maine
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Nebraska
- New York
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Virginia
- Washington Territory

Note: The 1880 schedule had various different pre-printed forms that grouped businesses into categories. All manufacturers that belonged to that category were enumerated together on the same page. For this year, some areas also used general forms that enumerated all of the manufacturers together, regardless of the industry.

Example: 1880 Manufacturer’s Schedule; Mission Creek Township, Wabaunsee County, Kansas

Industry: Cheese Factories: Butter Factories: Combined Butter and Skim-Cheese Factories: Condensed Milk Factories:
Name of Corporation, Company, or Individual: Swiss Cheese Co.
Capital Invested: $1,500
Employees: 1 (male above 16 years)
Average Day’s Wages: $2.00 (dairyman), $1.00 (laborer)
Total Wages Paid: $300
Manufacturing Season: May 12 to Oct 4
Average No. of Cows Providing Milk: 60
Total Amount of Milk Used: 139,246 lbs.
Cheese Produced: 13,924 lbs. (Type: full cream)
Average Price of Cheese: 7 ½
Remember! Check both the Manufacturing and the Agricultural schedules! You might find that your ancestor was enumerated on both in the same year.

Example: Orrin Tucker, Chardon, Geauga, Ohio; enumerated on the 1850 Agricultural and Manufacturing Schedule for his farm and his coopering side business:

Slave Schedules, 1850 & 1860
While enslaved people are enumerated individually, unfortunately, most of these schedules do not provide the names of those individuals themselves. Instead, the name of the “slave owner” is listed here.

- Enumerators recorded the age, sex, and color of the enslaved person (black or mulatto), and whether they were a freedom seeker “fugitive” from the state at the time
- The lack of individual names makes it difficult to determine whether a specific enslaved person was present in a household or on a plantation
- Additional information provided by these records includes: the names of the “slave owners,” number of enslaved people manumitted (freed), and whether the enslaved person was deaf, dumb, blind, insane, or idiotic

Records for this schedule are available for the following states:

- Alabama
- Arkansas
- Delaware
- Florida
- Georgia
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Maryland
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- New Jersey
- North Carolina
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Virginia
Note: Don’t shy away from using the Slave Schedules for fear of finding an ancestor enumerated there. All genealogists have ancestors they may not be proud of, including those who enslaved others, but you have to accept and acknowledge the bad with the good when doing genealogy research.

Example: 1850 Slave Schedule, Atlanta, DeKalb County, Georgia
Slave Owner: Edwin Payne
Number of Enslaved: 12 total; 6 male, 6 female; ranging in age from 22 years to 6 months old; 4 marked mulatto, 8 marked black
Fugitives from the State: 0
Deaf & Dumb, Blind, Insane, or Idiotic: 0
Number of Enslaved Manumitted: 0

Federal Land Records
The distribution of federal land initially had three main objectives
- to raise revenue to compensate for war debt
- to grant land in lieu of financial rewards for soldiers (war bounty land records)
- to accommodate and encourage westward expansion (homesteads and cash-entry sales)

Federal Land Patents
- Details the initial transaction between the federal government and an individual
  - Available to search and view at: [https://glorecords.blm.gov](https://glorecords.blm.gov)

Note: Only the first sale of this land generated a federal record, any further sale was either a state or county level transaction and those records are held separately.

State/County Land Records
At the end of the Revolutionary War, states claimed possession of all land within their borders
• This was done to create new land records; the same person typically held the land title before and after this process
• Local records, generated on a county level, are typically held by the county courthouse
  o The County Recorder’s office is often the best place to check first for land deeds
• Types of state/county land records include: Patents, Deeds, Grants, Tract Books

Note: States that have some early grants and patents online are Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Missouri, and Alabama.

Understanding Aliquot Parts in Land Records
Land records often use this system to describe the location and size of the land with cardinal directions and fractions
• These help subdivide a section of a township into smaller parts
• If you are struggling to read it, it can help to read it in reverse, starting with the township and range, then the section, and then narrowing down with the directions and fractions

Example: E½ SW¼ NW¼ Section 10 44N – 30W or “the east half of the southwest quarter of the northwest quarter of Section 10 in Township 44, of Range 30 containing 20 acres”
  o Using a plat map, you would first go to the Survey Township set at 44 North, 30 West (typically labelled at the top of the page), then find Section 10.
  o From there divide the square section into four smaller squares and find the northwest quarter.
  o Divide that quarter again into four smaller sections, and then look at the southwest quarter.
  o Split the square in half vertically – the eastern half is the land described by the aliquots above.

Plat Maps
Sometimes “Land Ownership Maps”
• Plat maps cover a Survey Township (sometimes “Congressional Township”)
• Standard plat maps are a square-shaped unit of land 6 miles long on a side, or 36 square miles total.
  o Each of the 36 sections is a square mile
• Plats for a specific county are often bound in book format, though plat map availability varies
  o Some of these county plat map books for Missouri have been digitized and made available through Missouri Digital Heritage: www.sos.mo.gov/mdh (click on the Quick Links tab in the navigation bar and select Missouri County Plat Books)

What a Plat Map Will Show You
• Property lines and lot dimensions
• Landowner’s name(s)
• Township borders
• Town names and locations – blocks, streets, lots, and subdivision names (for platted towns and cities)
• Location of any significant features including roads, rivers, creeks, railroad tracks and depots/stations, churches, schools, buildings, etc.

Example: 1930 Plat Map, Pine Creek Township, Ozark County, MO

Name: Joe Hamilton
Township/Range: T. 23 North, R. 12 West
Township Name(s): Pine Creek, Richland
Section(s): 21, 22, 27, 28
Total Land: ~550 acres
Homestead Records

With the first Homestead Act in 1862, the US government began distributing public land to those without.

- Between 1862 and 1986, 1.6 million homesteads were granted (a total of 270,000,000 acres, or 10% of all land in the United States)
- Check both the land patents (Bureau of Land Management Database, General Land Office Database) and the incomplete applications (National Archives) because not all homesteaders finished the process

The requirements to receive homestead land were:
- file application papers, and pay filing fees, eventually a total of $18 (or $10 to temporarily hold a claim on the land)
- improve the land over the next five years (usually build a dwelling, and start a farm)
- file for a deed of title
  - Landless farmers, former slaves, single women, widows, and immigrants who had filed their first papers were able to apply
    - However, from 1862 to 1898, racial and citizenship restrictions did prevent some from applying before the Fourteenth Amendment and United States v. Wong Kim Ark expanded the process to allow former slaves and South East and East Asians born in America
  - Homestead land was allotted to heads of households over the age of 21
  - Anyone who had “borne arms against” the US government or aided its enemies did not qualify

Note: In some instances, large or commercial farms were noted by the name of the farm with the name of the owner beneath it.

i.e. “LONG VIEW STOCK FARM”

D. M. Gregg
Example: 1920 Homestead Deed, Laramie, Wyoming

Name: Anna Mary Smith
Date: 22 September 1920
Land Office: Cheyenne, Wyoming
Total Land: 280 acres

Note: The Sixth Principal Meridian mentioned here was the North-South line established as a reference point when Wyoming was surveyed, along with Kansas, Nebraska, and parts of Colorado and South Dakota.

Bounty Land Warrants
From 1788 to 1855, the United States government gave bounty land to soldiers as a reward in lieu of monetary payment

- Warrants were awarded to veterans of the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812

Revolutionary War
- In 1788, the government began granting free land in the public domain to officers and soldiers who continued to serve during the Revolutionary War or, if they were killed, to their representatives or heirs
  - The amount of land received was determined by the veteran's rank: privates received 100 acres, major generals received 1,100 acres
  - A 4,000 square mile tract of land located in what is now southwest Ohio was earmarked for these warrants
  - Veterans often turned around and sold the land on the open market — such land transactions would have generated state or county-level land deeds
  - These warrants typically contain: the date of issuance, name and rank of veteran, state from which enlisted, name of heir or assignee in lieu of veteran (if applicable)

War of 1812
- Noncommissioned officers and soldiers serving for 5 years (unless discharged sooner), or their heirs, would be entitled to 160 acres of land from the public domain in partial compensation for their military service
  - 6 million acres of land in the Michigan, Illinois, and Louisiana Territories were set aside
  - Warrants issued for service during the War of 1812 could not be transferred or assigned to a person other than the veteran, except through inheritance
  - These warrants typically contain: name of veteran, rank on discharge from service, company, regiment, and branch of service, and date of issuance
Cash-Entry Sale Land
These are lands that were earmarked for public sale after a survey was conducted in unsettled territory.
- When a new tract of unsettled land was surveyed by the federal government, a portion was usually set aside for war bounties and various grants, and the remaining area was divided for immediate auction
  - Buyers paid for this land and the associated fees with cash
- Public auction land was intended to encourage expansion and settlement among those who perhaps didn’t qualify for homestead land or did not receive bounty land for military service

Example: 1851 Cash-Entry Sale Record

Name: James L. Scrivner
Residence: Cole County, MO
Date: 1 December 1851
Land Office: Fayette, Missouri
Total Land: 40 acres
Meridian: 5th Principal Meridian
Aliquots: SE¼ SE¼ Section 6, T 43N, R 13W

Example: War of 1812 Bounty Land Warrant

Name: Thomas T. Taylor
Date: 4 February 1819
Military Service: Private
Unit: 35th Infantry (Virginia)
Commanding Officer: Captain Benjamin Hardaway
Total Land: 160 acres
Land Deeds

Public land records typically generated by a county clerk, but sometimes a lawyer or justice of the peace

- Earlier deeds are usually handwritten in a ledger book with one recorded right after another
- More recent deeds tend to be recorded in ledger books with pre-printed forms

- Some deeds are available on microfilm or can be viewed digitally online
  - Many deeds not be digitized in any way – in those instances, researchers must contact the county courthouse, Recorder’s office, or the local historical society for original copies and indexes
  - For Cass County, the Genealogy Branch has a collection of deeds on microfilm (1837-1900), the Historical Society holds physical copies up to 1939 – more recent deeds are at the Recorder’s office

- Deeds are typically organized by the name of the Grantor (the individual selling the land) and by the Grantee (the individual purchasing the land)
  - Grantors and grantees may also be trusts, administrators/executors of estates, county and state government entities, etc.
  - In handwritten deeds, the date is typically listed first, in long form
  - The grantor’s name is followed by “of the first part” and the grantee’s name is followed by “of the second part,” and the residence of both parties involved is typically included after their names

Example: 1857 County Land Deed

Grantor: Hiram Bowman (of Cass County, Missouri)
Grantee: Gustavus F. Taylor (of Cass County, Missouri)
Date: 7 October 1857
Amount Paid: $200
Aliquots: NE¼ NW¼ Section 34, T 44N, R 30W
Total Land: 40 acres

Databases for Land Records Research

Bureau of Land Management — General Land Office: https://glorecords.blm.gov
- Federal Land Patents (Homestead, Cash-Entry, Bounty Land Warrants), Tract Books, Land Survey Plats, etc.


Ancestry Collections
- U.S. War Bounty Land Warrants, 1789-1858
- U.S., Homestead Records, 1863-1908
- U.S. General Land Office Records, 1776-2015
- U.S., Indexed County Land Ownership Maps, 1860-1918
- U.S., Indexed Early Land Ownership and Township Plats, 1785-1898
[And various state land record collections]
Wills and Probate
Court records created after an individual’s death related to the decision the court makes regarding the distribution of the deceased’s assets to heirs, creditors, and the care of dependents

- These records held in various locations – as court records, they may be held by the courthouse, or the county may have sent records to be held at a local repository like a historical society, the state archives, or libraries
- Probate files can vary in size and detail, but often include:
  - **Wills**
    - May list the deceased’s date of death, spouse(s), heirs, parents, siblings, dependents, occupation, land and property owned, matters of adoption or guardianship, etc.
  - **Inventory Papers**
    - Descriptions of property and its appraised value
  - **Petition Papers**
    - Petitions to the estate, its administrator, or the court, typically regarding outstanding debts, mishandling of the estate by an administrator, changes to the will, etc.
  - **Account Papers**
    - Accounting records and receipts for payments to and from the estate
  - **Administration Papers**
    - Documents generated by the Administrator of the estate

Intestate Estates
- If the deceased died without a will, but the estate has outstanding business to resolve, the court can appoint a Public Administrator
  - Notice of this appointment can often be found printed in the local newspaper
  - It may also be documented in probate file

Example: 1902 Probate Court News Section, Cass County Democrat

**Executor:** Jacob C. Gilkerson
**Deceased:** George N. Gilkerson
**Date:** 5 June 1902
**News Item:** Jacob, executor of the estate, has filed with the court to lease George N. Gilkerson’s farm

Example: Letter and clipping from J. H. Turner, editor of the Carroll Record [taken from the probate file]

**Deceased:** William R. Scrivner
**News Item:** Public Administrator, James W. Buchanan was revoked by the Probate Court of Carroll County, Missouri, and was no longer administrator of William R. Scrivner’s estate. Because Scrivner died intestate, a new Public Administrator, Hiram S. Hall, took over the probate.
Example: 1879 Probate File of William R. Scrivner, a farmer from Carroll County, Missouri

Description of Property & Appraised Value [from Inventory Papers of the file]

- One span black horse mare, $180
- One span dun horse mare, $140
- One dun horse mare (widow), $60
- One grey mare mule, claimed by widow
- One black mare mule, claimed by widow
- One sorrel horse, $20
- One cow, $15
- Fifty-six fat hogs, $358
- Twenty four (eighteen?) shoats, $22.50
- 3 Cultivators, $18
- 2 hinge harrows, $8
- 1 Roller, $10
- 2 Riding plows, $22.50
- 1 Walking plow, $3
- 1 Corn planter, $20
- 1 Wheat drill, $5

Receipt for a Transaction Paid by the Administrator [from Account Papers]

Paid to: Mary Kelly
Amount: Sixty-four barrels of corn, at rate of one dollar per barrel, in full of rent for year 1878

Court Order to Assign a New Public Administrator to the Estate [from Petition Papers of the file]

The deceased’s widow, Maria Scrivner, submitted an affidavit to the Carroll County Probate Court detailing the status of estate’s wheat crop, requesting a new administrator to handle it.

“[S]ome has been wasted, lost and destroyed by neglect and failure to have some harvested and properly cared for and there being no administrator in charge of said estate, it is therefore ordered by the Court that Hiram A. Hall, Public Administrator of Carroll County, Missouri, take charge of said estate..."
Chattel Mortgages

Chattel is the legal term for moveable personal property – i.e. animals, cars, radios, clothes, etc.

- Under this mortgage, the purchaser borrows funds for the purchase of movable personal property from the lender
- The lender then secures the loan with a mortgage over the chattel
- Legal ownership of the chattel is transferred to the purchaser at the time of purchase, and the mortgage is removed once the loan has been repaid

- Farmers often used chattel mortgages to purchase livestock, vehicles, and farming implements
- Availability of these records varies
  - If they still exist, they can often be found in historical societies and state and local archives

Example: 1934 Chattel Mortgage Register, Cass County, Missouri

Example: 1891 Chattel Mortgage Contract

**Purchaser(s):** T. N. Pierson, A. M. Winders (both of Cass County, MO)

**Lender:** W. A. Crooks

**Date:** 29 Aug 1891

**Amount Due:** $175, on or before 1 September 1892

**Chattel:** One brown horse nine years about 14 ½ hands high; one brown horse ten year old about 14 ½ feet high both hind feet white – white speck in eye; one sorrel mare three years old about 14 hands high feet white blaze face; one black horse mule eleven years old about 14 hands high lump on right shoulder

**Date Paid/Discharged:** 29 December 1892
Recovered Strays
Whenever stray livestock was recovered by or surrendered to the county, it recorded it in the estray ledger

- These ledgers are often recorded in different books or sections based on animal type
  - i.e. steers, heifers, mules, stallions, mares, etc.
- Estray Notices were also regularly published in newspapers to inform the owner where they were being kept and allow them to come forward and claim their livestock (usually for a fee)
  - If the animal went unclaimed, it would be sold (often at public auction with other unclaimed livestock)
- These records are often found in state and county archives and historical societies — not many of these records are digitized
  - Some are narrative in format, others are pre-printed form ledgers

Example: 1870 Narrative Estray Notice, Steer and Heifer Ledger

**Date Found:** 12 December 1870  
**Found by:** James Cline  
**Where:** Six miles south of Harrisonville, Grand River Township  
**Animal:** Reddish Brindle Heifer, estimated 2 years old, no marks or brands, appraised at fourteen dollars  
**Appraised by:** S. L. Cline, John W. Austin

Example: 1879-1880 Estray Records Register, for Cass County, Missouri, Mule Section

**Animal:** One black mare mule, 3 years old, about 15 hand high  
**Appraisal:** $50, by James Clarkson, Thomas Mahaffey, and Sam Alexander  
**Taken Up:** 13 Dec 1879, by Thomas Mahaffey in Polk Township  
**Remarks:** Taken away as the property of J. E. Albien, 3 January 1880
County & State Fairs
Look for articles detailing the events and awards of the fair
- You may find that all individuals who participated were listed, not just the winners
- State and County fairs typically occur in late summer or early fall, depending on the location
  - If you don’t know the exact date, you can try browsing through the local newspapers starting in late June
  - There was usually a long lead up to the fair and it was mentioned often in the paper in the weeks before it occurred
  - For state fairs especially, you might find articles and photos detailing the individuals who are judging or facilitating the events, i.e. Director of Poultry, Director of Swine

Example: Cass County Democrat
Date: 12 October 1939

Full page, continuation of a front-page article. Detailing the children’s events and the winners of each category including livestock, crops, handiwork, cakes, and competitions like team pulling and horseshoe pitching.

Below: The winners and participants in the categories of horses, largest pumpkin, and jar apple butter.

Public Notice of Strays/Stolen Livestock
- Public notices of strays were used to inform the owner that their livestock was “taken up” and now held by the county and can be reclaimed
  - Depending on the means of the person who found the animal(s), they might have held them on their own property or given them to the state
  - Those posted before by the county (by the Justice of the Peace) would have been recorded in an estray ledger
- Owners of missing or stolen livestock could also post notice in newspapers, often offering a reward for the animal’s return or recovery
Community Organizations

Farm Bureau Notes
- Recorded by the Farm Bureau Agent for the county and regularly published in the newspaper
  - Details upcoming meetings and events, the names of committee members, special meetings, the attendance and happenings of the previous meeting, etc.
  - Special committees may include: Agricultural Committee, Home Making Committee, Educational Committee, Civic Committee, etc.
- Check for articles written by local farmers sharing their farming tips, crop yields, and animal husbandry knowledge
  - Supplemental inserts for agriculture may have been printed with the paper in the spring and summer with articles (and photos) by, for, and about local farmers and their farms

Example: Stray or Stolen Animal Notice →
Paper: Cass County Democrat
Date: 16 August 1894

Example: Farm Bureau Notes
Paper: Cass County Democrat
Date: 18 February 1926

Example: Melvin Smith, of Freeman →
Paper: Cass County Democrat
Date: 2 August 1928

Example: Stray Notice
Paper: Cass County Democrat
Date: 5 January 1899
Advertisements

19th and 20th century newspapers were full of ads for local businesses and events

- These advertisements often included the name of the business owner (or land/farm owner in some cases)
- Look for ads for:
  - Butchers
  - Live Stock Sales and Auctions
  - Land Sales
  - Farms and Farm Land for Rent
  - Farm Loans
  - Farming Implements

**Example:** Hughes Meat Market, O. P. Hughes, Pleasant Hill, Missouri

**Paper:** Pleasant Hill Times

**Date:** 15 March 1918
Classifieds

Sometimes called "Wants" or "Want Ads"

- Classifieds are small advertisements placed in the newspaper, often separated into different categories
- These advertisements can be for items up for sale or rent, items local individuals are looking to buy, items that have lost or found, and offers to trade items
  - Farmers may have placed their livestock or farming and husbandry implements for sale
  - The name and residence of person the who posted the ad is typically noted at the end

Example: Wants – For Sale – Etc., Pleasant Hill Times

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Example: Greenwood News; Harley Hutchins
Injured at A. C. Sorency Livestock Sale →
Paper: Pleasant Hill Times
Date: 15 March 1918

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Example: “Thomas Roupe & Son’s Dispersion Sale of Live Stock”
Paper: Pleasant Hill Times
Date: 15 March 1918

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Example: Pleasant Hill Times
Date: 15 March 1918
Local News Sections
Local newspapers and trade magazines often covered residents on an individual basis
- This includes news about travel, visits to and from family members, illnesses, deaths and funerals, local events, church news, etc.
- **For farmers, it can also include covering things like:**
  - Individuals who have already finished planting their crops for the season and what they planted
  - Successful or new farming methods explained by individuals who tried them
  - Notable or award-winning livestock
  - Injuries that have occurred on the farm

← Example: *County News Section, covering Everett, Garden City, West Line, and Freeman, Missouri*
**Paper:** Cass County Democrat  
**Date:** 15 March 1918

↑ Example: C. S. Nelson of Freeman explains his corn planting methods  
**Paper:** Cass County Democrat  
**Date:** 1 April 1926

← Example: A cow owned by Thomas Jennings of New Castle, Pennsylvania, ate an umbrella  
**Paper:** Cass County Democrat  
**Date:** 9 January 1894
Obituaries

Obituaries are excellent resources for genealogists who are researching any ancestor

- With these records, researchers can discover the deceased’s parents’ names, birth location, previous residences, spouse and children’s names, religious denomination, etc.
- Some obituaries will also include information related to the deceased’s occupation
  - For farmers, you will often find details about:
    - Where their land was located
    - What kind of crops they grew
    - What kind of livestock they had
    - Other locations they lived
    - Farmers’ organizations they were members of
    - Stories about their farms

Example: Iowa State College wins the 52nd International Livestock Show with Toby, a 1,240 pound Aberdeen Angus steer.


Paper: Pleasant Hill Times
Date: 16 January 1952

Example: Mrs. P. L. Cook of Tennessee Ridge, Houston County, TN, (pictured here with 1,000 jars of preserves) wins first prize for her garden in the Nashville Tennessean’s $3,000 Greater Home Gardens Contest.

Paper: The Tennessean
Date: 9 October 1946
Resources for Researching with Newspapers

Cass County Newspapers
- For newspapers available on microfilm in the Genealogy Branch, check our holdings guide:
  - Our collection of local newspapers on microfilm is free to access and view
    - Obituaries can be saved to a storage device for free, printed copies cost 15 cents a page

Chronicling America
- Created by the Library of Congress – a free online database of digitized newspapers from across the country:
  - https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov
  - If you are looking for a newspaper that has not yet been digitized on Chronicling America, try searching their US Newspaper Directory: https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/search/titles
  - It will show you which archives and libraries do have copies of those papers and in what format (i.e. physical copies, microfilm, etc.)

Newspapers (subscription database)
  - www.newspapers.com
GenealogyBank (subscription database)
  - www.genealogybank.com

Kansas City Star Archives (accessible from home for free with a Mid-Continent Public Library card)

Farmers Unions & Organizations
- The Grange, 1867
  - “The National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry”
- National Farmers Union, 1902
  - “Farmers Educational and Cooperative Union of America”
- Farmers’ Alliance, 1870s

Example: Obituary for James Floyd Sabens, who lived and farmed in Cass County for 81 years

Paper: Cass County Democrat
Date: 9 April 1936
Location of Farm: Three miles north of Harrisonville
(and was raised on a farm one mile northwest of Harrisonville until 1895)

“Mr. Sabens was a farmer and livestock dealer, remaining actively engaged in his work until within a few weeks of his death – a remarkable record in physical endurance.”

“Mr. Sabens was not a veteran of the Civil War. Instead of fighting, he was employed by the government to transport corn across the desert in wagons drawn by oxen, thus escaping much of the hardships of the conflict.”
Note: Most of the records pertaining to farmers union membership and participation in these organizations are not digitized, instead they are held separately in various repositories
- Union records research often requires more “leg work” than other types of records – you may have to contact archives or repositories directly via email or phone and pay copy fees in order to get them
- The easiest way to locate and access farmers unions records is to search for them using WorldCat (www.worldcat.org) — you can then contact the owning repository regarding research or copies
  - Example Searches: “Montana Farmers Union,” or “Farmers’ State Alliance of South Carolina”

Grower’s Associations & Farm Bureaus
- These were organizations dedicated to supporting farmers with access to information, resources, and opportunities to make their farm more successful
  - i.e. Meetings about methods for improving your chickens’ output, growing new types of crops, soil testing, demonstrations, etc.
- Local newspapers will often publish summaries of local Farm Bureau meetings [see page 17 of this guide]
  - This includes lists of members, the names of special committee members, individuals who demonstrated or presented during the meeting, etc.

Example: Membership Dues Ledger, Houston County, Tennessee Grower’s Association

Members are listed individually here, including Thomas McAuley, the Chairman, I. V. Campbell, Vice Chairman, and D. T. Knight, Director.

Note: This record and others like it are held at the Tennessee State Archives. Union and association records can often be found in state and county archives, libraries, and repositories specifically dedicated to farmers’ union records.

Farmers Home Administration Records, 1918-1980
These records are not available online – they are held by the National Archives, organized by region
- Rural Rehabilitation Division
  - 1930s, loans to destitute farm families
- Subsistence Homesteads Division
  - Subsistence homestead projects, wages of workers employed on subsistence homestead projects
- Resettlement Division
  - Farm-community projects, scattered-farm projects, and subsistence homestead projects, migratory labor camps
- Emergency Crop and Feed Loan Division
  - Funds for drought relief, selected case files
Example: 1936 Kern Migrants Camp Visitors Log ("Weedpatch Camp") Kern County, California

Note: This camp began as a relief camp for Oklahoma farmers affected by Dust Bowl. It later expanded as a Works Progress Administration (WPA) camp during the Great Depression drawing migrant workers from Arkansas, Missouri, and Texas.

Century Farms

In 1976, the Centennial Farm project was initiated in Missouri to award certificates to persons owning farms that had been in the same family for 100 years or more.

- The project is run by the University of Missouri Extension Office
  - A total of 2,850 Missouri farm owners in 105 of Missouri’s 114 counties were recognized as Centennial Farm owners
  - These farms and the supporting materials (photographs, plat maps, and newspaper articles) are available in book format at the library for century farms up to 2006 [see example below]
- The application process can be found here: https://extension2.missouri.edu/programs/century-farms
  - Applications are open each year from February 1st to May 15th

Example: “Century Farms of Cass County, Missouri” – the century farm of Noah Yoder and his grandson Jerrald. 1867-

Noah Yoder was born in Logan County, Ohio in 1848. He came to Cass County, Missouri, in 1867 with his parents, the Reuben Yoder family, and settled on a farm nine miles due east of Harrisonville.

The family came to Holden, Missouri by train and moved across country by wagon. There were few fences and not many roads. Reuben Yoder bought his land the same year, in 1867 and paid $2,000, or $12.50 an acre.

The 100-acre farm was half timber and half prairie. The timber afforded wood for fuel and lumber for building. A stream supplied stock water. Squirrels chattered in the trees, goose gussied on the open fields. There were also blackberries to gather in the summer and nuts in the fall.

Noah bought 80 acres adjoining the home place fifteen years later in 1883, and paid $2,040, or $25.50 an acre. He kept adding to this until he had 392 acres. He farmed and raised livestock, lived at home a number of years, then moved on his own farm and lived alone, until February, 1898 at the age of 46, when he married Katie Hartler from Michigan. They raised five children. Froncis, wife of O.J. Hartler; Lacy, wife of John E. Miller; Nellie, wife of C.V. Hartler and Frank Roth; Reuben J. and Lela.

The buildings on their farm were all old, so in 1901 they built a six-room house, and in 1906, they built a large barn and made many other improvements.

Noah was a successful farmer and stockman. His cows, which took a lot of care, went out into the timber to farrow and only raised one litter a year. When the offspring was 15 or 16 months old, they were big, fat hogs and went to market with their mothers. He shipped by rail and usually had two car loads. Noah also bought livestock in the community and shipped them to Kansas City or St. Louis. Noah died in 1918; Katie in 1943.

After Noah’s death, Reuben J. stayed on the farm with his mother and sister, Lela. In 1930 he raised a drove of prize-winning togs and made a national record. In 1933 he married Ruth Schrock. They had three children: James, Donna and Jerald Yoder.

Jerald continues to live on the home place and farms full time in 2006.
Narrative Histories
Prior to the Industrial Revolution, a larger majority of the population worked in agriculture – on a farm they owned or rented, or as a laborer on a farm owned by someone else

- Early histories of an area often contain information on early farmers on an individual basis
- These types of resources are typically found in book form, at state and county archives, and libraries
  - Sometimes, but not often, digitized
- Types of history books and record collections to look for are:
  - Early Settlers and Pioneers Books
    - Especially for early colonial farmers
  - Biographical Sketches
    - Provide detailed information about notable local families in the area, including the occupations of the heads of house, land owned, and types of farming or livestock they preferred
  - Farmers’ Diaries
    - Farmers’ account books, personal letters, and reminiscences

Example: Biographical Sketches from Washington County, Indiana, 1884 History

Township: Brown Township
Name: Jeremiah C. Caress, son of Peter and Rachael (Worrall) Caress
Excerpt: “Our subject received a common school education and remained at home on the farm with his parents until they died. Throughout life he has been engaged in agricultural pursuits with success, as his farm of 250 acres indicates. He devotes considerable attention to stock-raising.”

Databases for Digitized History and Genealogical Books
Google Books — https://books.google.com
The Internet Archive — https://archive.org

Visit the library’s locations page (www.casscolibrary.org/locations) for CCPL Genealogy’s location, contact information, and hours of operation.

Information regarding our digital collections, access to online databases, submitting inquiries, and more, can be found on Cass County Public Library’s Genealogy Resources page, located here: www.casscolibrary.org/genealogy

Send Research Inquiries to: askgenealogy@casscolibrary.org  Cass County Public Library – Genealogy Branch
400 E. Mechanic St. Harrisonville, MO – 816.884.6285