

France

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INTRODUCTION

This outline introduces you to the records you can use to discover your French ancestors. It describes the content, use, and availability of major genealogical records. Use this outline to set meaningful goals and to select the records that will help you achieve those goals.

Generally, *you must know the specific town where your French ancestor was born* before beginning research in France. Occasionally you may be able to

determine the town or general area of origin through French or other European sources.

You will need some basic understanding of genealogical research procedures. The video orientation program and the accompanying booklet, *Guide to Research* (30971), may be helpful. These are available at the Family History Library and at Family History Centers™.

Opportunities for genealogical research in France are good because many valuable records have been preserved. However, vital records of the last hundred years are restricted from public use. Beyond the last hundred years, you may search the records yourself or hire a genealogist.

Using This Outline

The “French Search Strategies” section of this outline explains how to effectively research your family history. This section is particularly valuable if you are just beginning your research.

The “Record Selection Table” on page 7 helps you select records to search. “Records at the Family History Library,” describes the library's French collection. The “Family History Library Catalog” section explains how to use the library's catalog to find specific records in the library's collection.

Beginning on page 9 the outline discusses, in alphabetical order, the major records used for French research, such as “Church Records” and “Civil Registration.” The names of these sections are the same as the subject headings used in the Family History Library Catalog.

Related records and concepts are grouped together under the same heading. For example, in the “Emigration and Immigration” section, you will find information about—

- The history of emigration from France.
- Passenger lists.
- Records of French emigrants in their destination nations.

In this outline, French-language terms are frequently given in brackets and italics after the English terms (for example, baptisms [*baptêmes*]). English translations, in parentheses, follow French-language book, microfilm, or microfiche titles. French spellings are used for French place-names: for example, *Savoie* instead of *Savoy* and *Corse* instead of *Corsica*.

Header

This outline does not mention all possible genealogical record sources. At the end of the outline, you will find a brief list of additional subject headings under “Other Records,” and a short bibliography of sources, “For Further Reading.” To find information about French people who emigrated, use the library's research outline for the nation where they settled and the *Tracing Immigrant Origins Research Outline* (34111).

FRENCH SEARCH STRATEGIES

Step 1. Identify What You Know about Your Family

Begin your research with family and home sources. Look for names, dates, and places in certificates, passports, letters, identity cards, family civil registration booklets [*livrets de famille*], photos, obituaries, diaries, family Bibles, and similar sources. Ask your relatives for any additional information. It's very likely that your second cousin, great-aunt, or other relative already has some family information. Organize the information you find and record it on pedigree charts and family group record forms.

To find out all you can about your ancestor, first check all sources in the area your ancestor immigrated to. Then check records in the area your ancestor came from. Going from the known to the unknown is easier, and you are likely to have more success.

Step 2. Decide What You Want to Learn

Select a specific relative or ancestor, born in France, *for whom you know at least a name, the town where he or she lived, and an approximate date when he or she lived there*. It's also very helpful to know the names of other family members born in France. For records prior to 1792, it also helps to know a person's religion.

If you don't have enough information on your French ancestor, review the sources mentioned in step one to find a birthplace or residence. For further suggestions on how to find a birthplace, see the “Emigration and Immigration” section of this outline. The library's *Tracing Immigrant Origins Research Outline* (34111) may also help.

Next, decide what you need to learn about your ancestor, such as the place and date of marriage or the names of parents. You may need to ask an experienced researcher or a librarian to help you select a goal that you can achieve.

Step 3. Select a Record to Search

Read this outline to learn about the types of records used for French research. To trace your family, you may need to use some of the records described in each section. This outline describes the content, availability, ease of use, time period covered, and reliability of the records. It can help you determine the likelihood that your ancestor is listed in a record. The table on page 7 can also help you decide which records to search.

Effective researchers look first for background information. Then they survey previous research. Finally, they search original documents.

Background Information Sources. You may need geographical and historical information. This can help you find the correct place and time period to research.

- *Locate the town or place of residence.* Examine gazetteers, maps, and other place-finding aids to learn as much as you can about each of the places where your ancestors lived. Identify the major migration routes, nearby cities, department boundaries, other geographical features, and government or ecclesiastical jurisdictions. Place-finding aids are described in the “Maps” and “Gazetteers” sections of this outline.
- *Review local history.* France's history has greatly affected the development of records used in genealogical research. If possible, study a history of the areas where your ancestors lived. Look for clues about the people, places, religions, and events that may have affected them and the records about them. Records with information about migration and settlement patterns, government jurisdictions, and historical events are described in the “Church History” and “Minorities” sections of this outline.
- *Learn about French jurisdictions.* Learn how France is divided into areas called departments, arrondissements, cantons, communes, and, before 1789, provinces. See the “Historical Geography” section of this outline.
- *Use language helps.* The records and histories of French places are usually written in French. A few are written in Latin, German, or Italian. It is not necessary to speak or read these languages to search the records, but you will need to learn some key words and phrases. Some helpful sources are described in the “Language and Languages” section of this outline.
- *Understand naming patterns.* A few families in France followed distinct naming patterns. Understanding these customs can help you locate missing ancestors. See the “Names, Personal” section of this outline for more information.

Previous Research Sources. Most genealogists do a survey of research previously done by others. This can save time and provide valuable information. You may want to look for—

- The International Genealogical Index®.
- Ancestral File™.
- The Family Group Records Collections.
- Printed family histories and genealogies.
- Local genealogical society periodicals, particularly lists of families or subjects each society member is researching.

Some records that contain previous research are described in the “Genealogy,” “Periodicals,” and “Societies” sections of this outline. Remember that the information in these sources may be inaccurate. Verify the information you find in such records with other records.

Original Research Sources. After surveying previous research, you will be ready to begin original research. Original research is the process of searching through original documents. These documents are usually handwritten in the native language. Often you will search microfilmed copies of the original. These documents give primary information about your family—information usually recorded during an event or soon after by a reliable witness. To be thorough, you should search records of—

- Each place where your ancestor lived.
- The time period in which your ancestor lived in each particular place.

Many types of original documents are described in this outline. For research in France, most family information is found in these kinds of records—

- Civil Registration.
- Church Records.
- Notarial Records.

When you know the record type you want, look for it in the Family History Library Catalog.

Step 4. Find and Search the Record

Suggestions for Obtaining Records. You may be able to obtain the records you need in the following ways:

- **Family History Library.** You are welcome to use the records at the Family History Library. The library is open to the public. There are no fees for using the records. If you would like more information about its services, contact the library at the following address:

Family History Library
35 North West Temple Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84150

- **Family History Centers.** Copies of most of the records on microform at the Family History Library can be loaned to more than 2,000 Family History Centers. There are small duplication and postage fees for this service.

The library's books cannot be loaned to the centers, but copies of many books not protected by copyright are available on microfilm or microfiche. You can get a list of the Family History Centers near you by writing to the Family History Library at the address above.
- **Town registrars.** Most of the original documents you will need are at the civil registration office [*bureau de l'état civil*], which is usually located in the local town hall [*mairie*]. The Family History Library has many records on microfilm, but some records are available only at the civil registration office. You can write to request one or two hand-copied certificates from registrars, but they will not send you original documents or do research for you. (See the “Archives and Libraries” section of this outline for more information.) Complete instructions on writing to France and preparing a genealogical letter in French are in the library's *French Letter-Writing Guide* (34059).
- **Professional researchers.** You can employ a private researcher to search the records for you. Some researchers specialize in French records. Lists of qualified professional researchers are available from the Family History Library. A list of researchers in France who are approved by the Council of Genealogists [*Chambre syndicale des généalogistes*] can be found on the last page of each issue of the *Gé[néalogie] Magazine* (Genealogy Magazine). Other researchers advertise on the last few pages of *La revue française de généalogie* (French Genealogical Review). See the “Periodicals” section for further details.
- **Photocopies.** The Family History Library offers limited photoduplication services for a small fee. You must specify the exact pages you need. Books protected by copyright cannot be copied in their entirety. However, a few pages can usually be copied for personal research. In France, photocopying vital records is illegal.

Correspondence. When requesting information by mail from town halls, archives, or professional researchers, you are more likely to be successful if

French Search Strategies

your letter is brief and very specific. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope when writing to someone within your own nation. When you write to people in other nations, enclose at least three international reply coupons (available from large post offices).

Your letter should include the following information:

- Full name and the sex of the person sought.
- Names of the person's parents or spouse, if known.
- The event you wish to document (such as birth, marriage, death) and its approximate date and specific place.
- Your relationship to the person.
- Reason for the request (such as family history).

See the library's *French Letter-Writing Guide* (34059) for details.

Suggestions for Searching the Records. You will be most successful with French research if you can examine the original records (or microfilm of the original). Any transcription or translation may be less accurate than the original records.

As you search the records for your ancestor—

- *Search for one generation at a time.* Do not attempt to connect your family to others of the same surname who lived more than a generation before your proven ancestor. It is much easier to prove parentage than descent.
- *Search for the ancestor's entire family.* The records of each person in a family may provide clues for identifying other family members. In most families, children were born at regular intervals. If there appears to be a longer period between some children, reexamine the records for a child who may have been overlooked. Consider looking at other records and in other places to find a missing family member. Records for the first child born to a couple are often found in the place where the maternal grandparents lived.
- *Search each source thoroughly.* A minor detail on the record you are searching may lead you to another person or to trace the family further. Note the occupation of your ancestor and the names of witnesses, godparents, neighbors, relatives, guardians, and others. Also, note the places they are from.
- *Search a broad time period.* Dates obtained from some sources may not be accurate. Look several years before and after the date that you think an event, such as a birth, occurred.

- *Look for indexes.* Many records have indexes. However, many indexes are incomplete. They may include only the name of the specific person the record is about. They usually do not include parents, witnesses, or other incidental persons. Also, the original records may have been misinterpreted, or names may have been omitted during indexing. Some pages may have been missed during microfilming.
- *Search for previous residences.* Information about previous residences is crucial to continued successful research.
- *Watch for spelling variations.* Look for the many ways a name could have been spelled. Spelling was not standardized when most early records were made. You may find a name spelled differently than it is today.
- *Watch for name translations.* In some nations a surname may have been translated. For example, a person named Miller (wheat grinder) may be called *Meunier* (in French) or *Molitor* (in Latin).

Record Your Searches and Findings. Copy the information you find and keep detailed notes about each record you search. These notes should include the author, title, location, call numbers, description, and results of your search. Most researchers use a "Research Log" (31825) for this purpose. Making photocopies of the information, including the title page, may save you a lot of time and prevent possible errors.

Step 5. Use the Information

Evaluate the Information You Find. Carefully evaluate whether the information you find is complete and accurate. Ask yourself these questions:

- Who provided the information? Did that person witness the event?
- Was the information recorded near the time of the event, or was it recorded later? How much later?
- Was the handwritten information interpreted accurately?
- Is the information consistent and logical?
- Does the new information verify the information found in other sources? Does it differ from information in other sources?
- Does it suggest other places, time periods, or records to search?

Share Your Information with Others. Your family's history can become a source of enjoyment and education for yourself and your family. Contributing your information to Ancestral File™ is a good way to

share your information (see page 5). In addition, you may want to compile your findings into a family history. You can then share copies of your history with family members, the Family History Library, and other archives.

If you are a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, be sure to submit information about your ancestors so that temple ordinances can be done for them. Your ward family history consultant or a staff member at the Family History Library or your family history center can assist you. You can also use the booklet *Member's Guide to Temple and Family History Work* (34697), which is available through Church distribution centers.

RECORDS AT THE FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY

Microform Records

The Family History Library has more than 100,000 microfilms and microfiche that contain information about people who have lived in France. Most of the library's records have been obtained through an extensive acquisition program. The library has microform copies of records found in government archives, church archives, and private collections. These records include—

- Birth, marriage, and death records from churches and civil officials.
- Passport applications, border crossings, and a few passenger lists.
- Notarial records.
- Private collections.
- Genealogies.

The library has collected many French records from the Alsace-Lorraine area bordering Germany, northern France, Normandie, Ile de France, and Languedoc. Many additional areas are being microfilmed. However, the library does not have records for every department in France. There are, for example, few records from the old provinces of Auvergne or Pyrénées.

Printed Records

The library has a collection of books and printed materials helpful for French research. Copies of some of these books are available in microform. The collection includes—

- Archive inventories.
- Atlases and maps.

- Family histories.
- Gazetteers.
- Handbooks and manuals.
- Indexes prepared by local societies.
- Periodicals.
- Private collections.
- Telephone directories.

FAMILYSEARCH®

FamilySearch is a powerful computer system that simplifies family history work. The FamilySearch system includes computer files of family history information. The files are gathered from many different sources, and more files will be added in the future.

When you select a file in FamilySearch and type in a name, the computer will search the file for any names that match. The computer even matches last names that are spelled differently but sound the same. It can guide users from the matches they find to full screens of information, including dates and places of birth, marriage, and death, as well as names of parents, children, and spouses.

FamilySearch is available at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City; at hundreds of family history centers; and at some public and private libraries in the United States, Canada, and other countries.

These FamilySearch files are useful for French research:

- **Ancestral File™**. Ancestral File contains family history information gathered from family group sheets and pedigrees that have been contributed since 1979. The file already contains millions of names. You may contribute your family history information to Ancestral File. For more information, see the library publication *Contributing Information to Ancestral File* (34029), which is available at the Family History Library and through family history centers.
- **Family History Library Catalog™**. The Family History Library Catalog on FamilySearch is an automated edition of the Family History Library's catalog. The automated edition simplifies use of the catalog. It allows you to quickly find information about records held by the library, including library call numbers.
- **International Genealogical Index®**. The International Genealogical Index provides the names and vital information—including birth,

christening, and marriage dates on more than 3.4 million deceased people who lived in France. The index includes names extracted by volunteers from parish registers and civil registrations and names submitted by other researchers.

- **Social Security Death Index.** The Social Security Death Index lists all the people in the United States who had social security numbers and who died between 1962 and 1988. The index can lead to other social security records that may provide your ancestor's birthplace in France.

Other files will be added to FamilySearch as they become available.

THE FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY CATALOG

The key to finding a record in the Family History Library's collection is the Family History Library Catalog. The catalog describes each of the library's records and provides the call numbers. The catalog is available on microfiche and on compact disc as part of FamilySearch. It is available at the Family History Library and at each family history center.

The Family History Library Catalog on microfiche is divided into four major sections:

- Locality
- Surname
- Subject
- Author/Title

The Family History Library Catalog on compact disc has four types of searches:

- Locality Search
- Surname Search
- Film Number Search
- Computer Number Search

To find the call numbers of the records described in this outline, you will most often search the Locality section on microfiche or the Locality search on compact disc. When you know the record type you want (such as "church records" or "civil registration"), then you can look for it in the Locality section.

The catalog's description of a record is written in the same language as the record itself. A brief English summary of the content is included.

The Locality section or Locality Search lists records according to the area they cover. Records relating to the entire nation, such as nobility lists, are listed under "France." Most records (including records from old provinces) are listed under a specific department [*département*] or city.

For example, in the Locality section, look for—

- The *place* where an ancestor lived, such as—

EUROPE (continent)

FRANCE (nation)

FRANCE, RHONE (nation, department)

FRANCE, RHONE, LYON (nation, department, city)

- Then the *record type* you want, such as—

EUROPE - **NOBILITY**

FRANCE - **HISTORY**

FRANCE, RHONE - **GENEALOGY**

FRANCE, RHONE, LYON - **CHURCH RECORDS**

The catalog is organized by the department structure that existed before 1965. When the pre-1789 provinces are listed in the Family History Library Catalog, they are labeled regions, for example, **FRANCE, ALSACE (REGION) - MINORITIES**. For additional information, see the "Gazetteers," "Historical Geography," "History," and "Map" sections of this outline.

This outline also provides some of the library's call numbers. These are preceded by FHL, the abbreviation for Family History Library.

If you need more information on using the Family History Library Catalog, a short video program, written instructions, and librarians are available to help you.

Italian Records Listed under France

Genoa (now part of Italy) sold the island of Corse to France in 1768. France controlled the Duchy of Savoie and County of Nice from 1792 to 1814 and permanently after 1860. The Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog lists all records from Corse, Savoie, and Nice under their respective departments in France, for example, FRANCE, ALPES-MARITIMES, NICE.

French Records Listed under Other Nations

Alsace-Lorraine. The Family History Library Catalog lists records of Alsace-Lorraine (Bas-Rhin, Haut-Rhin, and Moselle) under both France and Germany for localities that were formerly claimed by Germany. For example, records from the town of Oudrenne (Udern) appear under both—

FRANCE, MOSELLE, OUDRENNE

and

GERMANY, ELSAß-LOTHRINGEN, UDERN

Overseas Areas. Records for independent overseas areas, such as Algeria, New Caledonia, and Guadeloupe, are listed under their own names in the Family History Library Catalog.

RECORD SELECTION TABLE: FRANCE

This table can help you decide which records to search.

In column 1, find what you need to know (your goal).

In column 2, find the types of records that are most likely to have the information you need. Then turn to that section of this outline.

In column 3, find additional records that may be useful.

When you know the record type you need, look for it in the Family History Library Catalog in the Locality section.

Records containing previous research (genealogy, biography, history, periodicals, and societies) could provide information for almost every category listed. These have not been included in the list unless they are especially helpful for the goal.

1. If You Need	2. Look First In	3. Then Search
Age	Civil Registration, Church Records, Notarial Records, Schools	Naturalization and Citizenship, Emigration and Immigration
Birth date and birthplace	Civil Registration, Church Records, Notarial Records, Jewish Records	Census, Military Records, Cemeteries, Biography
City or parish of foreign birth	Naturalization and Citizenship	Emigration and Immigration
Boundaries (province, canton, arrondissement, department)	Gazetteers, Maps, History	Historical Geography, Church History
Death	Civil Registration, Church Records, Notarial Records, Jewish Records	Cemeteries, Probate Records, Biography
Emigration information	Emigration and Immigration	Societies, Minorities
Historical background	History, Church History	Maps, Minorities
Language helps	Language and Languages	-
Living relatives	Directories, Genealogy	Societies, Periodicals
Maiden name	Civil Registration, Church Records	Notarial Records
Marriage	Civil Registration, Church Records	Notarial Records, Biography
Naming Customs	Names (Personal)	Genealogy, Periodicals
Occupations	Directories, Church Records, Census	Emigration and Immigration, Military Records
Parents, children, and other family members	Civil Registration, Church Records, Genealogy, Societies, Nobility	Probate Records, Notarial Records, Heraldry, Biography
Physical description	Military Records, Biography	Emigration and Immigration
Place-finding aids	Gazetteers, Maps	Historical Geography
Place of residence	Civil Registration, Directories, Emigration and Immigration	Census, Voting Registers, Schools, Taxation
Previous research (compiled genealogy)	Genealogy, Periodicals, Societies, Church History	Biography, History, Nobility, Heraldry, Minorities
Record-finding aids	Archives and Libraries, Church History	Societies, Periodicals, Minorities
Religion	Civil Registration, Church Records	Minorities, Cemeteries



ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES

Archives collect and preserve original documents of organizations. These documents include government and church records. Libraries normally collect published sources such as books, maps, and microfilms. This section describes the major repositories of genealogical and historical records and sources for France. When one of these institutions is referred to elsewhere in this outline, return to this section to obtain the address.

If you plan to visit one of these repositories, contact the organization and ask for information about their collection, hours, services, and fees.

Although the records you need may be in an archive or library in France, the Family History Library has filmed over half of the vital records of France. A microfilm copy may be available in Salt Lake City or in its family history centers.

France has three major types of genealogical repositories:

- Departmental archives
- Town registrars
- Other libraries, networks, and archives

Departmental Archives

In France each department has its own archive [*Archives départementales*] that is separate from those of the national government. Most French records of genealogical value are kept at these archives. The departmental archives serve as repositories for local records. Their collections include—

- Civil registration birth, marriage, and death records.
- Church records (before 1792).
- Census records.
- Some notarial records.
- Military conscription records.

The departmental archives of France are open to the public. They are usually located in the largest town of the department. The archivists or staff members will answer general correspondence inquiries, such as those about the availability of records, but they do not have time to do research for you. They do not make photocopies of records. All departmental archives have a reading room in which researchers can do their own research. You may want to hire a researcher through a nearby genealogical society to search records at the departmental archives. See the “Societies” section of this outline.

Copies of civil registers that are more than 100 years old are deposited at the departmental archives, except in extremely large towns, which have their own municipal archives.

Inventories, Registers, Catalogs. Most departmental archives have inventories and guides that describe their collections. If possible, study these inventories or guides before you visit an archive so that you can use your time more effectively. A bibliography of inventories and guides from each department is included in—

France. Direction des Archives. *État des inventaires des archives départementales, communales et hospitalières au 1er janvier 1983* (Report on archive inventories of departments, communities, and hospitals) 2 vols. Paris: Archives nationales, 1984. (FHL book 944 A3fan 1984; not on microfilm.)

Some of these inventories and guides are available at the Family History Library, at public or university libraries, or through interlibrary loan. These types of records are listed in the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog under—

FRANCE - ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES
FRANCE - ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES -
INVENTORIES, REGISTERS, CATALOGS
FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT] - ARCHIVES AND
LIBRARIES - INVENTORIES, REGISTERS,
CATALOGS

More recent inventories may be available only at the departmental archives where the collection is continually updated. The archive inventories, however, are not always up to date. The person in charge of the reading room usually knows of records that may have been found recently. Inquire about other available civil or parish register collections not listed in the inventories.

A directory of French departmental archive addresses is found on pages 157-60 of the *International Directory of Archives*. (See a description of the directory at the end of this section, on page 11.)

Town Registrars

Original local records of births, marriages, and deaths created by a town registrar from 1792 to the present are usually found at the civil registration office [*bureau de l'état civil*] in the town hall [*mairie*]. However, the most recent hundred years are confidential. Birth and marriage certificates will be issued only to direct-line descendants who submit a written request. Obtaining death certificates for people who have died within the last hundred years is usually not a problem.

Archives and Libraries

First check the Family History Library Catalog for records that may already be microfilmed. If they are not at the library, your options are to visit the town, hire a researcher, or write.

Clerks at local civil registration offices are busy and are increasingly reluctant to help family history researchers. Clerks usually deposit duplicates of records before the last hundred years at the departmental archive. They expect researchers to use the departmental archive whenever possible. If you cannot visit, you may want to hire a researcher through a nearby genealogical society to search the records for you. See the "Societies" section of this outline.

See the library's *French Letter-Writing Guide* (34059) for details about writing to the civil registration office for certificates. Limit requests to registrars to one or two certificates.

Other Libraries, Networks, and Archives

Genealogical Library

The Genealogical Library [*Bibliothèque généalogique*] in Paris has a name index, genealogical books, and genealogical periodicals from all parts of France. There is a correspondence service that has a limit of three requests per letter (20 francs per request) plus costs for photocopies and postage. Instructional classes for the beginner are also offered. The first visit at this library is free; thereafter a yearly membership fee of 220 French francs is required.

Bibliothèque généalogique
3 rue de Turbigo
75001 Paris
FRANCE

Computer Networks

Minitel is a French on-line computer network service connected by telephone lines. *Minitel* includes several databases and services of interest to family history researchers. Researchers around the world who have personal computers, *Minitel* software (which is free), and a modem can gain access. Users are charged a fee based on their connect time. The service is available twenty-four hours a day.

Minitel includes French telephone directories (searched department by department or by city), a computer mailbox, lists of genealogical societies, marriage indexes, advice and addresses useful for genealogists, and other services. Their computer query file is a compiled source and relies on the opinions of the people who answer. Wherever possible, the answers found in a computer query file should be verified using original records.

French genealogical periodicals give additional information about *Minitel*'s databases and about other services useful to genealogists.

The Minitel address in the United States is—

Minitel Services Company
888 7th Ave 28th Floor
New York, NY 10106-1301
USA

Telephone 212-399-0080
Fax 212-399-0129

Minitel will mail you free information and a diskette for installing the software on your computer. The software and the installation are free. The charges will be made to your American Express, MasterCard, or Visa™ bank card number, which you provide when you sign up for the program.

Several American computer networks also have genealogical bulletin boards. These allow researchers to make genealogical queries that may be answered by other network users. Elsewhere in the same network, specialists can give brief answers to genealogical reference questions. The networks that offer this service include—

- America Online.
- CompuServe.
- GENie.
- Prodigy.

Public Library of Information

In Paris, the Public Library of Information [*Bibliothèque publique d'information*] has a collection of 300,000 volumes and 2,400 periodicals. Genealogy is well represented. This is a self-service library, and there is no entry fee. The library is closed on Tuesdays.

Géopatronyme is a computerized surname file available in the Public Library of Information. It maps the departments of France where a particular surname is found and the frequency of that surname. The search is free. Following a search on *Géopatronyme*, you can make a *Minitel* search in the telephone directories to obtain specific names and addresses in a given department. The Public Library of Information will not answer research requests by mail. The address for visitors is—

Bibliothèque publique d'information
Centre Georges Pompidou
rue Saint-Martin
Paris, France

Miscellaneous Archives and Libraries

The following archives and libraries have collections or services that are helpful to genealogical researchers. They do not have the staff to answer research requests by mail, only questions about hours and services.

Les Archives d'Outre-Mer (Overseas Archives)
29 Chemin du Moulin de Testas
13090 Aix en Provence
FRANCE

Bibliothèque Nationale (National Library)
58 rue de Richelieu
75084 Paris Cedex 02
FRANCE

Archives Militaires (Military Archives)
Château de Vincennes
94304 Vincennes Cedex
FRANCE

Archives Nationales (National Archives)
11, rue des Quatre-Fils
75141 Paris 3e
FRANCE

Archives des Affaires étrangères (Foreign Affairs Archives)
5 et 6 boulevard Louis-Barthou
B.P. 1056
44035 Nantes Cedex
FRANCE

Municipal Libraries. There are 163 towns with municipal libraries listed on pages 160-70 of the *International Directory of Archives* (listed next).

Directory of Archives

The following directory contains addresses of many important French archives:

International Council on Archives. *International Directory of Archives = Annuaire international des archives*. München; London; New York; Paris: Saur, 1992. Archivum; vol. 38. (FHL book 020.5 Ar25 v. 38; not on microfilm.) Text in French.

BIOGRAPHY

A biography is a history of a person's life. In a biography you may find an individual's birth, marriage, and death information and the names of his parents, children, or other family members. Use the information given in biographies carefully

because there may be inaccuracies. There are many biographical sources for France, but typically they are about the most notable people.

Thousands of brief biographies have been gathered and published in collective biographies, sometimes called biographical encyclopedias or dictionaries. Usually these include only biographies of prominent or well-known citizens of France. Some feature biographies of specific groups of people, such as artists, military officers, or Protestant leaders.

A significant biographical dictionary follows. Its articles about individuals run from a few lines to several pages:

Nouvelle biographie générale depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu'à 1850-1860 (New biographical dictionary, early to 1860). Paris: Firmin Didot, 1853-1866. Reprint. Copenhagen: Rosenkilde et Bagger, 1963. (FHL book 920 N855n; not on microfilm.) Worldwide coverage.

There is also a major collection of French biographies:

Archives biographiques françaises (French biographical archives). New York: K.G. Saur, 1988-1989. (FHL fiche 6002178.) This set of 1073 microfiche may not be circulated to family history centers. It lists 140,000 pre-1914 individuals from 180 biographical works. It includes people from Switzerland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Quebec, and many French colonies. An index to these biographies is in the following book:

Dwyer, Helen, and Barry Dwyer. *Index Biographique Français* (French biographical index). 4 vols. London: K.G. Saur, 1993. (FHL book 944 D32i; not on microfilm.) Includes 40,000 cross-references. Citations include birth and death years, occupation, biographical source, microfiche, and frame number.

The following is an important bibliography of French biography:

Fierro, Alfred. *Bibliographie analytique des biographies collectives imprimées de la France contemporaine, 1789-1985* (Bibliography of collected biographies for modern France). Genève: Slatkine, 1986. (FHL book 944 D33f; not on microfilm.) This annotated bibliography cites 2,513 collected biographies. It is divided into general biographies, professional groups, and locality biographies. It also includes an author and title index.

Collective biographies at the Family History Library are generally listed in the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog under one of the following:

FRANCE - BIOGRAPHY
FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT] - BIOGRAPHY
FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT], [TOWN] -
BIOGRAPHY

CEMETERIES

In France, tombstones with inscriptions can be found from as early as the 18th century. The inscriptions may apply to entire families, because members of the same family may be buried in the same grave in layers for several generations. Family inscriptions are especially common for the recent 20th century. Some older French graves have been replaced by new graves with recently deceased persons and new tombstones.

Cemetery records may include the name of the deceased, age, birth date, death date, and sometimes marriage information. They may also provide clues about military service, occupation, place of residence at time of death, or membership in an organization, such as a lodge. It is illegal to photograph French tombstones without permission of the cemetery keeper.

Cemetery files are usually kept at the town hall. The cemetery keeper at the entrance to a cemetery may have alphabetical files with detailed information and relationships.

A Jewish or German cemetery may be adjacent to but separated from the Catholic cemetery.

Few cemetery records or tombstone transcriptions from France have been published. Some are listed in the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog under—

FRANCE - CEMETERIES
FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT] - CEMETERIES
FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT], [TOWN] -
CEMETERIES

CENSUS

A census is a count and description of a population. Censuses have been taken by the government of France, by individual towns, and by some old provinces. These have been taken primarily for military purposes, taxation, or identification of the poor.

French national censuses have not been microfilmed and are seldom used for genealogical research. Unlike the censuses of the United States, Canada, or Great Britain, they cannot be easily used to locate families. Because French censuses are not indexed, it is not

easy to find a name in them. Church records and indexed civil registration are better sources.

The first national census listing names in France was taken in the year 1772. Most national censuses from 1795 to 1836 show only statistics without personal names. From 1836 until 1936, a national census was taken every five years except for 1871 (which was taken in 1872) and 1916 (which was skipped).

Census records less than one hundred years old are confidential and may not be searched by individuals. However, some archivists are not strict with this rule and may allow access to census records up to the last 30 years.

Some earlier censuses may have been destroyed because of an 1887 decree, but this law was not applied everywhere. Early town and provincial censuses usually covered a smaller portion of the local population.

Census records do not consistently give the same information, but after 1836 they usually give the surname and given names, age, occupation, head of house, nationality, and sometimes the birthplace. Use the information with caution, however, since the information may have been given to a census taker by any member of the family or a neighbor. Some information may have been incorrect or deliberately falsified.

National censuses are usually found in the departmental archives. They are not microfilmed by the Family History Library. The early local census records (tax records) of a few towns have been published or microfilmed and are available at the Family History Library. These are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT], [TOWN] - CENSUS.

For more details about French censuses see page 81 of *Guide des recherches sur l'histoire des familles*, listed in the "For Further Reading" section of this outline.

CHURCH HISTORY

Research procedures and genealogical sources are different for each religion. It is helpful to understand the historical events that led to the creation of records, such as parish registers, which may list your family.

In France most people have been Roman Catholics but a few other religions have existed for many centuries, namely the Huguenots, Waldensians, and Mennonites.

Roman Catholics

Roman Catholicism has been the predominant faith of France since the 6th century. However, several reform movements gained footholds in France, especially among people in Alsace-Lorraine and in Montbéliard, near Germany and Switzerland.

Protestants (Huguenots)

Beginning in 1541 some of the people of France accepted the teachings of John Calvin. Religious wars with the Roman Catholics began as early as 1562 and resulted in turmoil throughout France.

The first large migration of French Protestants (Huguenots) began after the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572. In 1598 the Edict of Nantes granted religious freedom. Many Protestant records date from that year. They are arranged by town or province, depending on the denomination. But this religious freedom did not last and the peace was punctuated with occasional clashes. In 1685 the revocation of the Edict of Nantes removed all religious freedom and caused Protestants to flee by the thousands to foreign nations. Many Protestant records were destroyed.

The Protestants who could not leave France became Catholics, renounced Protestantism, and had their children baptized in the Catholic church. Converted Protestants are listed in Catholic records, especially after 1685. Some of these "converts" later left France and can be found in the Protestant records of another nation.

During the eighteenth century there were some revivals of Protestantism with various expressions of intolerance, but in 1787 Louis XVI signed the Edict of Tolerance, which again granted freedom of religion to Protestants.

For a history of the Huguenots see—

Roche, O.J.A. *The Days of the Upright: the Story of the Huguenots*. New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1965. (FHL book 944 K2ro; not on microfilm.) Text in English.

Waldensians

The Waldensians were founded by Pierre Valdo (or Waldo) at the end of the twelfth century in Lyon. The movement soon spread to Germany, Flanders, and Aragon. In 1545 hundreds of French Waldensians were executed in the towns of Cabrières and Merindol. Persecutions caused Waldensians to move as far away as Uruguay and Argentina. A branch of this group in Merindol, France, publishes the—

La Valmasque: Bulletin de l'Association d'Etudes Vaudoises et Historiques du Luberon (Bulletin of the association for the study of the Waldensian history of Luberon). (FHL book 944.92 H25v; not on microfilm.) The address of the association is—

La Muse, BP No. 4
84360 Merindol
FRANCE

Mennonites

The Mennonites (or Anabaptists) have existed in France since 1523 and are found mostly in Alsace-Lorraine and in the former principality of Montbéliard. For more information about their history see—

Séguy, Jean. *Les assemblées Anabaptistes-Mennonites de France* (Mennonite congregations of France) Paris: Mouton, 1977. (FHL book 944.38 F2sj; not on microfilm.)

Sommer, Pierre. *Historique des assemblées* (History of the congregations) [France]: Association française d'Histoire Anabaptiste-Mennonite, 1982. (FHL book 944.38 F2s; not on microfilm.)

See also the "Minorities" section of this outline.

CHURCH RECORDS

Church records [*registres paroissiaux*] are excellent sources for information on names, dates, and places of baptisms, marriages, and deaths. Most persons who lived in France were recorded in a church record.

Records of births (baptisms), marriages, and deaths are commonly called "vital records" because critical events in a person's life are recorded in them. Church records are vital records made by priests. They are often referred to as *parish registers* or *church books*. They include records of births, christenings, marriages, and burials. Church records may also contain other information, lists, or documents.

Church records are crucial for pre-1792 research in France. Since civil authorities did not begin registering vital statistics until 1792, church records are often the only sources of family information before this date. After 1792 Church records continued to be kept, but such records were usually not filmed because they are incomplete and less accurate than the civil registers.

For birth, death, and marriage records after 1792, see the "Civil Registration" section of this outline.

General Historical Background

The keeping of Catholic parish registers was first required by the church at the beginning of the fifteenth century. The oldest parish register in France, for the city of Givry, dates back to 1334. However parish registers are rare until 1539, when the French king, François I, required priests to keep parish registers. Unfortunately, many of the earlier records have been destroyed or lost.

The efficient recording of baptisms, marriages, and deaths developed slowly. The record-keeping requirement was limited, at first, to baptisms. The requirements developed as follows:

- 1539 The first laws required baptismal registers showing the date and the hour of the birth.
- 1563 The Council of Trent required that the godparents' names be recorded in the baptismal certificates.
- 1579 Death and marriage records were required in addition to baptismal records.
- 1691 Some preprinted forms were given to priests for uniformity of record keeping.
- 1792 Civil registration began. Church records became less important as a genealogical source. Most church records before 1792 were turned over to the departmental archives.

Feast Dates. Each day of the year had several patron saints and was a feast day to honor those saints. Some vital events are recorded in church records only by the holy day (feast day) on the church calendar. For example, the feast day called “All Saints Day” [*Toussaint*] is “1 November.” To convert feast dates to days of the month for either the Julian (old style) or Gregorian (new style) calendar, use the following book:

Bukke, Inger M., et. al. *The Comprehensive Genealogical Feast Day Calendar*. Bountiful, UT: Thomson's Genealogical Center, 1983. (FHL book 529.44 C738; fiche 6054630.)

Duplicate Church Records

The practice of making duplicates of church books was introduced as law in 1667. The original was kept at the vicarage, and the duplicate was delivered to the clerk of the court [*greffe du bailliage*]. Although this law was not completely obeyed, most parishes did comply and made at least some copies. Another law reinforcing the requirement for parish register duplicates was passed in 1736. Sometime after the French Revolution, these duplicates and most of the original parish registers prior to 1792 were handed over to the departmental archives for safekeeping.

Differences in Record Keeping by Various Churches

The manner of keeping church records differed somewhat depending on the religion. For more information on the churches of France, see the “Church History” section of this outline.

Roman Catholic. The Catholic churches in France were amongst the first to keep vital records. The council of Trent in 1563 issued the first mandate that Roman Catholic parishes keep records of christenings. A later directive in 1579 required the keeping of marriage and death records. The churches in France did not always comply with this regulation. Many Catholic registers date from the mid-1600s, but a few date back to the 1500s. However, there are some earlier records, such as the parish registers of Givry (Saône-et-Loire) which go from 1334 to 1357 and the records of Roz Landrieux (Ille-et-Villaine) from 1451 to 1528. Records were kept in French or Latin.

Although many of the very early records may have been preserved, many parishes have gaps in their records, especially before 1736.

Protestants (Huguenots). In France, Protestantism started in 1541. A synod in Paris in 1559 decided that a record of baptisms and marriages of Protestants would be kept by the pastors. Because of wars, intolerance, and other calamities, some of these early Protestant records may have been destroyed.

Researching Protestants is difficult because these people moved frequently, sometimes from one nation to another. As with all genealogical research, it is necessary to go from the known to the unknown. To trace a Protestant from America back across the Atlantic, it is necessary to know more than just the name of a person. It is important to know relatives or at least friends who traveled as a group with the ancestor. Knowing the nation where they previously resided will help you search the records of that nation and identify the family and its previous nation of residence.

Most Protestants did not come straight from France to North America, but fled first to nearby nations, especially after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. If your ancestors arrived in North America sometime in the early 1700s, the chances are that the family left France in 1685 and spent the years in between in a European nation such as England, the Netherlands, or Germany, sometimes moving from one nation to another. It may be necessary for you to research everyone with a selected surname, especially if this surname is not too common, rather than research just one ancestor. You also need to be aware that in going from one nation to another, the surname

spellings were subject to change to fit in better in the new nation.

It is a good idea to learn all you can about the history of these people and search every record available in the Family History Library in their area of residence. To do so, search the Subject section of Family History Library Catalog under subjects like—

HUGUENOTS - ENGLAND
HUGUENOTS - FRANCE
HUGUENOTS - NORTH CAROLINA
HUGUENOTS - UNITED STATES

Look for name indexes and study the history of the area. Identify their date of arrival and their nation of residence before they crossed the ocean. Do not believe everything that has been published previously, but prove information for yourself. The following sources may help researchers looking for Huguenot ancestors.

Indexes

Bibliothèque Wallonne (Leiden). *Fiches op de Waalse register, 1500-1828* (Card index of Huguenots, 1500-1828). Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1950. (FHL film 199,755-953.) Text is mainly in French, with some Dutch, on 198 microfilms. Includes Huguenots in the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany and elsewhere. The names are alphabetical phonetically, then chronological in order by the event date. They show dates and places of births, marriages, deaths, and migrations.

Bibliothèque Wallonne (Leiden). *Fiches op de registers, collectie Montauban, 1647-1682* (Card index of Huguenots of Montauban, Tarn-et-Garonne, France, 1647-1682). Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1950. (FHL film 199,957-62.) Text in French. Alphabetical by name. Shows dates and places of births, marriages, deaths, and migrations.

Bibliothèque Wallonne (Leiden). *Fiches op de registers, collectie La Rochelle, 1602-1685*. (Card index of Huguenots of La Rochelle, Charente-Maritime, France, 1602-1685). Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1950. (FHL film 199,954-56.) Text in French. Alphabetical by name. Shows dates and places of births, marriages, deaths, and migrations.

Parish Register Inventory

France. Archives nationales. *Les familles Protestantes en France (XVI^e siècle-1792)* (French Protestant families from the 16th century to 1792). Paris: Archives Nationales, 1987. (FHL book 944 F23f;

not on microfilm.) Many of the parish registers mentioned in this inventory are also available on microfilms at the Family History Library.

Historical Periodicals

Cahiers du Centre de Généalogie Protestante (See the “Periodicals” section of this outline.)

Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français (See the “Periodicals” section of this outline.)

Publications of the Huguenot Society of London. 57 vols. London: HSL, 1969-1985. (FHL book 942.1/L1 B4h; most volumes have been microfilmed.) Includes many parish register transcripts from cities chiefly in Great Britain and Ireland. Text in French in some volumes.

Geschichtsblätter des Deutschen Hugenotten-Vereins

(Historical series on Huguenot leaders, churches and settlements throughout the world, published by the German Huguenot Society). Sicking: Verlag des Deutschen Hugenotten-Vereins, 1892-. (FHL book 943 F2gd; fiche 6000819.) Place of publication varies. Text in German. Volumes 1-14 are indexed in Cordier, Leopold. *Hugenottische Familiennamen in Deutschland* (Huguenot surnames in Germany). Berlin: Verlag des Deutschen Hugenotten-Vereins, [1953?]. (FHL book 943 F2gd v. 1-14 index; film 962,761 item 3.) Volumes 15-19 are indexed in Mathieu, Ursula-Marianne. *Hugenottische Familiennamen in Deutschland, Teil II* (Huguenot surnames in Germany, part 2). Bad Karlshafen: Verlag des Deutschen Hugenotten-Vereins, 1991. (FHL book 943 F2gd v. 20 pt. 7-10; not on microfilm.)

Der Deutsche Hugenott (Periodical of German Huguenot genealogy and history) Hannover: Deutscher Hugenotten-Verein, 1929-. (FHL book 943 B2dh; film 908,257.) Text in German. A cumulative name index is found in Mathieu, Ursula-Marianne. *Namensregister 1.-40. Jahrgang, 1929-1976* (Name index for years 1 to 40, 1929-1976) Sicking: Verlag des Deutschen Hugenotten-Vereins, 1987. (FHL book 943 F2gd v. 19 pt. 5-7; not on microfilm.)

Significant Huguenot Records

Haag, Eugène. *La France protestante: l'histoire* (The history of Protestant France). 9 vols. Paris: Imp. de J.-B. Gros, 1846-1859. (FHL book 944 D3hg; film 962,949-53.) Biographical and genealogical sketches of prominent figures in the Protestant movement in France. Alphabetical by surname.

Church Records

Mours, Samuel. *Les Eglises réformées en France* (The reformed churches in France). Paris: Librairie Protestante, 1958. (FHL film 765,005.) Maps and listing of Protestant centers in France with dates of establishment.

Wagner, Henry. *Wagner collection of Huguenot pedigrees in England*. Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1952. (FHL film 087,860-65, index on 824,245 item 9.) Text in English. About 1,000 surnames.

Handbook

La généalogie: histoire et pratique (see the “For Further Reading” section of this outline). Pages 181-87 describe Protestant records, their content, and history.

Some French Protestant records may have been published or indexed by a local genealogical society.

Library

You may also write to the Library of French Protestantism for assistance. To pay for the search send about \$15.00 worth of francs to—

Bibliothèque de la S.H.P.F.
54, rue des Saints-Pères
75007 Paris
FRANCE

Information Recorded in Church Registers

The information recorded in church books varied over time. The later records usually give more complete information.

The most important church records for genealogical research are baptism, marriage, and burial registers. Other helpful church records are marriage banns, marriage rehabilitations, and abjurations from Protestantism.

Catholic records are usually written in French or Latin. Protestant records in Alsace were often written in German. Some records from the area of Nice are in Italian. Local dialects may have affected the spelling of some names and other words in the church records. Some given names are common to some areas and unknown in others.

Baptisms [*baptêmes*]

Catholic children were usually baptized within two days of birth. Some were given an emergency baptism [*ondoyé*] by the midwife when the child was in danger of death. Protestant children were usually baptized within a few weeks of birth. Baptism registers usually give the infant's and parents' names,

status of legitimacy, names of godparents, and the baptism date. You may also find the child's birth date, the father's occupation, and the family's place of residence. Death information has sometimes been added as a note. Children who died at birth may be recorded only in the death records.

Earlier registers typically give less information, sometimes including only the child's and father's names and the date of the baptism. The mother's maiden surname may be missing, and even her given name may be omitted. At first only the baptism date was recorded, but in later years the birth date was given as well.

Marriages [*Mariages*]

Marriage registers give the date of the marriage and the names of the bride and groom and their parents or deceased spouse. They also indicate whether they were single or widowed and give the names and relationships of witnesses. They often include other information about the bride and groom, such as their ages, residences, occupations, and sometimes birthplaces. In cases of second and later marriages, they include the names of previous partners and their death dates. Often a note is made whether a parent or other party gave permission for the marriage.

Marriage registers sometimes give the dates on which the marriage intentions were announced in addition to the marriage date. These announcements, called banns, gave opportunity for anyone to come forward who knew any reasons why the couple shouldn't be married. Engagements may be recorded in the marriage register. In some cities, such as Lyon, the notary who recorded the marriage contract is sometimes mentioned.

Many genealogical societies in France are presently indexing the marriages before 1792. See the “Societies” section of this outline for information about contacting them.

Marriage banns [*publications de mariage*]. In addition to, or instead of the actual marriage register, some churches in France kept a separate register where marriage banns were recorded. Marriage banns do not always give the actual marriage date. However, hometown banns sometimes refer to a marriage place away from the bride's or groom's hometown.

Rehabilitation [*réhabilitation*]. Closely related people [*consanguinité* or *affinité spirituelle*] required special permission to marry [*dispensation*]. If a close relationship was discovered after marriage, a rehabilitation was required which granted the couple permission to stay married. Rehabilitations are often found in the marriage registers but more often at the diocesan archives. These were recorded like a marriage but sometimes twenty or thirty years after a marriage.

Sometimes a chart showing the relationship can be found either in the parish registers or in the departmental archives record, series G.

Burials [*Sépultures*]

Burials were recorded in the church record of the parish where the person was buried. The burial usually took place within a few days of the death, in the parish where the person died. Burial registers give the name of the deceased and the date and place of the burial. Often the age, place of residence, name of the surviving spouse or parents, and sometimes birthplace are given. But early death registers failed to record the age of the deceased and information about parents or spouse.

Some people, born and perhaps married before the keeping of vital records began in their area, may be recorded only in the burial records. These records may help fill in information when baptism or marriage records are lacking. Some children who died at birth are recorded only in the burial records (sometimes with a note that the child was baptized by the midwife).

Abjurations from Protestantism [*Abjurations*]

During times of persecution, especially in 1685, some French Protestants were forced to renounce their religion and convert to the Roman Catholic Church. The records of their abjurations show the name, age, occupation, and residence. You may also identify parents, spouses, or children in some of these records.

Other Lists

Other church records include confirmation lists, lists of families, rental of a church bench, communion lists, and attendance at special meetings. Unusual calamities, such as torrential rains, flash floods, and fires, were also noted.

Locating Church Records

Sometime after the French Revolution, the parish registers that had been kept at each parish until 1792 became state property. These registers were turned over to departmental archives or town registrars. The local priests no longer have parish registers before 1792. The departmental archives will answer written inquiries regarding the whereabouts of the parish registers of a specific locality, but they will not research a name in them.

You must know the town where your ancestor lived to use pre-1792 parish registers at the departmental archives. You need the same information to contact a priest for help with church records written after 1792.

Your ancestor may have lived in a village that belonged to a parish in a nearby town. A village may have belonged to different parishes during different periods. Try searching adjacent parishes with older records when you cannot find relatives in the parish where you think they should be.

Church Record Inventories

An inventory is a list of available church records, their location, and what years they cover. Church record inventories are included in the departmental archive inventories described in the “Archives and Libraries” section of this outline. Some inventories may be out of date.

Indexes

Andriveau Collection. For a description of indexes to parish registers of 25 large French and Belgian cities, see the “Genealogy” section of this outline.

Some Catholic church records have partial indexes in larger towns, but the church records in smaller towns usually have no indexes.

Several French genealogical societies have begun indexing pre-1792 church records in their districts. For a list of indexed church records, chiefly marriages, see—

Recensement des dépouillements systématiques réalisés en France pour faciliter les recherches généalogiques (Inventory of the systematic extraction made in France to help genealogical researchers). Paris: Bibliothèque généalogique, 1988. (FHL book 944 D2r; not on microfilm.) List of where to obtain assistance and abstracts of community records.

Some of these societies are entering these marriage indexes on *Minitel*. See the “Archives and Libraries” section of this outline for details.

GENLOR. The Genealogical Society of Lorraine has created a 600,000-name computer database of pre-1792 marriages in church records. It lists all marriages of the department of Vosges, about 95 percent of marriages in Meurthe-et-Moselle, about 50 percent of those in Meuse, and some for Moselle. *GENLOR* includes the groom's name, bride's name, parents, and date and place of marriage. The search is done one department at a time. *GENLOR* is on *Minitel* under “3628 GENLOR” (see the “Archives and Libraries” section of this outline for details). If you want to write to request a search of this database, send the names of the bride and groom and the approximate year of the marriage, three international reply coupons, an envelope, and the name of the department to be searched to—

Civil Registration

U.C.G.L.
Madame la Secrétaire
B.P. 8
54131 Saint Max Cedex
FRANCE

Records at the Family History Library

The Family History Library has Catholic church records on microfilm from over 60 percent of the departments in France. This collection continues to grow as new records are microfilmed. Most of these records are from the northern, eastern, and southern areas of France. Fewer are from central France. Most of the library's parish records come from years before 1792.

The specific holdings of the Family History Library are listed in the Family History Library Catalog. You can determine whether the library has records for the locality your ancestor came from by checking the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog. However, if a record has been destroyed, was never kept, has not been microfilmed, or is restricted from public access, the Family History Library *does not have a copy*.

In the Family History Library Catalog, look under the name of the town where the parish was, not necessarily the town where your ancestor lived. Look under FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT], [TOWN] - CHURCH RECORDS.

New records are continually added to the Family History Library collection from numerous sources. Don't give up if records are not available yet. Check the Family History Library Catalog again every year for the records you need.

Records Not at the Family History Library

Baptism, marriage, burial, and other church records may be found by contacting or visiting departmental archives, town registrars, or local parishes in France, or you may hire a researcher to do this for you.

- *Departmental archives.* Most pre-1792 parish records are in departmental archives. See the "Archives and Libraries" section of this outline.
- *Town registrars.* A few pre-1792 church records are preserved at the local civil registration office. See the "Archives and Libraries" section of this outline.
- *Local parishes.* Church records after 1792 in France are available by writing to the parish. Parishes will usually answer correspondence in French. However, most researchers have more success by contacting civil registration offices first. Your request may be forwarded if the records have

been sent to another archive. To obtain the address of a given parish, write to the mayor of the town. The mayor will know if the parish office is in his town or in a nearby town.

If your request is unsuccessful, search for records that may have been filed in other archives or in civil registration offices. You may also want to hire a professional researcher for expert help.

Search Strategies

Effective use of church records includes the following strategies in addition to the general strategies on page 2:

- For records after 1792, search civil records thoroughly before searching church records.
- When you find the baptism record of a relative or ancestor, search for the baptisms of brothers and sisters. Note the towns where godparents lived—these may be additional places to search for church records.
- Then search for the marriage of the parents. Marriages are usually recorded in the bride's parish. The marriage record will often lead to the baptism records of the parents.
- You can estimate the ages of the parents and search for their baptism records.
- Then repeat the process for both the father and the mother.
- If earlier generations are not in the record, search neighboring parishes.
- Search the death registers for all family members. Death records may show children who were never recorded in baptism records.

CIVIL REGISTRATION

Civil registers are the vital records made by the government. Records of births, marriages, and deaths are commonly referred to as "vital records" because they refer to critical events in a person's life. French civil registration offices are excellent sources for accurate information on names, dates, and places of births, marriages, and deaths in their area. In addition, civil registration may include divorce records.

Civil records are crucial for research in France. Civil authorities began registering births, marriages, and deaths in 1792. After this date, all individuals who lived in France are recorded. Because these records cover all the population, are indexed, are easily accessible, provide more information than church records, and include persons of all denominations, they are the most important source for genealogical research in France.

Other significant genealogical sources, such as church records, are not easily available after 1792, not complete, not necessarily accurate and not considered as reliable a source as the civil registers. For many families, civil registers are often the only valuable source of information after 1792.

For baptism, death, and marriage records before 1792, see the “Church Records” section of this outline.

General Historical Background

The earliest vital records in France were made by the churches at the request of the French kings. In 1792, the revolutionary government made civil officers responsible for keeping vital records. Civil registration was accomplished by requiring the people to report all births, marriages, and deaths to a civil registration office [*bureau de l'état civil*], usually at the town hall [*mairie*]. Civil registration was well received, and nearly all of the people were recorded.

Baptism, marriage, and death record duplicates that were made by the churches before 1792 are usually in the departmental archives, or sometimes in the town's civil registration office. After civil registration began in 1792, the clergy continued to keep their own parish registers separate from civil registers.

Regional Differences in Record Keeping

Savoie and Nice. France controlled the Duchy of Savoie and the County [*comté*] of Nice from 1792 to 1814 and permanently after 1860. Use the church records of Savoie or Nice for the periods when they belonged to Sardinia and civil registration was suspended. These church records were given to the local community [*commune*] in 1906, but the ten-year indexes are often missing before 1882. French civil registers were usually made for towns in Savoie from 1792 to 1814 or 1815, and starting again in 1863.

The Family History Library Catalog shows many civil registers in Nice between 1815 and 1859. These were originally church records but are cataloged as civil registers because they were turned over to the French civil authorities for safekeeping.

Corse. Genoa (now part of Italy) sold the island of Corse to France in 1768. Some family surnames were not fixed until end of the eighteenth century. The records were kept in Latin or Italian, and starting in 1820 they are kept in French. The Family History Library has not yet obtained any microfilm of civil registration from Corse.

Overseas. In French territory overseas, parish registers were kept in duplicate until 1776 and then in triplicate in Africa and Asia. The three copies continued after 1792. For help locating these records,

see chapter 23 of *Guide des recherches sur l'histoire des familles* in the “For Further Reading” section of this outline.

Paris. A fire in 1871 destroyed almost all the civil registers of Paris before the year 1860. The government has reconstructed about 2.7 million of the estimated 8 million burned records. For a guide to the Paris records see—

Demeulenaère-Douyère, Christiane. *Guide des sources de l'état civil parisien* (Guide to civil registration sources of Paris). Paris?: s.n., 19--. (FHL book 944.361 V27d; film 1,573,092 item 15.)

The Family History Library has a part of the Andriveau collection (started before the fire) which includes some baptisms, marriages, and deaths in Paris from about 1800 to 1860. This collection is not complete, some film is out of focus, and circulation to family history centers in Europe is prohibited. For details see page 30.

Consulates. After 1792 the consuls, like the town registrars in France, had the responsibility of recording the births, marriages, and deaths of French citizens in foreign nations, when it was requested. These records are kept in duplicate. One copy is sent each year to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Information Recorded in Civil Registers

The information recorded in civil registration records varied over time. The later records usually give more complete information than the earlier ones.

The most important civil records for genealogical research are birth, marriage, and death registers. References to other documents are often noted in the text or marginal entry of the civil records. This practice alerts researchers to look for documents such as acknowledgment of paternity, subsequent marriage of the parents of an illegitimate child, name rectification, or any court judgment regarding the person, or the name and date of the notary who wrote the marriage contract.

Most French civil registers are written in French, with the exception of areas under a foreign influence. In Alsace-Lorraine, some civil registers are in German. In Nice and Corse, some are in Italian.

Births [Naissances]

Birth records usually give the child's name, sex, date and place of birth, and the name of the parents, including the mother's maiden surname. The records may provide additional details, such as the age of the parents, occupation of the father, or place of origin of the parents.

Civil Registration

Births were usually registered within two or three days of the child's birth, usually by the father, but sometimes by a relative or friend, especially if the father was absent. Parents of a single mother are usually listed for more complete identification of the mother. Corrections to a birth record, marriage of the parents of an illegitimate child, or rectifications of any kind may have been added as marginal notes.

Children who died very young [*présenté mort* or *présenté sans vie*] are not stillborn but probably died shortly after birth. Some of the children who died at birth may be recorded only in the death records. The baptismal given name in church records may differ from the given name in civil registers. Search both when they are available.

Civil register births usually have yearly indexes in addition to the ten-year indexes (see page 21).

You may also find birth information in the "Family civil registration booklets" described in the following marriage section.

Marriages [*Mariages*]

After 1792 marriages had to be performed by civil authorities before the couple could be married by the church. The church wedding usually took place where the bride resided and was recorded there in the church records. But the civil marriage could be recorded in another town.

The early civil marriage records include more information than the corresponding church records. When they are available, search both the civil registration and church records of marriage.

A law passed in 1798 (year VI of the French Republic) required citizens to be married at the canton seat [*chef-lieu de canton*] instead of the local town [*commune*]. This law was abolished in 1800 (year VIII) when couples were again allowed to marry in their local town. For this reason, marriages for the years VII and VIII (1798-1800) are usually missing from town records. A note in town records may suggest you search for marriages at the canton seat.

When you cannot find a marriage record, search records of intent to marry.

Records of Intent to Marry. You may find records that show a couple's "intent to marry" in addition to or instead of the records of the actual marriage. Various records may have been created that show a couple's intent to marry.

- *Marriage banns* [*publications*] were made twice in the weeks before a couple planned to marry. The couple was required to announce their intention to give other community members the opportunity to raise any objections to the marriage. Some

registers of marriage banns before 1927 have been preserved. Banns are made in the places of origin of both the bride and the groom and usually show the town where the marriage took place or the residence of the bride. Search these if you do not know where a marriage took place.

- *Marriage supplements* [*pièces annexes* or *pièces justificatives*] were occasionally filed by the bride and groom in support of their application to be married. They may include birth record extracts of the bride and groom, death certificates of the parents, divorce decree of a previous union, certificates of residence, a marriage contract, legitimation of children, parent's consent, or military status of the groom, and sometimes documentation on earlier generations may be included. In France these marriage supplements were originally kept by the clerk of the court [*Greffé du tribunal*], but a few may have been given to the departmental archives.
- *Contracts* [*contracts de mariage*] are documents created for the protection of property. These are notarial documents. Sometimes the marriage certificate will show the name and town of the notary who wrote the contract and the date it was written. But these contracts are not usually on microfilm at the Family History Library and are not always deposited at the departmental archives. They may have remained in the office of the notary's successors.

Marriage Records. You may find the following records that document the actual marriage.

- *Certificates* [*certificats*]. You can obtain a marriage certificate from the last hundred years from the registrar's office [*bureau de l'état civil*] at the town hall [*mairie*]. A copy of a marriage certificate will be sent by mail to direct descendants only.
- *Marriage register* [*registre des actes de mariage*]. Civil officials recorded the marriages they performed, usually in a prescribed paragraph format, bound in a book and kept in the registrar's office.

The civil marriage registers give many details, such as the birth date and birthplace of the bride and groom and their parents' names, including mother's maiden surname. If the parents have died, their death date and death place are recorded. More recent civil marriage records may even include the same information for the grand-parents. There are usually four witnesses listed, with their age, occupation, residence, and relationship. Civil marriage records contain the complete birth information of the couple's children who are born out of wedlock. If a marriage contract was made, the date, the name of the notary, and the town where this contract was written may be

included. Civil marriage records may also mention the date of the banns [*publications*].

- *Family civil registration booklets* [*livrets de famille*]. After 1877 the civil registrar gave a booklet to each couple he married. This booklet includes an extract of the marriage record and references to the marriage contract. The couple was responsible for taking the booklet to the registrar as each of their children was born. The registrar would update the booklet with the child's birth information and return the booklet to the parents. The registrar also recorded deaths in this booklet. Families keep possession of their family civil registration booklets and often hand them down to their children.

Divorce Records [*Divorces*]

Divorce was permitted in France from 1792 to 1816 and after 1884. A few divorce records may be found with the marriages in the early period. A marginal note referring to the divorce was noted on the couple's birth certificates in more recent years.

The Family History Library has a few of the earlier divorce records in its collection of French civil registration. You can also obtain information from divorce records by contacting the civil registration office [*bureau de l'état civil*] at the town hall [*mairie*] where the divorce took place.

Deaths [*Décès*]

Death records are especially helpful because they may provide important information on a person's birth, spouse, parents, age, and birthplace. Civil death records often exist for individuals for whom there are no birth or marriage records. Deaths were usually registered within a day or two of the death in the town or city where the person died.

Early death records may give only the name, date, and place of death. But most of them will also give the age, birthplace, and parents' names (including mother's maiden surname), and whether or not the parents are also deceased. The death certificates usually have two informants, at least one of them closely related. Information in death records may be subject to error because the informants may have lacked complete information.

Children who died before the declaration of birth was made may be found only in the death records.

The death of a soldier who died away from home is usually noted in the death records of the town where the soldier was born. Such an entry may be listed in the records a year or two after the soldier died.

Locating Civil Registration Records

Two civil registers were created for each event. One register is kept at the registrar's office [*bureau de l'état civil*], usually in the town hall [*mairie*]. The other register is made available to the public at the departmental archive after it is 100 years old.

You must determine the town where your ancestor lived before you can find civil registration records. Your ancestor may have lived in a village that belonged to a nearby larger town. In large cities there may be many civil registration districts. Each district has its own registrar. You may need to use gazetteers and other geographic references to identify the place your ancestor lived and the civil registration office that served it. See the "Gazetteers" section of this outline.

In addition, it helps to know the approximate year in which the birth, marriage, divorce, or death occurred. Records less than 100 years old are confidential. This means the registrar will issue a birth or marriage certificate less than 100 years old only to direct relatives.

Indexes to Civil Registration Records

In each town's civil registration office [*bureau de l'état civil*] births, marriages, and deaths were written in the registers as they occurred and thus are arranged chronologically. Yearly indexes and ten-year indexes to civil registers can help you find your ancestor more easily.

Almost every registrar created a yearly index of his register. Indexes are usually bound with each year's register. It is often more practical to use the town's yearly indexes, which have fewer names to search, than to use ten-year indexes.

Ten-year indexes [*tables décennales*] were kept in a separate register. You can sometimes find the ten-year indexes for several towns in the same district [*arrondissement*] or canton [*canton*] bound together in the same volume. A ten-year index is especially useful when you are not certain of the year of an event.

Yearly indexes and ten-year indexes have several characteristics in common. The registrar usually indexed births, marriages, and deaths separately. The indexes are alphabetical by surname. They usually list the given name(s), document number, and date of the civil register entry. In marriage indexes, the groom's name is usually in alphabetical order, with the bride's maiden surname listed after the groom. In some indexes, only the first letter of the surname is in alphabetical order.

Records at the Family History Library

The Family History Library has microfilmed civil registration records from about half the departments of France to the 1870s, and some departments up to 1890. Most of these records are from the northern, eastern, and southern areas of France. Fewer are from central France.

The Family History Library has no nationwide collections or special indexes of French civil registration records. Yearly indexes and ten-year indexes are available for almost every individual town. Ten-year indexes for several towns in a canton are often bound together in the same volume on the same microfilm.

The Family History Library has civil registration from towns in many departments of France. However, if a record has been destroyed, was never kept, was not available in the archives at the time of microfilming, was not microfilmed, or is confidential, the Family History Library *does not have a copy*. You may use the records at the library for your family research, but the library does not issue or certify certificates for living or deceased individuals.

The specific holdings of the Family History Library are listed in the Family History Library Catalog. To find civil registration records in the Family History Library, search in the Locality section of the library's catalog under—

FRANCE - CIVIL REGISTRATION
FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT] - CIVIL
REGISTRATION
FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT], [TOWN] - CIVIL
REGISTRATION

The library's collection continues to grow and its catalog is updated annually. Don't give up if records are not available yet. Check the Family History Library Catalog every year for the records you need.

Locating Records Not at the Family History Library

France has no single, nationwide repository of civil registration records. Birth, marriage, divorce, and death records may be found by contacting or visiting local registrars' offices or departmental archives in France. To protect the privacy of living persons, records of the most recent 100 years are confidential and have restrictions on their use and access.

- *Local registrars' offices [bureau de l'état civil]* will usually mail one or two birth, marriage, or death certificates at no charge. However, they are busy and they may not respond to requests for more than two certificates at a time. If the records are less than 100 years old, they are confidential and will be sent only to direct descendants. Records more

than 100 years old are more accessible at the departmental archives.

- The *clerk of the court [greffe du tribunal]* keeps a duplicate of the most recent hundred years of civil registration records. Then the records are sent to the departmental archives. Clerks' copies are not normally available for research.
- *Departmental archives [archives départementales]* will only send replies to general questions about their holdings. They will not do research in their records for you. You may visit the archives to search the civil registers over 100 years old. You can also hire a researcher to examine archive records for you.

You may also find archive inventories (see the “Archives and Libraries” section) that describe the record-keeping systems and available civil registration records in France. They may not be up-to-date. These and other guides are found in the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog under—

FRANCE - ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES -
INVENTORIES, REGISTERS, CATALOGS
FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT] - ARCHIVES AND
LIBRARIES - INVENTORIES, REGISTERS,
CATALOGS

The “French Search Strategies” section of this outline and the Family History Library's *French Letter-Writing Guide* (34059) give details about how to write to town registrars and departmental archives in France for genealogical information.

If the reply does not have the information you request, try to get help from the local genealogical society.

Search Strategies

Effective use of civil registers includes the following strategies, in addition to the general strategies on page 2:

- Search for the relative or ancestor you selected in step 2. When you find his birth record, search for the birth records of his brothers and sisters.
- Search for the death records of his parents, which will tell you where the mother came from and where the marriage probably took place.
- Search for marriage records of all the children. Marriage records will tell you if the parents have died and where and when they died.
- If you cannot find the person you want in the regular marriage records, search the marriage banns [*publications*].
- Then, search for the marriage record of the parents. The marriage record will give you birth dates, birthplaces, and parents' names.

- Then repeat the process for both the father and the mother.
- Search the death registers for all family members. These are indexed and will take you back in the parish register period, giving you ages and localities of birth.
- Search the civil registers completely before starting to search in the parish registers.

DIRECTORIES

Directories are alphabetical lists of names and addresses. In the twentieth century there are directories of all those who have telephones.

The most helpful directories are telephone directories of local residents and businesses. These are usually published annually and may include an individual's name and address. An individual's address can be very helpful when you are trying to contact distant relatives.

The Family History Library has many telephone directories of France, but they are not cataloged. These directories date from about 1980 or later. Each directory covers one department, with each town listed separately, showing people's names in alphabetical order. Ask someone at the information desk to locate these directories. They are not available at family history centers.

A French computer network, *Minitel*, can search the computer telephone directory of France. *Minitel* is accessible in the U.S. and some other foreign nations. See the "Archives and Libraries" section of this outline for additional details.

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION

Emigration and immigration records list the names of people leaving (emigration) or coming into (immigration) France. These lists are usually found as permissions to emigrate; records of passports issued, including passports for the interior; records of border crossings; and lists of prisoners deported. The information in these records may include the name of the emigrant, age, occupation; usually include the place of origin and destination; and sometimes include the reason for leaving. These sources can be very valuable in helping you determine where in France your ancestor came from. French emigration records are very incomplete and are not usually indexed.

In addition to their usefulness in determining where an emigrant lived in the nation before leaving, these records can help you construct family groups. If you

don't find your ancestor, you may find emigration information about neighbors of your ancestor. People who lived near each other in France often settled together in the nation where they emigrated to.

Records were created when individuals emigrated from or immigrated into France. Other records document an ancestor's arrival in his destination nation. This section discusses—

- Finding the emigrant's town of origin.
- Emigration from France, including the historical background of French emigration.
- Records of French emigrants in their destination nations.
- Immigration into France.

Unfortunately, there are few emigration records from France. There are some helpful Canadian records of French immigrants into Quebec from 1632 to 1713.

Finding the Emigrant's Town of Origin

Once you have traced your family back to a French emigrant, you must determine the city or town the ancestor was from. There are no nationwide indexes to birth, marriage, or death records in France. These records were kept locally.

There are several sources outside of France that may give your ancestor's place of origin. You may be able to learn the town your ancestor came from by talking to older family members. Members of your family or a library may have documents that name the city or town, such as obituaries, church records, and naturalization petitions.

Additional information about finding the origins of immigrant ancestors is given in the library's *Tracing Immigrant Origins* (34111) research outline.

Emigration from France

There was no systematic, official method of emigration, and few French emigration lists are available.

Significant numbers of emigrants left France during the following periods:

- *1538 to 1685*. Protestants flee religious persecutions in France.
- *1632 to 1713*. French settle Quebec and Acadia (Canada).
- *1722*. Alsatian colonies established in the Holy Roman Empire (Austria-Hungary).
- *1764 to 1786*. Alsations colonize Russia, Ukraine, and Banat.

Emigration and Immigration

- 1785. Some exiled Acadians shipped from France to Louisiana.
- 1789 to 1791. About 500,000 refugees flee the French Revolution for neighboring nations and the Americas. About half later returned.
- 1804 to 1832. Additional Alsatians emigrate to Ukraine, Bessarabia, and Banat.
- 1815 to 1817. Political turmoil after the fall of Napoleon leads to a wave of French emigration to neighboring countries and the Americas.
- 1830 to 1962. French colonize Algeria (Africa).
- 1830s, 1840s, 1850s, and 1860s. Agents go from town to town recruiting emigrants, mostly in Alsace-Lorraine. Some went to America, others to Russia.
- 1871. There is a wave of French emigrants, largely to North America.

For emigrants leaving France, documents that record their migration can sometimes be found in France and in the country to which they moved.

Passenger Departure Lists

During the 1800s most French and south German emigrants left through the port of Le Havre. The records of departures from this port are called *passenger lists*. The information in these lists varied over time but usually included name, age, occupation, origin, and sometimes birthplace. There are only a few, incomplete passenger lists for ports in France, and they have no indexes.

The only lists available for the French port of Le Havre are lists of crews and passengers on some commercial cargo vessels. They are very incomplete. Very few passengers sailed on cargo ships. Passenger vessels are not included. These lists are not indexed. A few records from Calais, Cherbourg, Brest, Lorient, La Rochelle, and Dieppe are available at the French National Archives.

The Family History Library has filmed the Le Havre commercial cargo vessel passenger lists for the years 1750 to 1886. The film numbers are listed in the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog under—

FRANCE, SEINE-MARITIME, LE HAVRE -
BUSINESS RECORDS AND COMMERCE

Le Havre Passenger Index

A French genealogical society has discovered a 100-year-old card file of 45,000 passengers, 25,000 sailors, and 5,000 retirees at Le Havre from 1780 to 1840. The source of the index is uncertain and it is

difficult to determine how comprehensive it is. It does not correspond to the unindexed lists mentioned above. The passenger cards usually show name, maiden surname of the spouse (including cross references), birth date or age, birthplace, parents, date and place of embarkation and debarkation, and, for French ships, the vessel's name.

Researchers may send written inquiries to learn if a relative is indexed. The society can search only for passengers between 1780 and 1840, and they will search only for a specific name. They will not respond to vague requests to search for anyone with a certain surname. Send the correctly spelled given name and surname of the passenger, a self-addressed envelope, and three international reply coupons (purchased at large post offices) to—

Liste de passagers
Groupement Généalogique du Havre et de Seine-
Maritime
B.P. 80
76050 Le Havre Cedex
FRANCE

French Emigration Indexes

Alsace-Lorraine Emigration Indexes. Many French, Swiss, and Germans lived in Alsace-Lorraine or passed through it to emigrate. Several indexes help identify many of them.

Alsace Emigration Index. The Family History Library compiled an index of persons emigrating from or through Alsace-Lorraine from 1817 to 1866. About half the names are from France. The alphabetical index gives the emigrant's name, age, occupation, place of origin, residence, destination, passport date, and source microfilm number. Not everyone who emigrated via Alsace is in this index. The index is easiest to find in the Author/Title section of the Family History Library Catalog under "Alsace emigration index." It is also listed as—

France. Ministère de l'Intérieur. *Registres des émigrés, 1817-1866* (Register of emigrants). Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1977. (FHL film 1,125,002-1,125,007.) Text in English.

Alsace Emigration Books. Cornelia Schrader-Muggenthaler used part of the *Alsace Emigration Index*, other emigration records, passenger lists, genealogies, genealogy periodicals, and newspaper articles to compile the following index:

Schrader-Muggenthaler, Cornelia. *The Alsace Emigration Book*. 2 vols. Apollo, PA: Closson Press, 1989-1991. (FHL book 944.38 W2s; not on microfilm.) Text in English. This index has over 20,000 entries, mostly of 1817-1870 emigrants.

Other useful books on the subject are—

Burgert, Annette Kunselman. *Eighteenth Century Emigrants from the Northern Alsace to America*. Camden, ME: Picton Press, 1992. (FHL book 974.8 B4pgp v. 26; not on microfilm.) Text in English.

Laybourn, Norman. *L'émigration des Alsaciens et des Lorrains du XVIII^e au XX^e siècles* (Emigration from Alsace-Lorraine from the 18th to the 20th century). Strasbourg: Association des Publications près les Universités de Strasbourg, 1986. (FHL 944.383 W2L; fiche 6001613-6001614.) Two volumes. Primarily a history but it contains many short lists of names and places. Indexed.

Smith, Clifford Neal. *Immigrants to America from France (Haut-Rhin Department) and Western Switzerland, 1859-1866*. 2 vols. McNeal, Ariz: Westland Publications, 1983, 1986. (FHL 973 W25s; not on microfilm.) Text in English. List of names, ages, occupations, places of origin, and destinations.

Bordeaux Emigration Index. About 16,000 emigrants from Bordeaux from 1713 to 1787 are listed on a card index on microfilm. The film can be viewed at the departmental archives in Bordeaux. A computer index is forthcoming. This index is not available at the Family History Library.

Published Emigration Records

Lists of emigrants are often published. These usually focus on the emigrants from one town, department, or region. An example follows:

Lassus, Alfred. "Les départs de passagers par Bayonne pour l'Amérique entre 1749 et 1779" *Ekaina - Revue d'études Basques* (Review of Basque studies). Bidart: Association Culturelle Amalur, 1982?-. (FHL 944.79 B2e; not on microfilm.) This article listing Basque emigrants and their home towns starts in the 1984 issue. It is not alphabetical.

Dozens of other published emigrant lists from many areas of France can be identified in the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog under the town, department, province, or region from which the emigrants came, for example—

FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT] - EMIGRATION
AND IMMIGRATION
FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT], [TOWN] -
EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION

Records of French Emigrants in Their Destination Nations

Sometimes the best sources for information about your immigrant ancestor are found in the nation to which he or she immigrated. Emigrants from France in the seventeenth and eighteenth century settled in Canada, Pennsylvania, Russia, the Banat, and other areas. Huguenot emigrants settled in the Antilles, Switzerland, Germany, Scandinavia, the Netherlands, the British Isles, the United States, South Africa, Italy, and other areas. The French emigrants from Alsace-Lorraine province in the nineteenth century settled in the United States (Louisiana, Texas), Algeria, New Caledonia, Russia, South America, and other areas.

To learn about the records of these nations use handbooks and library research outlines, if available, for the nation where your ancestor settled and the library's research outline, *Tracing Immigrant Origins* (34111).

Acadia and Quebec (Canada)

In 1755 England dispersed French settlers in Acadia (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Cape Breton, Prince Edward Island, and Maine) to France, England, and English colonies in America. In 1785 Spain transported seven shiploads of Acadian exiles to Louisiana where Acadians were called Cajuns. A bibliography of these people is—

Sources of Acadian research materials in Acadian Genealogy's Repertoire. Covington, Kentucky: Acadian Genealogical Exchange, [1993?] (FHL book 970 F23s; not on microfilm.)

Several French Canadian sources mention the French home parish of an individual or his parents, for example:

Loiselle, Antoinin. *Loiselle card index to many marriages of the Province of Quebec and adjacent areas, 1642-1973*. Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1972. (FHL film 543,685-543,858.) Text in French.

Rivest, Lucien. *Index to marriages of Quebec and adjacent areas, 1670-1964*. Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1973. (FHL film 933,109-933,124, 933,142-933,166.) Alphabetical by the name of the bride. Text in French.

Jetté, René. *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles du Québec* (Genealogical dictionary of the families of Québec). Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1983. (FHL book 971.4 D2jr; fiche 6049365.)

Emigration and Immigration

United States

Passenger lists. Many French immigrants to the United States arrived at the ports of New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Canada, and others. The Family History Library has microfilm copies of the records and indexes of these. See the *United States Research Outline* (30972) for more information about emigration and immigration records of the United States.

A bibliography of over 2,500 published lists of emigrants and immigrants is—

Filby, P. William. *Passenger and Immigrations Lists Bibliography, 1538-1900*, 2d ed. Detroit: Gale Research, 1988. (FHL book 973 W33p 1988; not on microfilm.) Text in English. Almost 2,000 of these lists are indexed in P. William Filby et al., *Passenger and Immigration Lists Index*, 13+ vols. Detroit: Gale Research, 1981-. (FHL book Ref 973 W33p; not on microfilm.) Text in English. This does not index official U.S. arrival lists. Many of the names are from post-1820 published sources.

Immigration lists. An example of a published list of emigrants from Canada to America with French ancestors is—

Dennisen, Christian. *Genealogy of the French Families of the Detroit River Region, 1701-1936*. Ed. Harold F. Powell. 2 vols. Detroit: Detroit Society for Genealogical Research, 1987. (FHL book 977.43 D2d 1987; not on microfilm.) Text in English.

Russia

In 1763 Catherine the Great of Russia offered free land, no taxes for 30 years, freedom of religion, and other incentives to west Europeans to settle her vast, sparsely populated domain. Dozens of German and French (Alsatian) colonies were established and grew until World War I. Many Russian Alsatians moved to the United States, Canada, or South America, beginning in 1874.

A French Protestant colony was established at Schabo in Bessarabia. The Family History Library has acquired several records of this colony, some in French and some in German. They are listed in the Family History Library Catalog, Locality section, under—

RUSSIAN EMPIRE, BESSARABIA, SCHABO-KOLONIE - CHURCH RECORDS
RUSSIAN EMPIRE, BESSARABIA, SCHABO-POSSAD (AKKERMAN) - CHURCH RECORDS

Since many Alsatians (people in Alsace-Lorraine, France) spoke more German than French, they were

often called Germans when they emigrated to other nations. For example, some of the “Germans from Russia” were actually from Alsace-Lorraine, instead of from Germany. See the library's separate publication, *Germany Research Outline* (34061), for important emigration records that include German-speaking Alsatians of France.

The single most valuable source for researching German-speaking families of Alsace-Lorraine who moved to Russia is—

Stumpp, Karl. *The Emigration from Germany to Russia in the Years 1763-1862*. Tübingen: Stumpp, 1972. (FHL book 943 W2sk; fiche 6000829; 1978 ed. on film 1,183,529). Text in English.

Southeast Europe

Starting in 1722 the Holy Roman emperors and Austro-Hungarian monarchs encouraged German and Alsatian settlement in their lands, especially along the devastated border with the Turks. Colonies developed in what later became Hungary, Romania, and Yugoslavia. Following World War II many settlers moved to the United States, Canada, Australia, Brazil, and other nations.

An index that helps find Alsatians in Southeast Europe is—

Brandt, Bruce. *Where to look for hard-to-find German-speaking ancestors in Eastern Europe: index to 19,720 surnames in 13 books, with historical background on each*, 2nd ed. Baltimore: Clearfield Co., 1993. (FHL book 943 H22b; not on microfilm.) Text in English. Surnames only. Includes index from five books about immigrants to Galicia, Austria, Hungary, the Banat, and Batschka.

Other Nations

Similar immigration records and indexes are available at the Library for most nations and states where French people settled. They are listed under the new nation or state in the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog under—

[NATION OR STATE] - EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION

You can also search the Subject section of the Family History Library Catalog under—
FRENCH - [NATION OR STATE]

See also the “Minorities” section of this outline.

Immigration into France

Significant numbers of immigrants moved to France during the following periods:

- 1618-1648. Many Swiss emigrants come into Alsace-Lorraine as a result of the Thirty Years War.
- 1755-1763. Acadians (French-Canadians) are exiled. Many return to France.
- 1848-1850. German revolutionaries take refuge in Bas-Rhin.
- 1831-1870. Polish refugees settle in Bas-Rhin.

Thousands of Mennonites came from Switzerland into Alsace. Some Swiss Protestants settled in the Montbéliard area. Many Italians immigrated into the south of France.

Unfortunately, there are very few immigration sources for France. Instead, look for emigration records of the nation from which your ancestor moved.

GAZETTEERS

A gazetteer is a dictionary of place-names. Gazetteers describe towns and villages, departments, provinces, rivers, mountains, sizes of population, and other geographical features. They include only the names of places that existed up to the time the gazetteer was published. The place-names are usually listed in alphabetical order, similar to a dictionary.

You can use a gazetteer to locate the places where your family lived and to determine the civil jurisdiction over those places. For example: Corbières (Ardèche) is a small village that belongs to the community of Gourdon.

Many places in France have the same or similar names. You will need to use a gazetteer to identify the specific village where your ancestor lived, the nearest town with a town hall [*mairie*] and registrar's office, the department [*département*] it was in, and the jurisdictions where records were kept. You will also need the name of the department when using the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog.

Finding Place-Names in the Family History Library Catalog

Place-names in the Family History Library Catalog are listed under the name of the department [*département*]. To find the department in which a local community [*commune*] is filed in the Family History Library Catalog, you can use the “see” references on the first few Family History Library Catalog microfiche for France. If you are using the catalog on compact disc, use the Locality Browse search. The computer will find places with that name.

A few records before 1792 may be listed under the name of their province. Provinces are labelled “region” in the catalog; for example, FRANCE, ANJOU (REGION) - BIOGRAPHY.

Paris area. France has reorganized the departments in the vicinity of Paris. New departments such as Essonne, Hauts-de-Seine, Paris, Seine-St.-Denis, Val-d'Oise, Val-de-Marne, and Yvelines were created to replace the older Seine and Seine-et-Oise. The Family History Library continues to use the older Seine and Seine-et-Oise in its catalog.

The rest of France. Because of the many changes in place-names, the Family History Library uses gazetteers as the guide for listing places in the Family History Library Catalog. Except in the old departments of Seine, Seine-et-Oise, and Basses-Alpes, French places are listed in the Family History Library Catalog by the name and department listed in—

Code officiel géographique 1985 (Directory of geographic codes). Paris: Impr. Nationale, 1985. (FHL book 944 E2co 1985; not on microfilm.) Arranged by department. Lists the numbers assigned to each department, canton, district [*arrondissement*] and community in France and overseas. These are NOT postal codes.

Since this gazetteer is arranged by department, you must know the department before you can use it easily. Therefore, some researchers prefer to use—

Dictionnaire National des Communes de France

(National dictionary of the communities of France). Paris: Albin-Michel, Berger-Levrault, 1984. (FHL book 944 E5di; not on microfilm.)

Localities in this gazetteer are listed in alphabetical order starting on page 203. Places in bold type are communities with a town hall [*mairie*] and its civil registrar's office. The information about each community is listed in the following order: community (in bold and all capitals), geographic code, department (in bold), *arrondissement* (ar.), canton (c.), tax office (perc.), number of houses (log.), population (h.), surface area in hectares (ha.), and postal code (in bold). A locality too small to have its own town hall and registrar's office is listed in italics. This is followed by its department (in bold) and the community (comm.) to which it belongs.

Modern Place-Names

For some research purposes, it is useful to learn modern jurisdictions for the area where your ancestors lived. It may also be helpful to find the ancestral town on modern maps. The following gazetteer can be found at some large libraries and archives:

Bottin des Communes (Bottin's gazetteer of communities). Paris: Didot-Bottin, 1991. (FHL book 944 E5b 1991; 1955 ed. on **fiche 6053519**.) This gazetteer gives a map and listing of each locality within a specific department. Searching a small department-by-department list of places makes it easier to find places for which you have a garbled spelling.

Historical Place-Names

Because names and boundaries of some places have changed or no longer exist, you may need to use sources that describe places as they were known earlier. Some of the historical national gazetteers that identify places in France are:

France. Administration Générale des Postes.

Dictionnaire des postes aux lettres (Dictionary of post offices). Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1845. Microfilmed at Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1983. (FHL film 1,344,020.) It lists the department immediately following the locality. The abbreviation **c^{ne}** shows its local community [*commune*]. Please do not confuse **c^{ne}** with **C^{on}**, which means *canton*. The last locality in italics refers to the post office in 1845. Many of these place names still exist today.

Guyot, M. ***Dictionnaire géographique et universel des postes et du commerce*** . . . (Gazetteer of France). Paris: Guillot, 1787. Microfilmed at Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale. Service Photographique, [19--]. (FHL **film 418,114**.) Contains the names of towns, villages, parishes, castles, and other places in the kingdom of France. Also gives the name of the province where these are located and the distance to the nearest post office.

These sources are listed in the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog under FRANCE - GAZETTEERS. Gazetteers and similar guides to place-names for some departments are listed under FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT] - GAZETTEERS.

GENEALOGY

The term *genealogy* is used in this outline and in the Family History Library Catalog to describe a variety of records containing family information gathered by individuals, other researchers, societies, or archives. These records may include pedigree charts, compiled information on families, correspondence, ancestor lists, research exchange files, record abstracts, and collections of original or copied documents. These can be excellent sources of information that can save you valuable time. Because they are compiled from

other sources of information, they must be carefully evaluated for accuracy.

Additional sources of genealogy for noble families in France are described in the "Nobility" section of this outline.

Major Collections and Databases

Several large databases contain previous research or can lead you to others who are interested in sharing family information. These sources include—

- ***International Genealogical Index***. The index provides names and vital information for over 3.4 million deceased persons who lived in France. This valuable research tool lists birth, christening, or marriage dates. The index for France includes names extracted from parish registers by volunteers and names submitted by other researchers.

The International Genealogical Index is available on microfiche and on compact disc as part of FamilySearch. If you are using the microfiche, search under FRANCE. If you are using the compact disc edition, however, you will have to search for France under CONTINENTAL EUROPE. The 1992 International Genealogical Index contains about 187 million names, including almost 3 million French names. For more information on FamilySearch, see page 5.
- ***Ancestral File***. This file, part of FamilySearch (see p. 5), contains family history information linked in family groups and pedigrees that has been contributed since 1979. As of 1993, the file contains the names of 15 million people, including thousands of French families. On Ancestral File you can print pedigree charts, family group records, and individual summary sheets for any person in the file.
- ***Family Group Records Collection***. More than 8 million family group record forms have been microfilmed in the Family Group Records Collection. This collection includes many French families. There are two major sections: the Archive Section and the Patron Section. The film numbers for both sections are listed in the Author/Title section of the Family History Library Catalog under FAMILY GROUP RECORDS COLLECTION.
- ***Minitel***. This French commercial computer network is available in the United States and includes French telephone directories, a computer mail box, genealogical society addresses, marriage indexes, and research advice. See the "Archives and Libraries" section of this outline for details.
- ***Nordbib***. An organization called the Genealogical and Historical Sources of the Provinces of Nord [*Sources généalogiques et historiques des provinces*

du nord] has created a computer database of genealogical and historical sources for the area of northern France and southern Belgium. Researchers can search *Nordbib* for surnames and receive bibliographic citations from over 4,000 sources. To search *Nordbib* contact—

Union Régionale des Associations
Généalogiques du Nord et du Pas-de-Calais
133 rue de Silly
92100 Boulogne
FRANCE
Telephone 1-46-03-45-24

- *Géopatronyme*. The Public Library of Information in Paris has a computer database that lists the modern surnames of France. Researchers enter a surname into the computer and each department with ten or more persons with that surname will be shown on a map of France. The number of names in that department will also be shown. The names are apparently from telephone directories. This helps researchers locate the most likely departments to search for uncommon surnames.

Family Histories

Some French families have produced histories or newsletters that may include genealogical information, biographies, photographs, and other excellent information. These usually include several generations of the family.

The Family History Library has only a limited number of published French family histories and newsletters. These are listed in the Surname section of the Family History Library Catalog. Not every name found in a family history will be listed in the catalog; only the major surnames discussed in the family history are included.

Unpublished family histories are sometimes found in the possession of private individuals in France. These persons may have collected a variety of records about their own families. But such materials are accessible only by contacting the appropriate individual. Local genealogical societies can often help locate such collections.

Many French family histories are indexed in—

Arnaud, Étienne. *Répertoire de généalogies françaises imprimées* (French genealogical bibliography). 3 vols. Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1978-1982. (FHL book 944 D23a; not on microfilm.) This book indexes many periodical articles and published genealogies. Each listing cites a home area in France. The source reference is shown in an abbreviated form. Each source has to be looked up at the beginning of the volume in the list of list of abbreviations [*Liste des sigles*]. The reference number given after the

name of the author and the name of the source is the call number at the National Library. The Family History Library has a few of the sources found in the Author/Title section of the Family History Library Catalog.

Family Civil Registration Booklets

After 1877 the civil registrar gave a booklet [*livret de famille*] to each couple whose marriage he performed. For details, see page 21.

Genealogical Collections

The Family History Library has some collections of genealogical material for French families. These may include published and unpublished collections of family histories and lineages, as well as the research files of prominent, recognized genealogists.

A major genealogical collection is—

Andriveau, B. (Bernard). *Archives privées* (Private collection). Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1966-1967. (FHL film 1,147,628-1,147,978, 1,296,501-1,297,226; computer number 37619.)

This is a manuscript card index of parish registers (1700-1891) of twenty-five large French and Belgian cities on 1068 rolls of microfilm. The films circulate only to family history centers outside Europe. The collection contains mostly marriages. It usually gives the name of the bride or groom, birthplace, birth date, spouse, and parents. The sections for Paris also include indexes of baptisms, deaths, and marriage contracts.

Some of the information for Paris may have been extracted from the original records before the fire that destroyed most of the pre-1860 Paris records. This collection can be used to help locate the general area of a surname in France.

Each city has its own separate index. Paris baptisms, marriages, and deaths are listed at the beginning of the Family History Library Catalog entry. Paris marriage contracts are listed at the end.

Genealogical collections are listed in the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog under—

FRANCE - GENEALOGY
FRANCE - [DEPARTMENT] - GENEALOGY
FRANCE - [PROVINCE] (REGION) -
GENEALOGY

If you find your surname in any of the sources described in this section, determine whether the entry actually pertains to your family. All people with the same surname are not necessarily related. Often, you will have to do some original research before you can connect your ancestry to families listed in these sources. Many of the films are out of focus.

HERALDRY

In France only the noble classes originally had coats of arms. But little was done to prevent the spread of heraldry to French burgher, artisan, and peasant classes. In 1696 the king, to raise money, ordered everyone who bore arms to register them. Even those who did not bear arms were forced to buy them. Arms registrations were documented.

Various authors in France have prepared armorial or heraldry books. An *armorial* is a collection of descriptions of coats of arms and the families that bear them. It also briefly describes their entitlement to that coat of arms. It may also note early bearers of that coat of arms, sometimes with relationships, birth dates, and other genealogical information. Each armorial will differ from others and will include different names. Some minor noble families are not included in any books. The following sources are of particular interest in France:

Jouglar de Morenas, Henri. *Grand armorial de France* (Great armorial of France). 7 vols. Paris: Editions Héraldiques, 1934-1952. (FHL Q book 944 D22j; fiche 661990-661993.)

Rietstap, Johannes Baptist. *Armorial Général*. 2 vols. Gouda: G.B. van Goor Zonen, 1887. Reprinted Berlin: J.S. Stargardt, 1934, and New York: Barnes and Noble, 1965. (FHL book 940 D6r; film 1,045,393 items 2-4, and 1,045,394.)

The Family History Library has collected many armorials. These are listed in the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog under FRANCE - HERALDRY. For information about noble ancestors, look in the catalog under FRANCE - NOBILITY. In addition, such families are often subjects of published genealogical books or articles. See the "Genealogy" and "Nobility" sections of this outline.

HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

This section describes the changes that have taken place in the provincial and departmental structure of France. It describes the jurisdictions used in the Family History Library Catalog.

The boundaries of France have changed frequently. Genoa (now part of Italy) sold the island of Corse to France in 1768. France controlled the Duchy of Savoie and County of Nice from 1792 to 1814 and permanently after 1860. Alsace-Lorraine (basically Moselle, Bas-Rhin, Haut-Rhin) has been an area disputed over the centuries between France and Germany. France lost Alsace-Lorraine in 1871 and regained it in 1914. In the seventeenth century, France acquired a number of cities in Flanders from Belgium.

Before 1789 France was divided into provinces, referred to as "regions" in the Family History Library Catalog. The French revolutionary government reorganized France into new territorial divisions called departments [*départements*].

In 1966 France changed the departments in the vicinity of Paris. New departments such as Essonne, Hauts-de-Seine, Paris, Seine-St.-Denis, Val-d'Oise, Val-de-Marne, and Yvelines were created to replace the older Seine and Seine-et-Oise departments. In southeast France, the department of Basses-Alpes was changed in 1970 to Alpes-de-Haute-Provence. Côtes-du-Nord, in the northwest, was recently changed to Côtes-d'Armor. The Family History Library continues to use the older Seine, Seine-et-Oise, Basses-Alpes, and Côtes-du-Nord departments in its catalog.

Departments were smaller than the old provinces. Each department was divided into several districts [*arrondissements*] and each district was divided into several cantons.

During the French Revolution, starting in 1789 and for a few years afterward, names of towns containing the name Saint or God were temporarily changed to nonreligious names. For example, *Dieulouard* became *Scarponne* for a few years.

The following book explains more about the historical geography of France. You can find this and similar material at the Family History Library and many other research libraries.

Mirot, Léon. *Manuel de géographie historique de la France* (Historical geography of France). 2 vols. Paris: Picard, 1980. (FHL book 944 E2m; not on microfilm.)

Other sources about boundary changes are found in the Family History Library Catalog under—

FRANCE - HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY
FRANCE - HISTORY
FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT] - HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY
FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT] - HISTORY
FRANCE, [PROVINCE] (REGION) - HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY
FRANCE, [PROVINCE] (REGION) - HISTORY

HISTORY

Effective family research requires some understanding of the historical events that may have affected your family and the records about them. Learning about wars, governments, laws, migrations, and religious trends may help you understand political boundaries, family movements, and settlement patterns. These events may

have led to the creation of records such as land and military documents that mention your family.

Your ancestors will become more interesting to you if you also use histories to learn about the events in which they may have participated. For example, by using a history you might learn about the events that occurred in the year your great grandparents were married.

Some key dates and events in the history of France are as follows:

- 1334 Earliest Roman Catholic parish register in France begins.
- 1348 Black plague kills one third of the French population.
- 1572 Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre. Many Protestants flee France.
- 1579 Parish register of marriages and deaths required.
- 1598 Edict of Nantes (Protestants granted religious freedom).
- 1632 French begin settling Quebec and Acadia (Canada).
- 1685 Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which causes many Protestants to leave France.
- 1722 First wave of settlers begins moving from Alsace-Lorraine to colonies in the Banat (Austria-Hungary, in southeastern Europe).
- 1755 French Acadians (Canadians) deported by the British.
- 1764 First wave of settlers begins moving from Alsace-Lorraine to colonies in Russia and the Ukraine.
- 1787 Edict of Tolerance grants freedom of religion to the Protestants and Jews.
- 1789 French revolution. Half a million refugees flee.
- 1792 French civil registration started.
- 1808 Jews required to take a fixed family surname in addition to their given name.
- 1870 Franco-Prussian War. Alsace-Lorraine annexed by Germany.

The Family History Library has some published provincial and departmental histories for France. You can find histories in the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog under one of the following:

EUROPE - HISTORY
 FRANCE - HISTORY
 FRANCE, [PROVINCE] (REGION) - HISTORY
 FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT] - HISTORY
 FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT], [CITY] - HISTORY

Several encyclopedias give good summaries of the history of France. Books with film numbers can be ordered through local family history centers. They may also be found in major research libraries. The following is only one of many historical books available:

Guizot, François Pierre Guillaume. *History of France*. 8 vols. New York and London: Co-operative Publication Society, 1869. (FHL book 944 H2g; film 1,573,087 item 3 [v. 1]; film 1,181,964 [v. 2-7]; film 1,181,965 [v. 8].) Text in English.

Local Histories

Some of the most valuable sources for family history research are local histories. They give details about the history of the area, the population, immigration, wars and destruction, pestilences, natural disasters, names of some of the residents, social life in early times, traditions, invasions, and religious persecutions. Even if your ancestor is not listed, information on local history or other relatives may provide important clues for locating the ancestor. The bibliography may also mention other authors or earlier histories important for the area.

In addition, local histories should be studied and enjoyed for the background information they can provide about your family's lifestyle and the community and environment in which your family lived.

For some localities, there may be more than one history. Although relatively few local histories have been published for towns or departments in France, a careful search for available histories of your ancestor's locality is worthwhile.

The Family History Library has some local histories for towns in France. Similar histories are often available at major public and university libraries and archives.

Bibliographies that list local histories are available for some provinces or departments of France. These are listed in the Locality section of the Family History

Library Catalog under—
 FRANCE, [PROVINCE] (REGION) -
 BIBLIOGRAPHY
 FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT] - BIBLIOGRAPHY
 FRANCE - HISTORY - BIBLIOGRAPHY
 FRANCE, [PROVINCE] (REGION) - HISTORY -
 BIBLIOGRAPHY
 FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT] - HISTORY -
 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Calendar Changes

The Gregorian calendar is the calendar in common use in the world today. It is a correction of the Julian calendar, which had been in use since A.D. 46. Leap years had been miscalculated in the Julian calendar. By 1582, the calendar was ten days behind the solar year.

In France, the last day of the Julian calendar was 9 Dec 1582. At that time, ten days were omitted to bring the calendar in line with the solar year. The day after 9 December 1582 was 20 December 1582.

During the years 1793 to 1805, another calendar was introduced. This calendar was based on the founding of the French Republic and used a system of months unrelated to the regular calendar. See the library's *French Republican Calendar* resource guide.

LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGES

Most materials used in French research are written in French. However, you do not need to speak or read French to do research in French records. You merely need to know some key numbers, words, and phrases to understand the records.

Infrequently you may find other languages in French records. These include Latin, German, Italian, and Breton. Latin is sometimes found in Roman Catholic parish registers, but it is unusual to find it in baptism, marriage, and burial records, except in Alsace-Lorraine. German is also frequently found in records from Alsace-Lorraine. Records from Corse, especially before 1768, may be in Italian. Some records from Savoie and Nice are in Italian, especially before 1792 and from 1815-1859. Breton is spoken in Bretagne but is only rarely found in records useful to family historians.

French grammar and customs may affect the way names appear in genealogical records. For example, the names of your ancestor may vary from record to record in French. For help in understanding name variations, see the "Names, Personal" section of this outline.

Language Aids

The Family History Library has genealogical word lists for French, German, and Latin. The French list is found in the Author/Title section of the Family History Library Catalog under—

French: Genealogical Word List. Salt Lake City: Family History Library, 1990. (FHL book 929.1 F21wL; fiche 6105236.) Contains French words of value in genealogical research translated into English.

The Family History Library's separate *Germany Research Outline* (34061) includes an example of the German (Gothic) alphabet in print and handwriting.

The following books and English-French dictionaries can also help you in your research. You can find these and similar material at many research libraries.

French records extraction. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, [198-?]. (FHL book 944 D27f; fiche 6068523.) Text in English. Shows examples of French civil and parish records, translations of common words found in them, personal name lists, and handwriting examples.

New Cassell's French dictionary: French-English, English-French. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1970. (FHL book 443.21 C272; not on microfilm.)

Additional language aids (including dictionaries of various dialects and time periods) are listed in the Family History Library Catalog in the Locality section under FRANCE - LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGES or in the Subject section under FRENCH LANGUAGE - DICTIONARIES.

MAPS

Maps are an important source to locate the places where your ancestors lived. They help you see the neighboring towns and geographic features of the area your ancestor came from.

Maps locate places, churches, geographical features, transportation routes, and proximity to other towns. Historical maps are especially useful for understanding boundary changes.

Maps are published individually, or in atlases. An atlas is a bound collection of maps. Maps may also be included in gazetteers, guidebooks, local histories, and history texts.

Different types of maps will help you in different ways. Historical atlases describe the growth and development of nations. They show boundaries, migration routes, settlement patterns, military campaigns, and other historical information. French road atlases provide useful details. Other types of maps include departmental maps, topographical maps, and road maps. Maps show townships in great detail up to one-half inch to the mile. City street maps can be helpful when researching in the parish registers of large cities such as Lyon.

Using Maps

Maps must be used carefully for several reasons:

- Often several places have the same name. For example, at least ten towns are called Saint-Clément in present-day France.
- Not every town is on every map.
- The spelling and even names of some towns may have changed since your ancestors lived there. For example, *Crantenoy* became *Mesnils sur Madon (Les)* in 1971.

- Some localities have different names in different languages. For example, the French town of *Sélestat* is called *Schlettstadt* in German. *Bretagne* is spelled *Brittany* in English.
- Political boundaries are not clearly indicated on all maps.
- Complete listings of localities in the old provinces or dioceses are difficult to find.

Finding the Specific Town on the Map

To do successful research in France, you must identify the town where your ancestor lived. Because many towns have the same name, you may need some additional information before you can locate the correct town on a map. You will be more successful if you have some information about the town. Before using a map, search gazetteers, histories, family records, and other sources to learn all you can about the following:

- The canton, district [*arrondissement*], department [*département*], province, or parish, and diocese [*diocèse*] your ancestor's town was in.
- The name of the town where your ancestor was born or married.
- Towns where related ancestors lived.
- The size of the town.
- The occupation of your ancestor or his relatives (this may indicate the size or industries of the town), or nearby localities, such as large cities.
- Nearby features, such as rivers and mountains.
- Dates when the town was renamed.
- Other names the town was known by.

Use gazetteers to identify the department or canton your ancestor's town was in. This will distinguish it from other towns of the same name and help you locate it on a map. See the "Gazetteers" section of this outline.

Finding Maps and Atlases

Collections of maps and atlases are available at numerous historical societies and at public and university libraries.

The Family History Library has an excellent collection of French maps and atlases. These are listed in the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog under:

FRANCE - MAPS.

Some helpful maps at the Family History Library are—

Cassini de Thury, César François. *Carte de France* (Map of France). Paris: [s.n.], 1759-1789. Microfiched at Washington, DC: LC Photoduplication Service, 1985. (FHL fiche 6002154 part 1 to 186.) Scale 1: 86,400.

Institut Géographique National (France). *Cartes topographique [de France]* (Topographic maps of France). Paris: Institut Géographique National, 1984. (FHL Map 944 E7ig; not on microfilm.) Scale 1: 100,000.

Helpful atlases for France are—

Grand atlas routier, France, Belgique (Road atlas of France and Belgium). Paris: Editions Solar, 1986. (FHL book 944 E7g; not on microfilm.) Includes Luxembourg. Scale 1: 250,000.

See also the "Gazetteer" and "Historical Geography" sections of this outline.

You can purchase maps of France from—

Genealogy Unlimited
P.O. Box 537
Orem, UT 84059-0537
USA
Telephone 800-666-4363

MILITARY RECORDS

Military records identify individuals who served in the military or who were eligible for service. Most young men were required to serve in or register for military service in France. Evidence that an ancestor actually served may be found in family records, civil registrations, biographies, censuses, probate records, military conscription records, and church records.

Some French military records begin as early as the 1500s. They may give information about an ancestor's military career, such as promotions, places served, pensions, and conduct. In addition, these records may include information about his age, birthplace, residence, occupation, physical description, and family members.

The records you will find include—

- Conscription records (in the 1800s).
- Muster rolls.
- Personnel files.
- Regimental files.
- Lists of officers
- Pension records.
- Correspondence.

Many of these records have been centralized at the Military Archives in Vincennes, but the conscription records are kept at the departmental archives. The

Family History Library has not filmed military records, except for a few conscription records in the department of Bas-Rhin from 1817 to 1856.

Although military records have genealogical information, they are rarely used in French research because they are difficult to access and few are indexed. Military records are kept confidential for 120 years from the soldier's birth. Other sources (such as church records and civil registration) are more easily available and contain much of the same information.

To use French military records, you will have to determine the soldier's specific regiment or ship the sailor served on. If you do not know this information, it may be possible to learn which units were raised in the area where your ancestor lived. To do this, you must know at least the district [*arrondissement*] where the individual was living when he was of age to serve in the military.

Military Records of Genealogical Value

Military censuses or conscription records may help determine where a person was from. They are not indexed. They are compiled year by year and listed alphabetically in each locality for men who are age 19 and 20. The towns are grouped in cantons and districts. Each department has several districts. Because of this, a search of conscription records can be time consuming. You will need your relative's birth year and birth department before hiring somebody to search conscription records in departmental archives.

Records of French troop assignments [*contrôles de troupes*] start in 1716. They are arranged by regiment name and the date each company in the regiment was raised. The list shows where the company was raised, commanders, and number of men. It cites the archive number of the company's records and the types of information in the records (such as names of parents and dates and places of birth). Troop assignments from 1716 to 1789 are listed in—

Corvisier, André. *Les contrôles des troupes de l'Ancien Régime* (Troop assignments of the Ancien Régime). 4 vols. [S.n.]: Concours du C.N.R.S., 1970. (FHL book 944 M23c; not on microfilm.) Volume 2 infantry; Volume 3 cavalry, artillery, militia, French guards, Swiss troops, disabled companies, and colonial navy; Volume 4 indexes by name of the regiment, commanders, or company.

The military archives in Vincennes have not been microfilmed. The archivists occasionally answer letters, but you must know the exact name of the person, time period, rank, and regiment or ship. Do not expect to obtain much information from before 1800.

The following books help you locate French military records:

France. Archives nationales. *Archives de la marine, série B service général* (Navy archive index) Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1969. (FHL book 944 A3fn; film 962,225 item 2.) Alphabetical index to places, names, subjects, and ships mentioned in subseries B 1-3.

France. Ministère de la Marine. *Officiers civils, 1645-1817* (Index of civilian officers attached to the French navy). Paris: Chadwyck-Healey France, 1988. (FHL fiche 6002208.)

Bodinier, Gilbert. *Dictionnaire des officiers de l'armée royale qui ont combattu aux Etats-Unis pendant la guerre d'Indépendance 1776-1783* (Officers in the Royal French Army who fought in the United States during the American War for Independence, 1776-1783). Vincennes: Service historique de l'armée de terre, 1983. (FHL book 944 M2b; not on microfilm.)

Les combattants français de la guerre américaine, 1778-1783 (French soldiers in the American Revolution). Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 1969. Originally published as: United States Congress. 58th Congress, 2d. Session. Senate. Document no. 77. (FHL Q book 944 M2cf; film 547,088 item 5.) Includes index.

Military History

France was involved in many military actions, including—

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 1618-48 | <i>Thirty Years War</i> . Many records destroyed in eastern France. Severe devastation in German areas. |
| 1756-63 | <i>Seven Years War</i> (French and Indian War). Britain consolidates colonial power at the expense of France. |
| 1778-83 | French intervention in the <i>American Revolution</i> . |
| 1792-1800 | <i>French Revolutionary Wars</i> . France invaded Germany and Italy. |
| 1800-15 | <i>Napoleonic Wars</i> surge back and forth across Europe. |
| 1853-56 | <i>Crimean War</i> . France, Britain, Turkey fight Russia. |
| 1870-71 | <i>Franco-Prussian War</i> . Alsace-Lorraine lost. |
| 1914-18 | <i>World War I</i> . France regains Alsace-Lorraine. |

For more historical information about the French military campaigns, use—

Dupuy, R. Earnest, and Trevor N. Dupuy.
Encyclopedia of Military History: From 3500 B.C. to the Present. (Rev. ed.) London, Sidney: Jane's Publishing, 1980. (FHL book 355.033 D929e; not on microfilm.) Text in English.

Additional military histories are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under—

FRANCE - MILITARY HISTORY
 FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT] - MILITARY HISTORY
 FRANCE, [PROVINCE] (REGION) - MILITARY HISTORY

MINORITIES

France has had many ethnic and religious minorities, including Germans, Swiss, Italians, Protestants, Jews, Gypsies, and Mennonites. It's important to learn the history of the ethnic, racial, and religious groups your ancestors belonged to. For example, you might study a history of the Protestants in France, Jews in Alsace, or Mennonites in Alsace-Lorraine and Montbéliard. This historical background can help you identify where your ancestors lived and when they lived there, where they migrated, the types of records where they might be listed, and other information to help you understand your family's history.

For most minorities in France there are some unique records and resources available. These include histories, inventories, biographical sources, settlement patterns, handbooks, and genealogical societies.

The Family History Library collects records of these groups, especially published histories. These are listed in the Family History Library Catalog, Locality section, under—

FRANCE - MINORITIES
 FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT] - MINORITIES
 FRANCE, [PROVINCE] (REGION) - MINORITIES
 FRANCE - JEWISH HISTORY

Other sources are also in the Subject section of the Family History Library Catalog under the name of the minority, such as HUGUENOTS, JEWS, GERMANS, or MENNONITES. Some sources are listed under [MINORITY] - FRANCE. Examples of these books are—

Mathiot, Charles. *Recherches historiques sur les Anabaptistes de l'ancienne principauté de Montbéliard, d'Alsace, et des régions voisines* (Historical research regarding the Anabaptists [Mennonites] of Montbéliard, Alsace, and nearby regions). Belfort: Mission Intérieure luthérienne de Montbéliard, 1922. (FHL film 1,071,437 item 2.)

Scheid, Elie. *Histoire des Juifs d'Alsace* (History of the Jews of Alsace). Paris: Librairie Armand Durlacher, 1887. Reprint. Strasbourg: Willy Fischer, 1975. (FHL book 944.383 F2; film 1,184,064 item 5.)

The Family History Library also has many books about French people in other nations or states. These are listed in the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog under [NATION OR STATE] - MINORITIES and in the Subject section under FRENCH - [NATION OR STATE]. Additional examples of Subject section headings about French people in foreign lands include—

ACADIANS
 CAJUNS - LOUISIANA
 CREOLES - MISSOURI
 FRENCH-CANADIANS - MAINE
 HUGUENOTS - GERMANY

In nations to which members of French ethnic or religious groups went, various local and national societies have been organized to gather, preserve, and share the cultural contributions and histories of their groups. Some examples are the various French-Canadian and Huguenot communities in North America. See the "Societies" section of this outline.

See the "Church History" and "Church Records" sections of this outline for more information about Huguenots, Mennonites, and other Christian religious minorities.

NAMES, PERSONAL

Understanding surnames and given names can help you find and identify your ancestors in the records.

Surnames

Before the 1200s most people had only one name, such as John [*Jean*]. As the population increased, it became necessary to distinguish between individuals with the same name. The problem was usually solved by adding descriptive information. John became John the stout [*Jean Le Gros*] or John from the town of Dieulouard [*Jean Dieulouard*]. At first, "surnames" applied only to one person and not to the whole family. After a few generations, these names became hereditary and were used from father to son.

Surnames were developed from several major sources:

- Names of saints or persons from the Bible, such as David or Martin.
- Occupational names based on the person's trade, such as merchant [*Marchand*].
- Descriptive nicknames, such as Little John [*Petitjean*].

Names, Personal

- Geographical names based on a person's residence such as forest [*Dubois*] or "from Burgundy province" [*de Bourgogne*].

Surnames were first used by the nobility and wealthy land owners. Later the custom was followed by merchants and townspeople and eventually by the rural population. This process took two or three centuries. In France, the practice was well established by the 1200s.

Since 1539 the law that required priests to write baptism registers also required them to write the surname next to the baptismal name. In the 1700s researchers often find a name written various ways in the same document. But by 1808, especially in civil registration, the spelling of surnames became fixed.

Jewish Naming Customs. Before 1808, the use of a family name by Jews was left to the discretion of the individual. Most Jews in France followed the custom of using only a given name and the father's name, such as Isaac, son of Abraham. Occasionally the name of the town where the person lived was used, as in Isaac of Metz.

Most Jews did not adopt hereditary family names until required to do so by law. In 1808 Napoléon made Jews take a fixed surname. They were required to register their surnames and some of these surname registers still exist. They are usually at the departmental archives.

Double surnames. In some areas of France, especially in the mountainous regions of the Alps and the Pyrénées, individuals may have taken a second (double) surname. The first part of the surname is usually the family surname. The second part of the surname may be a place, a house name, or a nickname. Examples of double surnames are—

Lavit-Jeantoy
Dupraz-Canard
Raffin-Varende

Alias names. A few people, most often soldiers or sailors, took a second surname preceded by "so-called" [*dit*]. Sometimes the individual adopted the *dit* name as the family name, and dropped the original surname. For example, the surname HURNON dit LAJOIE may be listed in these ways:

HURNON
HURNON dit LAJOIE
HURNON-LAJOE
LAJOIE

Nobility names. Noble families often have several surnames, including one referring to the fief; for example, Chandon de Briailles, de Bourbon de Vendôme, or Dubois d'Ernemont.

Official Name Changes. Starting in 1474 anyone who wished to change his name was required to get permission from the King. Official name changes are indexed in—

Jérôme, archiviste. *Dictionnaire des changements de noms de 1803 à 1956* (Dictionary of changed names from 1803 to 1956). Paris: Librairie Française, 1974. (FHL book 944 D4j 1974; not on microfilm.)

French Names in Other Languages

French genealogical records may be in various languages: French, German, Latin, or Italian. Your ancestor's name could be in Latin in his birth record, in French in his marriage record, and in German on his death record. Given names are often very different when translated into different languages; for example—

Latin	French	German
Deodata	Dieudonné	Theodor
Stephanus	Etienne	Stephan
Guilhelmus	Guillaume	Wilhelm
Jacobus	Jacques	Jacob

Given names are translated into 23 different European languages, including English, in this book—

Janowowa, Wanda, et al. *Słownik Imion* (Dictionary of Names). Wrocław: Ossoliński, 1975. (FHL book 940 D4si; film 1,181,578 item 2; fiche 6000839.)

Given Names

Children were usually given two, three, four, or more given names. Some of these may be the names of parents or other relatives. Baptism names may be different from the names given in civil registration. They may not have been used later in the child's life.

Many given names have variants and dialectical forms. Dominique may also be found as Demange. Isabelle may be called Babet. An example of a book about name meanings, variants, and places of origin is—

Morlet, Marie-Thérèse. *Dictionnaire étymologique des noms de famille* (Etymological dictionary of surnames). Paris: Perrin, 1991. (FHL book 944 D46m; not on microfilm.)

See the "Archives and Libraries" section of this outline for information about *Géopatronyme*, a computerized file showing the frequency of surnames in each department of France.

Other books and microfilms about French names can be found in the Family History Library Catalog, Locality section, under—

FRANCE - NAMES, PERSONAL

NATURALIZATION AND CITIZENSHIP

In France before the 1789 revolution, everyone born outside of the kingdom was a foreigner even if born of French parents. All persons born in France, even of foreign parents, were French.

From the 1100s to 1789, citizenship was frequently limited to individual cities (burgess records) and associated with craft guilds. Burgess and guild records are available only for selected cities. They are difficult to find and use. Church records are usually more available and easier to use.

After 1789, naturalization applications concerning the whole of France are found in the judiciary series [*série judiciaire*] at the National Archives. An index to earlier naturalization records is—

France. Archives nationales. *Lettres de naturalité et de légitimation, 1674-1787; table alphabétique* (Index to naturalizations and legitimations 1674-1787). Paris: Chadwyck-Healey, 1988. (FHL **fiche 6002227**.) The index lists names, place of origin (nation or city), year of naturalization, and source reference.

In 1871 Alsace-Lorraine was annexed by Germany. Some of the former residents of Alsace-Lorraine declared their preference for French citizenship. Three hundred ninety-five alphabetical, printed lists of these declarations were published in—

France. Ministère de la Justice. *Bulletin des lois de la République française* (Lists of persons preferring French citizenship). Paris: Imp. Nationale, 1872. (FHL **film 787,154-787,166**.) These lists help locate where a particular surname appeared in Alsace-Lorraine in 1872. They give name, birth date, birthplace, residence, date of the declaration, and notes. These lists include about 950,000 names.

NOBILITY

The nobility is a class of people that has special political and social status. Nobility is inherited or is granted by the king as a reward to persons who perform a heroic deed, achieve greatness in some endeavor, or hold a prominent government position. French nobility has a well-defined order. The highest noblemen are **peers** [*pairs*], which include the titles (in descending rank) duke [*duc*], marquis, earl [*comte*], viscount [*vicomte*], and baron. This is followed by the **gentry** [*petite noblesse*], whose titles

are knight [*chevalier*], esquire [*écuyer*], and gentleman [*gentilhomme*]. Both peers and gentry are entitled to coats of arms.

Most family traditions of a noble ancestor turn out, on investigation, to have little foundation in fact. Very few members of the noble class emigrated to the United States. In addition, contrary to prevailing opinion, it was *not* customary to disown members of noble families for unacceptable behavior. Thus, traditions of an ancestor's being "erased" or eliminated from "all records" are unfounded.

Illegitimate children, though not entitled to noble status, often were recorded (although the father may not have been named) and can be found in the records.

If your research in the original records of France indicates that your ancestor was of the noble class, additional records, such as those described below, will be helpful in your research.

Grants of nobility were documented. Because of frequent false claims to nobility, families had to legitimize (provide documentary proof of) their nobility. Grants of nobility and nobility legitimizations are kept at the National Archives, the National Library, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, and departmental archives.

Although some original records (such as the grant of nobility) are still in existence, you can adequately accomplish most nobility research in secondary sources. These include published or manuscript genealogies of noble families. The noble class has been anxious to preserve its identity. This has led to the publication of many noble lines of France. Hundreds of publications are available to help you trace a French noble family. Some of the most important are—

Arnaud, Étienne. *Répertoire de généalogies françaises imprimées*. See the "Genealogy" section for a full citation.

Saffroy, Gaston. *Bibliographie généalogique héraldique et nobiliaire de la France des origines à nos jours, imprimés et manuscrits* (Bibliography of genealogy, heraldry and nobility of France). 5 vols. Paris: Saffroy, 1968-1988. (FHL book 944 D23s; not on microfilm.)

See also the "Heraldry" and "Genealogy" sections of this outline. The Family History Library has collected many records of noble families. these records are listed in the Family History Library Catalog, Locality section, under—

FRANCE - NOBILITY

FRANCE, [PROVINCE] (REGION) - NOBILITY

FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT] - NOBILITY

NOTARIAL RECORDS

Notarial records [*actes notariés* or *minutes de notaire*] are records prepared by a notary [*notaire* or *protonotaire* or *tabellion*]. Notaries are important officials in France and other nations where a civil code based on Roman law is in force. Among other matters, notarial records deal with estates and inheritances. They are somewhat equivalent to probate records of the United States, but they include more document types.

Notarial records cover an early time period, sometimes earlier than church records and civil registration. They often provide a great deal of genealogical information about the people listed in them. However, they are very difficult to find and they are difficult to use unless they are indexed.

Availability

Notarial records were made in all areas of France and its colonies. Researchers sometimes use notarial records from as early as the 1300s.

Notaries are required to deposit records more than 125 years old in the departmental archives, but compliance with this rule is incomplete. Most French notarial records are not indexed. In order to use the records, it helps to know or guess who the notary was, where he lived, and when the document was created.

Many notarial records have been deposited in departmental archives in bundles or boxes arranged by the name of the notary and his town of residence. Most of them have to be searched systematically one by one. In some areas, there may be some indexes. Other notarial records may still be in the office of the notary's successor.

The records of each notary are usually arranged chronologically, so records of most value to the family historian are mixed with other written agreements, including conveyances of land and other property, bonds for the payment of money, and partnerships.

Notarial Record Types

In France the legal profession is divided into notaries [*notaires*] and lawyers [*avocats*]. Lawyers handle legal disputes, but notaries prepare acts and contracts and certify authentic copies of them. Some important notarial records are—

- Marriage contracts [*contrats de mariage*].
- Wills [*testaments*].
- Division of property among heirs [*partages* and *successions*].

- Household inventories taken after someone's death [*inventaires des biens* or *inventaires après décès*].
- Guardianship agreements [*actes de tutelle*] providing for the care of minor children at the death of one or both spouses.

In many of these documents, names and relationships of all family members and friends present at the drafting are given.

Search Strategies

It is often necessary to start with a list of the notaries for the area where your relatives lived. A list of notaries and when and where they worked should be available at the departmental archives. Note the dates when each notary served. Search among the records of notaries in the area at the time your relatives lived there.

A family did not always go to the nearest notary. They may have used an old friend of the family or a notary their parents and grandparents used. Not every family needed a notary, but when they did they often stayed with him through several generations. You may find many documents together concerning the same family.

It may be difficult and costly to hire someone to search notarial documents on your behalf in France. You may be able to hire a professional genealogist listed in a French genealogical periodical or offer to exchange research with another reader of a genealogical periodical in order to have notarial records searched for you.

Also, members of French genealogical associations sometimes compile and sell indexes of notarial records, especially marriage contracts. To know if the notarial records of a locality have been indexed, find the list of indexed records [*relevés*] in the local French genealogical society periodical, or write to the society. They may ask you to become a member of their society before they sell you a copy of their indexes.

Notarial records can be useful to complete a family history. They are a good substitute for missing parish registers before 1792. But search for civil registers first and parish registers second. Then check archive inventories for notarial records.

The Family History Library has only a few French notarial records in its collection. They are listed in the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog under—

FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT] - NOTARIAL
RECORDS
FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT], [TOWN] -
NOTARIAL RECORDS

PERIODICALS

Most genealogical and historical societies in North America and in France publish magazines and newsletters. The articles often include—

- Family genealogies and pedigrees.
- Transcripts or abstracts of local records.
- Helpful articles on research methodology.
- Information about local records, archives, and services.
- Book advertisements and book reviews.
- Queries or requests for information about specific ancestors that can help you contact other interested researchers.
- Offers to exchange genealogical research services.
- Advertisements of professional researchers.

North American Periodicals

There are more than 25 historical and genealogical societies that publish periodicals focusing on French immigrants to North America. These are often published quarterly and may focus on the immigrants to a particular region or state. Some major examples are—

Acadian Genealogy Exchange, 1972-. Published by Janet Jehn, Acadian Genealogy Exchange, 863 Wayman Branch Road, Covington, Kentucky 41015 USA. (FHL book 973 B2aca; not on microfilm.) Text in English. It includes Acadian/Cajun families in Canada, Louisiana, and anywhere else in the world.

Je me souviens (I remember), 1978-. Published by American French Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 2113, Pawtucket, RI 02861 USA. (FHL book 973 F25am; not on microfilm.) Text in English. Indexes available through Summer 1985.

Lifelines, 1984-. Published by Northern New York American Canadian Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 1256, Plattsburgh, NY 12901 USA. (FHL book 974.7 D25L; not on microfilm.) Text in English.

Les Voyageurs (The voyagers), 1980-. German-Acadian Coast Historical and Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 517, Destrahan, LA 70047 USA. (FHL book 976.33 D25L; fiche 6088746-6088753.) Text in English.

You can find additional genealogical periodicals about the French in North America by contacting the genealogical societies in the areas where your ancestors lived. See the “Societies” section of this

outline. The following book identifies most societies and some of their periodicals:

Bentley, Elizabeth Petty. *The Genealogist's Address Book*, Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 1995. (FHL book 973 D24ben; not on microfilm.) See the “Canadian,” “Creole,” “French,” and “Huguenot” sections.

Another way to identify genealogy periodicals about the French in North America is to search the Subject section of the Family History Library Catalog under the subject FRENCH - [NATION, STATE, OR PROVINCE], for example, FRENCH - UNITED STATES.

North American Periodical Index

Many magazines have annual or cumulative indexes. A major composite index to some French-Canadian and French-American family history periodicals is—

Periodical Source Index (PERSI). Ft. Wayne, Ind.: Allen Co. Public Library, 1987-. (FHL book 973 D25per; fiche 6016864.) This annual index begins with periodicals published in 1986. There is also a multivolume retrospective 1847-1985 index (FHL fiche 6016863). It indexes about 2,000 English-language and French-Canadian genealogy and local history periodicals published in North America. For Canada, articles are listed by record type within provinces. The families section indexes worldwide surnames alphabetically.

French Periodicals

Many societies and organizations in France publish genealogical periodicals. These are in French. Much of their content is devoted to compiled genealogies of native families. They also are an excellent place to publish queries or advertisements for a lost ancestor from a specific area of France. The last few pages of these periodicals usually include queries, research exchange offers and professional researchers' advertisements. Some major examples of national French genealogical periodicals are—

Héraldique et généalogie (Heraldry and genealogy), 1969-. Published by Héraldique et Généalogie, B.P. 526, 78005 Versailles Cedex, FRANCE. (FHL book 944 B2h; fiche 6312504.)

Gé[néalogie] Magazine (Genealogy Magazine), 1982-. Published by Editions Christian, 5, rue Alphonse Baudin, 75011 Paris, FRANCE. (FHL book 944 D25gm; not on microfilm.)

La revue française de généalogie (French Genealogical Review), 1979-. Published by La Revue, 12, rue Raymond-Poincaré, 55800 Revigny, FRANCE. (FHL book 944 D25r; not on microfilm.)

Periodicals

In addition, excellent departmental and regional periodicals are also available. These include, for example, *Généalogie Lorraine* (Genealogy of Lorraine), *Cercle généalogique de Languedoc* (Genealogical Society of Languedoc), and *Nord Généalogie* (Genealogy of Nord).

French genealogical periodicals about ethnic or religious minorities may also be useful. They include—

Cercle de Généalogie Juive (Jewish Genealogical Society). 1985-. Published by the Cercle de Généalogie Juive, Centre Edmond Fleg, 8bis rue de l'Eperon, 75006 Paris, FRANCE. (FHL book 944 D25b; not on microfilm.)

Cahiers du Centre de Généalogie Protestante (Notices of the Center for Protestant Genealogy). 1978-. Published by the Society for the History of French Protestantism [*Société de l'histoire du Protestantisme Français*] 54, rue des Saints-Pères, 75007 Paris, FRANCE. (FHL book 944 F25c; not on microfilm.)

Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français (Bulletin of the Society for the History of French Protestantism). 1852-. Published by the Society for the History of French Protestantism [*Société de l'histoire du Protestantisme Français*] 54, rue des Saints-Pères, 75007 Paris, FRANCE. (FHL book 944 B2sp, vol. 1-115; film 885,700-29 and 885,753-58. The index for volumes 1 to 114 is on FHL film 104,348.)

Indexes

Some periodicals have annual or cumulative indexes. Others publish directories of their members' research interests. Some have indexes on the French commercial computer network *Minitel* (see the “Archives and Libraries” section of this outline). French genealogical periodicals are the best place to learn about *Minitel's* genealogical services.

Obtaining Periodicals

Copies of periodicals are available from the local societies that publish them. Major genealogical societies and libraries with genealogical collections will have copies of many periodicals, particularly those representing the area they serve.

The Family History Library subscribes to numerous periodicals. These are listed in the Family History Library Catalog in several ways. If you know the title of a periodical, search the Author/Title section of the catalog. More than 50 French regional and departmental genealogical periodicals have titles that start with “*Cercle généalogique . . .*” (Genealogical

society . . .) To find periodicals in the Locality section of the catalog, use the following approaches:

FRANCE - GENEALOGY - PERIODICALS
FRANCE - HISTORY - PERIODICALS
FRANCE - PERIODICALS
FRANCE, [PROVINCE] (REGION) -
 GENEALOGY - PERIODICALS
FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT] - GENEALOGY -
 PERIODICALS

See also *La généalogie: histoire et pratique*, pages 296-306 (see the “For Further Reading” section of this outline). The name of the periodical is in italics after the name of the society.

Also see the “Societies” section of this outline.

PROBATE RECORDS

Probate records are legal records that describe the distribution of a person's estate after he or she dies. In France certain kinds of notarial records are used as probate records. See the “Notarial Records” section of this research outline.

SOCIETIES

There are many societies and organizations that may have information of value to your genealogical research in France, and in the nation to which your ancestor immigrated, especially the United States and Canada. You may find it helpful to join some of these societies and support their efforts.

Genealogical Societies

There are many genealogical societies which emphasize French research. Most of these societies publish helpful periodicals, transcripts, compiled genealogies, and may have special indexes, collections, and projects. Many publish queries about French ancestors or maintain a list of members' research interests. Some also help find immigrants to or from a specific area.

French Societies. There are an estimated 300 genealogical societies in France, representing about 50,000 genealogists and publishing about 100 periodicals. Most French departments have genealogical societies. French genealogical societies are often involved in indexing church records before 1792. Contact the society in the department where your ancestor lived. The following societies may be of interest:

Cercle Généalogique d'Alsace
5, rue Fischart
67000 Strasbourg
FRANCE

Union des Cercles Généalogiques et Héraldiques
de Normandie
B.P. 556
27005 Evreux Cedex
FRANCE

Societies outside France. There are often French genealogical societies in the nations to which French people immigrated. For example—

Quebec Family History Society
P.O. Box 1026
Point Claire, PQ G9A 5L2
CANADA

American-French Genealogical Society
P.O. Box 2113
Pawtucket, RI 02861
USA

Historical Societies

Historical societies can be valuable sources of information for French ancestors. Similar societies are found in nations where French emigrants settled. These often collect information about French immigrants. Some may have information about specific French individuals. Many societies have special collections of books and manuscript material for France that may be difficult to find in libraries and archives. For example, you may be interested in the services, activities, and collections of the following:

British Huguenot Society
c/o University College
Gower Street
London WC1E 6BT
ENGLAND

The Society for the History of French Protestantism has a library open to the public and will search their records for a donation:

Société de l'histoire du Protestantisme Français
54, rue des Saints-Pères
75007 Paris
FRANCE

The American Historical Society of Germans from Russia has information about German-speaking people from French Alsace-Lorraine:

American Historical Society of Germans from Russia
631 D Street
Lincoln, NE 68502-1199
USA

Fraternal Societies

Your ancestor or relative may have belonged to an association, lodge, or fraternal society whose membership is based on common interests, religion, or ethnicity. These societies were involved in political, social, and financial activities, including life and burial insurance.

Several sources, such as local histories, biographies, obituaries, tombstones, family records, and artifacts may give you clues that an ancestor belonged to a fraternal society. An example French-American fraternal organization is—

Union Saint-Jean Baptiste
Box F
Woonsocket, RI 02895
USA

The records of fraternal organizations may exist in a society or business archive. You may be able to obtain some genealogical information through correspondence. The Family History Library has histories of a few fraternal societies but very few records. These are listed in the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog under the place-name followed by subject headings such as, SOCIETIES, GENEALOGY, HISTORY, OCCUPATIONS, and MINORITIES.

Guides to Societies and Associations

Directories. A good list of French genealogical societies is in—

Johnson, Keith A., and Malcolm R. Sainty.

Genealogical research directory: national and international. Sydney: Johnson and Sainty, 1993.

Annual. (FHL book 929.1025 G286grd 1993; not on microfilm.) Pages 766-81 describe 148 French genealogical societies including their mailing addresses. French text usually has an English translation.

A list of 175 historical-genealogical societies in France and their periodicals is found on pages 296 to 306 of *La généalogie: histoire et pratique* (see the “For Further Reading” section of this outline).

More than 40 genealogical societies with interest in French immigrants to North America are included in—

Meyer, Mary Keyser. *Meyer's Directory of*

Genealogical Societies in the U.S.A. and Canada.

10th ed. Mt. Airy, MD: Meyer, 1994. (FHL book 970 C44m 1994; not on microfilm.) Search the “Canada” chapter under “Quebec,” and the “Special Interest” chapter under the headings “Canadian” (separate from the “Canada” chapter), “French,” and “French-Canadian-Acadian.”

Twenty-three Canadian and United States genealogical societies emphasizing French immigrant research are

Societies

listed in Dennis M. Boudreau's *Beginning Franco-American Genealogy* (see the "For Further Reading" section of this outline).

Another directory listing North American French-immigrant genealogical societies is—

Bentley, Elizabeth Petty. *The Genealogist's Address Book*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1995. (FHL book 973 D24ben; not on microfilm.) Look in part 3, "Ethnic and Religious Organizations and Research Centers," for the headings "Creole" (1 society) and "French" (40 societies). In part 4, "Special Resources," look for the heading "Huguenot" (10 societies).

The addresses of thousands of historical societies in North America are given in—

Wheeler, Mary Bray. *Directory of Historical Organizations in the United States and Canada*. 14th ed. Nashville: AASLH Press, 1990. (FHL book Ref 970 H24d 1990; not on microfilm.) Text in English.

For more information about fraternal societies of interest to French immigrants in North America, see—

Wynar, Lubomyr Roman. *Encyclopedic Directory of Ethnic Organizations in the United States*. Littleton, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 1975. (FHL book 305.8 W99e; not on microfilm.) Text in English.

Guide to indexing projects in France. Many French genealogical societies have begun indexing church records (chiefly marriages) kept in their areas before 1792. For a list of indexed records use *Recensement des dépouillements systématiques . . .* (see page 17 of this outline) or write to the appropriate French genealogical society.

Locating Records at the Family History Library

Records of these societies are usually described in the Author/Title section of the Family History Library Catalog under the name of the society. They are also listed in the Locality section of the catalog under one of the following:

FRANCE - SOCIETIES
FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT] - SOCIETIES
FRANCE - GENEALOGY
FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT] - GENEALOGY

Some records gathered by societies are listed in the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog under the type of record. For example, church record indexes prepared by a local genealogical society are listed in the catalog under:

FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT] - CHURCH
RECORDS - INDEXES.

Lists and guides that describe the collections of societies are listed in the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog under—

FRANCE - ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES -
INVENTORIES, REGISTERS, CATALOGS
FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT] - ARCHIVES AND
LIBRARIES - INVENTORIES, REGISTERS,
CATALOGS
FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT], [TOWN] -
ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES - INVENTORIES,
REGISTERS, CATALOGS

Records Not at the Family History Library

The "French Search Strategies" section of this outline and the Family History Library's *French Letter-Writing Guide* (34059) give details about how to write to societies in France for genealogical information.

OTHER RECORDS OF FRANCE

The subject headings listed below can be found in the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog after the locality: for example—

FRANCE - [SUBJECT]
FRANCE, [PROVINCE] (REGION) - [SUBJECT]
FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT] - [SUBJECT]
FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT], [TOWN] -
[SUBJECT]

Though not discussed in this outline, the following catalog subject headings may be useful to your research:

CHURCH DIRECTORIES
COLONIZATION
COURT RECORDS
DESCRIPTION AND TRAVEL
ENCYCLOPEDIAS AND DICTIONARIES
HANDWRITING
JEWISH HISTORY
JEWISH RECORDS
LAND AND PROPERTY
LAW AND LEGISLATION
MANORS
MIGRATION, INTERNAL
MILITARY HISTORY
NAMES, GEOGRAPHICAL
OBITUARIES
OCCUPATIONS
POSTAL AND SHIPPING GUIDES
SCHOOLS
SOCIAL LIFE AND CUSTOMS
TAXATION
VOTING REGISTERS

FOR FURTHER READING

More detailed information about research and records of France can be found in—

Aublet, Robert. *Nouveau guide de généalogie* (New guide to genealogy). Evreux: Ouest-France, 1986. (FHL book 944 D27a; not on microfilm.)

Bernard, Gildas. *Guide des recherches sur l'histoire des familles* (Family history research guide). Paris: Archives Nationales, 1981. (FHL book 944 D27b; not on microfilm.)

Boudreau, Dennis M. *Beginning Franco-American Genealogy*. [Pawtucket, RI]: American-French Genealogical Society, 1986. (FHL book 973 D27bo; not on microfilm.) Text in English.

Durye, Pierre. *Genealogy: an introduction to continental concepts*. New Orleans: Polyanthos, 1977. (FHL book 944 D25dp; not on microfilm.) Text in English.

Valynseele, Joseph. *La généalogie: histoire et pratique* (Genealogy: History and Practice). Paris: Larousse, 1992. (FHL book 944 D27gL; not on microfilm.)

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

The Family History Library welcomes additions and corrections that will improve future editions of this outline. Please send your suggestions to—

Publications Coordination
Family History Library
35 North West Temple Street
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150.
USA

We appreciate the archivists, librarians, and others who have reviewed this outline and shared helpful information.

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France Historical Background

History

Effective family research requires some understanding of the historical events that may have affected your family and the records about them. Learning about wars, governments, laws, migrations, and religious trends may help you understand political boundaries, family movements, and settlement patterns. These events may have led to the creation of records such as land and military documents that mention your family.

Your ancestors will become more interesting to you if you also use histories to learn about the events in which they may have participated. For example, by using a history you might learn about the events that occurred in the year your great grandparents were married.

Some key dates and events in the history of France are as follows:

1334	Earliest Roman Catholic parish register in France begins.
1348	Black plague kills one third of the French population.
1572	Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre. Many Protestants flee France.
1579	Parish register of marriages and deaths required.
1598	Edict of Nantes (Protestants granted religious freedom).
1632	French begin settling Quebec and Acadia (Canada).
1685	Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which causes many Protestants to leave France.
1722	First wave of settlers begins moving from Alsace-Lorraine to colonies in the Banat (Austria-Hungary, in southeastern Europe).
1755	French Acadians (Canadians) deported by the British.
1764	First wave of settlers begins moving from Alsace-Lorraine to colonies in Russia and the Ukraine.
1787	Edict of Tolerance grants freedom of religion to the Protestants and Jews.
1789	French revolution. Half a million refugees flee.
1792	French civil registration started.
1808	Jews required to take a fixed family surname in addition to their given name.
1870	Franco-Prussian War. Alsace-Lorraine annexed by Germany.

The Family History Library has some published provincial and departmental histories for France. You can find histories in the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog under one of the following:

EUROPE - HISTORY
FRANCE - HISTORY
FRANCE, [PROVINCE] (REGION) - HISTORY
FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT] - HISTORY
FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT], [CITY] - HISTORY

Several encyclopedias give good summaries of the history of France. Books with film numbers can be ordered through local family history centers. They may also be found in major research libraries. The following is only one of many historical books available:

Guizot, François Pierre Guillaume. *History of France*. 8 vols. New York and London: Co-operative Publication Society, 1869. (FHL book 944 H2g; film 1,573,087 item 3 [v. 1]; film 1,181,964 [v. 2-7]; film 1,181,965 [v. 8].) Text in English.

Local Histories

Some of the most valuable sources for family history research are local histories. They give details about the history of the area, the population, immigration, wars and destruction, pestilences, natural disasters, names of some of the residents, social life in early times, traditions, invasions, and religious persecutions. Even if your ancestor is not listed, information on local history or other relatives may provide important clues for locating the ancestor. The bibliography may also mention other authors or earlier histories important for the area.

In addition, local histories should be studied and enjoyed for the background information they can provide about your family's lifestyle and the community and environment in which your family lived.

For some localities, there may be more than one history. Although relatively few local histories have been published for towns or departments in France, a careful search for available histories of your ancestor's locality is worthwhile.

The Family History Library has some local histories for towns in France. Similar histories are often available at major public and university libraries and archives.

Bibliographies that list local histories are available for some provinces or departments of France. These are listed in the Locality section of the Family History Library Catalog under—

FRANCE, [PROVINCE] (REGION) - BIBLIOGRAPHY

FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT] - BIBLIOGRAPHY

FRANCE - HISTORY - BIBLIOGRAPHY

FRANCE, [PROVINCE] (REGION) - HISTORY - BIBLIOGRAPHY

FRANCE, [DEPARTMENT] - HISTORY - BIBLIOGRAPHY

Calendar Changes

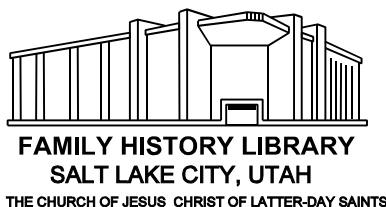
The Gregorian calendar is the calendar in common use in the world today. It is a correction of the Julian calendar, which had been in use since a.d. 46. Leap years had been miscalculated in the Julian calendar. By 1582, the calendar was ten days behind the solar year.

In France, the last day of the Julian calendar was 9 Dec 1582. At that time, ten days were omitted to bring the calendar in line with the solar year. The day after 9 December 1582 was 20 December 1582.

During the years 1793 to 1805, another calendar was introduced. This calendar was based on the founding of the French Republic and used a system of months unrelated to the regular calendar. See the library's *French Republican Calendar Research Outline*.

Counties and Provinces of France 1789





French

INTRODUCTION

This guide is for researchers who do not speak French but must write to France, Belgium, Luxembourg, or Quebec to request genealogical records. It includes a list of sentences you would use in a letter about genealogical records and a French translation of these sentences.

BEFORE YOU WRITE

Before you write a letter in French to obtain family history information, you should do these things:

- ☐ **Determine exactly where your ancestor was born, married, or died.** Because most genealogical records were kept locally, you will need to know the specific town where your ancestor's records were kept. See the *Tracing Immigrant Origins Research Outline* (34111) from the Family History Library™ for help in finding hometowns.
- ☐ **Determine if the Family History Library has records from the area where your relative lived.** The best sources of information in French-speaking areas are records of births, marriages, and deaths kept by civil registration offices (or parishes in Quebec). The library has microfilmed these records for many localities, but not all. Use the Family History Library Catalog™ to determine what records are available through the Family History Library and Family History Centers™. If records are available from the library or Family History Centers, it is usually faster and more productive to search these records first. The library's *France Research Outline*, *Canada Research Outline*, and *Quebec Research Outline* explain how to research records at the library or at Family History Centers. If the records you want are not available at these locations, you can use the research outlines to help you decide what records to search. Write to the Family History Library (35 North West Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150-3400) for the addresses of nearby Family History Centers.
- ☐ **Determine where records from your ancestor's hometown are stored today.** Records for smaller localities may be kept with records of a nearby larger community. You can use a gazetteer to determine which community serves your ancestor's locality in France, Belgium, or Luxembourg. For help locating records, see the library's research outline for France. For help locating parish records in Quebec, see the library's research outlines for Canada and Quebec.

RESEARCH BY MAIL

What to Ask in Each Nation

Write *only* when you cannot find the information any other way. The following list shows the kind of information you may be able to obtain through correspondence from several kinds of organizations in French-speaking nations:

In **all French-speaking nations** you can write to—

- *Genealogical societies.*
 - Request that the letter be forwarded to a member interested in the same family, locality, or group of people.
 - Request a list of people who might consider making a short search of records in a nearby repository for pay.
- *Professional researchers.* Offer to pay a researcher for a search of records in a nearby repository.

In **France and Belgium** you can also write to—

- *Civil registration offices.* Request a birth, marriage, or death certificate to verify the place of origin of a direct ancestor.
- *Departmental or provincial archives.*
 - Ask where the records of a specific town are kept and what dates the records cover.
 - Ask when their archives are open to the public.

In **Luxembourg** you can write to—

- *Civil registration offices.* Request a certificate to verify the birth place of a direct ancestor born within the last hundred years. The Family History Library has filmed most earlier records from Luxembourg.

In **Quebec** you can write to—

- *Roman Catholic parishes.* Request transcripts of baptism, marriage, or burial records from 1877 to the present. The Family History Library has filmed most earlier Catholic records from Quebec.

Addressing the Envelope

Societies. The book *Genealogical Research Directory: National and International* by Keith A. Johnson and Malcolm R. Sainty lists the addresses of most genealogical societies in French-speaking nations (Sydney: Johnson and Sainty, 1993; FHL book 929.1025 G286grd 1993).

Address the envelope to—

Monsieur le Président
(Name of the society)

(Address)
(Postal code) (Town)
(NATION)

Professional researchers. Names and addresses of researchers for hire can be found in genealogical periodicals.

Civil registration offices. (France, Belgium, and Luxembourg only.) Address the envelope to—

Monsieur l'officier de l'état-civil
Mairie de (Town)
(Postal code) (Town)
FRANCE, BELGIUM, or LUXEMBOURG

Archives. Find archive addresses with the help of the *France Research Outline*, the International Council on Archives' *International Directory of Archives* (Archivum Series, vol. 38 [Munich: Saur, 1992]; FHL book 020.5 Ar25 v. 38), or call the Family History Library at 801-240-3433.

Address the envelope to—

France: Monsieur le Directeur
Archives départementales
(Postal code) (Town)
FRANCE

Belgium: Monsieur le Directeur
Archives de la Province
(Postal code) (Town)
BELGIUM

Catholic parishes. (Quebec only.) Address the envelope to—

Monsieur le Curé
(Town), Québec
CANADA (Postal code)

Postal Codes

When addressing your letter, you will need to write the postal (zip) code **before** the name of the town when writing to France, Belgium, and Luxembourg. Write the postal code **after** the word "Canada" when writing to Quebec. For help finding postal codes, use the postal gazetteer for the country, or call the Family History Library at 801-240-3433.

How to Send Return Postage and Money

The first time you write someone in Europe or Quebec, send three international reply coupons (available at most large post offices) to pay for return postage.

When writing to a parish in Quebec, it is also a good idea to send a donation of \$10 as a courtesy. Do not send a personal check, which is difficult and expensive to exchange. Cash is most easily converted to foreign currency, but there are always risks in sending cash.

An easy and inexpensive way to send money to Europe or Quebec from the United States is to

telephone Ruesch International Financial Services at 800-424-2923. Ask for an international bank draft for the equivalent of \$10 (or another amount) in either Canadian dollars or Belgian, Luxembourg, Swiss, or French francs. There is a \$2 service charge. Have the check made payable to the organization you are contacting (the *Paroisse* [parish] in Quebec). Ruesch will give you a transaction number to write on your payment check. Send the payment to—

Ruesch International Financial Services
International Division, 10th floor
1350 Eye Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20005

When they receive your payment, Ruesch will promptly send you a foreign currency draft (check) you can mail to Europe or Quebec.

Some researchers do not send money when writing to a civil registration office, archive, researcher, or genealogical society for the first time. These organizations may prefer to bill you for their services. Some may ask you to make the check payable to their account number. If you want, you may write an institution to determine their fees before making a request. However, this will significantly increase the time it takes to get information.

Checklist for Mailing Your Letter

- ☐ Keep a photocopy of your letter.
- ☐ Enclose three international reply coupons.
- ☐ Convert funds to foreign currency.
- ☐ Mark "Air Mail" on envelopes addressed overseas.

WHAT TO EXPECT

It may take six months or longer for you to receive a reply to your request for information (airmail improves the response time). The results of writing to civil registration offices (or parishes in Quebec) can vary greatly. You may get more information than requested, or you may get no answer at all. Some will not answer until money is sent. Some may be unable to provide information.

Because some information is not easily obtained by writing directly to a registrar (or priest in Quebec), you may need to hire a local private researcher. We suggest that you inquire about a competent local researcher when you write.

When you receive a reply, send a note of thanks or acknowledgement. You may wish to do this in a follow-up letter requesting further information. Refer to your earlier letter and their return letter by date. If they have assigned you a reference number, include that number as well.

Use French-English dictionaries to help you understand the reply. Sometimes you can hire accredited genealogists to translate for you.

If you do not receive an answer, write again sending a copy of your first letter. Do not send more money unless you verify that your first letter did not arrive.

HOW TO WRITE A LETTER IN FRENCH

Your letter should include the following:

- the date (at the top)
- the name and address of the addressee
- a greeting
- a short, specific, genealogical request
- a comment about return postage (and sometimes reimbursement)
- closing remarks
- your signature
- your return address (including your country)

Be brief and simple. Do not ask for more than one or two pieces of information in a single letter.

The following English-to-French translations will help you compose your letter. Read the sentences in English and choose those that best express what you want to say. Alternative phrases are shown in double brackets (« »). Be sure that your sentences are arranged logically. You may want to write your letter first in English using the following sentences, then replace the sentences with their French translations. However you

proceed, make sure you type or neatly print your letter and, when necessary, add any diacritical marks and special characters (such as à, â, ç, é, è, ê, ë, î, ï, ô, ö, û, ù) with a pen.

Gender. Three of the words in the French translations need to match your gender. The words are intéressé(e), obligé(e), and reconnaissant(e). The feminine ending is listed in parentheses. If you are a man, use intéressé, obligé, and reconnaissant. If you are a woman, use intéressée, obligée, and reconnaissante.

Do not use this guide as the letter itself! That might insult the recipient and lessen the chance of a reply.

Writing Dates

Write dates in the European style: day-month-year. Write the name of the month out and write the year in full. For example, write *10 décembre 1889*, not *12-10-89* or even *10-12-1889*.

January	- janvier	July	- juillet
February	- février	August	- août
March	- mars	September	- septembre
April	- avril	October	- octobre
May	- mai	November	- novembre
June	- juin	December	- décembre

English

French

Letter to a Genealogical Society

1. Dear President:	1. Monsieur le Président,
2. My ancestor (<i>fill in ancestor's name</i>) emigrated from your region. «in (<i>fill in year</i>).»	2. Mon ancêtre (<i>fill in ancestor's name</i>) a quitté votre région. «vers (<i>fill in year</i>).»
3. He «She» was from (<i>fill in the town</i>).	3. Il «Elle» venait de (<i>fill in the town</i>).
4. He was born «She was born» «about» (<i>fill in date</i>).	4. Il est né «Elle est née» «environ» (<i>fill in date</i>).
5. I have not been able to identify this place which appears to be in your area. Perhaps I do not have the correct spelling. Do you have any suggestions?	5. Il ne m'a pas été possible d'identifier ce lieu exact d'origine dans votre région. Peut-être que l'orthographe a été déformée. Auriez-vous quelque recommandation à ce sujet?
6. The spelling of the surname, (<i>fill in surname</i>), is not certain. What is the likely spelling in your area?	6. L'orthographe de ce patronyme, (<i>fill in surname</i>), n'est pas certaine. Pourriez-vous suggérer les orthographes possible pour votre région?
7. Could you tell me if the surname (<i>fill in the surname</i>) is common in your area? Is there a member of your group who is studying that surname or the families in (<i>fill in the town</i>)? Would you kindly forward my letter to that person?	7. Pourriez-vous me dire si le nom de famille (<i>fill in the surname</i>) existe dans votre région? Y a-t-il un membre de votre groupe qui étudie ce nom ou les familles de (<i>fill in the town</i>)? Voudriez-vous être assez aimable pour lui acheminer ma lettre?

8. Do you have a list of people who are willing to do research for a fee?	8. Avez-vous une liste de personnes qui se chargent de faire des recherches rémunérées?
9. Is there a periodical published by your association? Please tell me the conditions and benefits of subscription and how to run a genealogical query.	9. Est-ce que votre association publie une revue? Quelles sont les conditions et les avantages de souscription et comment pourrais-je insérer une question dans la revue?
10. Please find enclosed three international reply coupons for return postage.	10. Veuillez trouver ci-joint trois coupons réponse internationaux pour couvrir les frais postaux.
11. With my greatest thanks, please accept my sincere greetings. (Your <i>signature</i>) (fill in your <i>name</i> and <i>address</i>)	11. Avec mes plus grands remerciements, je vous prie d'agréer, Monsieur, l'expression de mes sentiments distingués. (Your <i>signature</i>) (fill in your <i>name</i> and <i>address</i>)

Letter to a Professional Researcher

12. Dear Sir: «Madam:»	12. Monsieur, «Madame,»
13. I need the help of a genealogist for some research. I would be very grateful if you would send me your rate and conditions, including traveling expenses if necessary.	13. J'ai besoin de l'aide d'un généalogiste pour quelques recherches. Je vous serais très obligé(e) de bien vouloir m'envoyer votre tarif et conditions, y compris bien entendu, frais de déplacements éventuels.
14. Can I write to you in English?	14. Puis-je vous écrire en anglais?
15. Please find enclosed a family group sheet with all the information I have.	15. Veuillez trouver ci-joint une feuille de groupement de famille avec toutes les informations que je possède.
16. Would you be able to research the ancestors of the husband? «the wife?» «both spouses?»	16. Pensez-vous que vous pourriez rechercher les ancêtres de l'époux? «l'épouse ?» «des époux?»
17. I would like to find all the children of each family as well as the children's death dates when they died under the age of eight years.	17. Je désire avoir tous les enfants de chaque famille trouvée, ainsi que les décès des enfants morts en dessous de huit ans.
18. The marriages of the children interest me also.	18. Les mariages des enfants m'intéressent aussi.
19. I am not interested in the marriages of the children except for the direct line.	19. Les mariages des enfants ne m'intéressent pas excepté pour la lignée directe.
20. I do not need a complete transcription of each document but a short transcription of the genealogical information found in the documents and the source of information.	20. Je n'ai pas besoin de transcription complète des documents mais simplement une transcription des informations généalogiques trouvées dans chaque document avec la source d'information.
21. Please complete the family group sheets and do not worry about transcribing the documents.	21. Veuillez compléter des fiches familiales sans vous inquiéter de transcrire les documents.
22. If I use your services, it is my intention to pay you with a draft in converted currency. Please tell me the name to write on the draft.	22. Si je décide d'employer vos services, je compte vous payer par mandat international en monnaie de votre pays. Veuillez bien me dire le nom de la personne à qui le mandat doit être libellé !

23. Please find enclosed three international reply coupons for return postage.	23. Veuillez trouver ci-joint trois coupons réponse internationaux pour couvrir les frais postaux.
24. Awaiting your answer, Sir. «Madam.» Sincerely, (<i>Your signature</i>) (fill in your name and address)	24. Dans l'attente de votre réponse, je vous prie de croire, Monsieur «Madame», à l'expression de mes sincères salutations. (<i>Your signature</i>) (fill in your name and address)
Letter to a Civil Registration Office	
25. Dear Civil Registrar:	25. Monsieur l'officier de l'état-civil,
26. I would be very grateful if you would send me a complete copy of the «birth» «marriage» «death» certificate of (<i>fill in relationship</i>). my father my mother my grandfather my grandmother my great-grandfather my great-grandmother my parents my grandparents my great-grandparents one of my male ancestors one of my female ancestors	26. Je vous serais très obligé(e) de bien vouloir m'envoyer, si possible, la copie intégrale de l'acte de «naissance» «mariage» «décès» de (<i>fill in relationship</i>). mon père ma mère mon grand-père ma grand-mère mon arrière grand-père mon arrière grand-mère mes parents mes grands-parents mes arrière grand-parents d'un de mes ancêtres d'une de mes ancêtres
27. (<i>Supply pertinent information</i>) a. Given name and surname: b. Date of birth: c. Place of birth: d. Father's given name and surname: e. Mother's given name and maiden surname: f. Husband's given name and surname: g. Wife's given name and maiden surname: h. Date of marriage: i. Place of marriage: j. Date of death: k. Place of death:	27. (<i>Supply pertinent information</i>) a. Prénom et nom: b. Date de naissance: c. Lieu de naissance: d. Prénom et nom de son père: e. Prénom et nom de jeune fille de sa mère: f. Prénom et nom de son mari: g. Prénom et nom de jeune fille de sa femme: h. Date de mariage: i. Lieu de mariage: j. Date de décès: k. Lieu de décès:
28. Please find enclosed three international reply coupons for return postage.	28. Veuillez trouver ci-joint trois coupons réponse internationaux pour couvrir les frais postaux.
29. With my greatest thanks, please accept my sincere greetings. (<i>Your signature</i>) (fill in your name and address)	29. Avec mes plus grands remerciements, je vous prie d'agréer, Monsieur, l'expression de mes sentiments distingués. (<i>Your signature</i>) (fill in your name and address)
Letter to a Departmental or Provincial Archive	
30. Dear Director:	30. Monsieur le Directeur,

31. Do you have the civil and parish registers for the town of <i>(fill in town name)</i> ? For which years?	31. Possédez-vous les registres d'état-civil et paroissiaux de <i>(fill in town name)</i> ? Pour quelles années?
32. Are there other years available somewhere else?	32. Existe-t-il d'autres années consultables en mairie?
33. Please tell me the days and hours that you will be open during the month of <i>(fill in the month)</i> . (See page 3 for names of the months. Use <i>d'</i> in front of <i>avril, août, and octobre.</i>)	33. Voudriez-vous bien m'indiquer les heures et jours ouvrables pendant le mois de «d'» <i>(fill in the month)</i> . (Use <i>d'</i> in front of <i>avril, août, and octobre.</i>)
34. Could you send me the name and address of a person who could do research for me?	34. Pourriez-vous m'envoyer les nom et adresse d'une personne qui pourrait faire une recherche pour moi?
35. Could you send me the name and address of the genealogical association for your region?	35. Pourriez-vous m'envoyer les nom et adresse de l'Association généalogique de votre région?
36. Please find enclosed three international reply coupons for return postage.	36. Veuillez trouver ci-joint trois coupons réponse internationaux pour couvrir les frais postaux.
37. With my greatest thanks, please accept my sincere greetings. (Your signature) (fill in your <i>name and address</i>)	37. Avec mes plus grands remerciements, je vous prie d'agréer, Monsieur le directeur, l'expression de mes sentiments distingués. (Your signature) (fill in your <i>name and address</i>)

Letter to a Catholic Priest in Quebec

38. Dear Parish Priest:	38. Monsieur le Curé,
39. I am researching ancestors, and I would be very grateful for any information which you could find in your registers on my family.	39. Je suis en train d'effectuer des recherches sur mes ancêtres et je vous serais très obligé(e) pour toute information que vous pourriez trouver dans vos registres sur ma famille.
40. (Supply pertinent information) a. Given name and surname: b. Date of birth: c. Place of birth: d. Father's given name and surname: e. Mother's given name and maiden surname: f. Husband's given name and surname: g. Wife's given name and maiden surname: h. Date of marriage: i. Place of marriage: j. Date of death: k. Place of death:	40. (Supply pertinent information) a. Prénom et nom: b. Date de naissance: c. Lieu de naissance: d. Prénom et nom de son père: e. Prénom et nom de jeune fille de sa mère: f. Prénom et nom de son mari: g. Prénom et nom de jeune fille de sa femme: h. Date de mariage: i. Lieu de mariage: j. Date de décès: k. Lieu de décès:
41. Could you trace my ancestors back to the previous generation?	41. Pourriez-vous remonter mes ancêtres à la génération précédente?
42. I would like more information on the family of <i>(fill in the person's name)</i> . I would be very grateful if you could obtain the names and birth dates of his «her» brothers and sisters as well as the marriage of their parents.	42. Je voudrais davantage d'information sur la famille de <i>(fill in the person's name)</i> . Je vous serais très reconnaissant(e) si vous pouviez obtenir les noms et dates de naissance de ses frères et soeurs ainsi que le mariage des parents.

43. Please find enclosed \$10 (Canadian) for reply postage and donation to your parish. Let me know the balance owed you.	43. Veuillez trouver ci-joint 10 dollars (Canadien) pour les frais de réponse et une donation à votre paroisse. S'il vous plaît, veuillez bien me dire la balance qui vous est due.
44. With my greatest thanks, please accept my sincere greetings. (Your <i>signature</i>) (fill in your <i>name</i> and <i>address</i>)	44. Avec mes plus grands remerciements, je vous prie d'agréer, monsieur le curé, l'expression de mes sentiments distingués. (Your <i>signature</i>) (fill in your <i>name</i> and <i>address</i>)
<p style="text-align: center;">Follow-up [Use these sentences in follow-up letters as needed.]</p>	
45. Thank you for the information you sent on (<i>fill in date</i>).	45. Je vous remercie pour les informations que vous m'avez fait parvenir (<i>fill in date</i>).
46. I need further information about one of the individuals you mentioned in your letter: (<i>fill in name</i>).	46. J'ai besoin d'informations supplémentaires sur (<i>fill in name</i>) que vous mentionnez dans votre lettre.
47. I am very grateful for the information that you had the kindness to send me. I take the liberty to impose again on your kindness and ask you to please send me the complete copy of the «birth» «marriage» «death» certificate of (<i>fill in name</i>).	47. Je vous suis très reconnaissant(e) pour les informations que vous avez eu la gentillesse de m'envoyer. Je me permets d'abuser de nouveau de votre amabilité pour vous demander de bien vouloir m'envoyer la copie intégrale de l'acte de «naissance» «mariage» «décès» de (<i>fill in name</i>).
48. I requested a certificate from you on (<i>fill in date</i>). See the enclosed photocopy. Perhaps you did not receive the request. I am still interested in obtaining this certificate. Please inform me how much I should send you.	48. Je vous ai écrit le (<i>fill in date</i>) vous demandant de bien vouloir m'envoyer un acte d'État-civil. Veuillez trouver ci-joint la photocopie de ma lettre que vous semblez ne pas avoir reçue. Je suis toujours intéressé(e) à recevoir ce document. S'il vous plaît veuillez bien m'aviser de la somme à vous envoyer.
49. I am enclosing a copy of a letter I sent you on (<i>fill in date</i>). Please write and tell me if you can do this research.	49. Je vous joins une copie de la lettre que je vous avez envoyée le (<i>fill in date</i>). Je vous serais reconnaissant(e) si vous pouviez me contacter et me faire savoir si vous pouvez faire cette recherche.

See the next page for an example of a letter using the sentences in this guide.

EXAMPLE LETTER

Date 20 juillet 1994

Addressee Monsieur l'officier de l'état-civil
Mairie de Nulle Part
67999 Quelque Part
FRANCE

Greeting Monsieur l'officier de l'état-civil,

Genealogical Request Je vous serais très obligée de bien vouloir m'envoyer la copie intégrale de l'acte de naissance de mon arrière grand-père.

Prénom et nom: Jacob BELLER
Date de naissance: 19 novembre 1857
Lieu de naissance: Nulle Part, Bas-Rhin, France
Prénom et nom de jeune fille de sa femme: Anna ZIMMERMAN
Date de mariage: 19 janvier 1882
Lieu de mariage: Fairbury, Livingston, Illinois, USA

Comment on Postage Veuillez trouver ci-joint trois coupon-réponse internationaux pour couvrir les frais postaux.

Closing Avec mes plus grands remerciements, je vous prie d'agréer, Monsieur, l'expression de mes sentiments distingués.

Signature

Return Address Jane Doe
674 "Q" Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84103
USA

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

The Family History Library welcomes additions and corrections that will improve future editions of this guide. Please send your suggestions to—

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File: Language Helps.

34059

French

Genealogical Word List

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General Word List

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Numbers

Dates And Time

This list contains French words with their English translations. The words included here are those you are likely to find in genealogical sources. If the word you are looking for is not on this list, please consult a French-English dictionary. (See the “Additional Resources” section below.)

The French language is a Romance language derived from Latin. Although English is a Germanic language, it has many words of Latin and French derivation. Thus, many French words are similar to words in English but often have different meanings.

French is spoken in France; Quebec and other areas of Canada; Luxembourg; southern Belgium; southwestern Switzerland; northern and central Africa; some islands in the Indian Ocean, Pacific Ocean, and Caribbean Sea; southeast Asia; and other areas formerly colonized or influenced by the French.

Between about 1800 and 1812, French was also used in records of the Rhineland area of Germany, northern Belgium, and the Netherlands. In addition, French is found in some early records of Louisiana and a few other places in the United States. Since about 1680, the grammar, if not the spelling, of official written French has been fairly well standardized throughout the world, even though there are many different forms of spoken French.

LANGUAGE CHARACTERISTICS

French words for persons, places, and things (nouns) are classified as masculine or feminine. Generally, adjectives used to describe feminine words end with *e*.

Le (masculine form of *the*) is used with masculine words. *La* (feminine form of *the*) is used with feminine words. But *l'* is used with either if the word begins with a vowel. For example, the word *enfant* means *child* or *infant*, either masculine or feminine. But *l'enfant est né* (the child is born) is used with a male child, and *l'enfant est née* with a female child.

Variant Forms of Words

In French, as in English, the forms of some words will vary according to how they are used in a sentence. *Who*—*whose*—*whom* or *marry*—*marries*—*married* are examples of

words in English with variant forms. This word list gives the standard form of each French word. As you read French records, you will need to be aware that some words vary with usage.

Plural forms of French words are usually created by adding *s* or *x* to the singular word. Thus *frère* becomes *frères*, and *beau* becomes *beaux*. The plural of *beau-frère* (brother-in-law) is *beaux-frères* (brothers-in-law).

In French there are five diacritical (accent) marks. These are placed over vowels or under the letter *c* to indicate a change in pronunciation. The following diacritical marks are used in French: *à, â, é, è, ê, ë, î, ï, ô, ö, û, ù* and *ç*. The *ç* is pronounced as an *s*. These diacritical marks do not affect alphabetical order.

Spelling

Spelling rules were not fixed in earlier centuries. In French the following spelling variations are common:

Variation		Example		
bv	used for	v	février	spelled febvrier
c	used for	ss	aussi	spelled auci
ct	used for	t	faites	spelled faictes
es	used for	é	témoins	spelled tesmoins
I	used for	j	jour	spelled iour
o	used for	ou	tournier	spelled tornier
os	used for	ô	nôtre	spelled nostre
sç	used for	s	savoir	spelled sçavoir
t	used for	tt	cette	spelled cete
y	used for	i	hier	spelled hyer
y	used for	ill	filleul	spelled fyeul
z	used for	s	baptisé	spelled baptizé

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

This word list includes *only words most commonly found in genealogical sources*. For further help, consult a French-English dictionary. You can obtain a French-English dictionary at most public libraries and through many bookstores.

Several French-English dictionaries are available at the Family History Library. These are in the European collection. Their call numbers begin with 443.21.

The following dictionary is available on microfilm for use in Family History Centers:

A. Spiers. *The Standard Pronouncing Dictionary of the French and English Languages*. New York: Appleton, 1900. (FHL book 443.21 Sp44s, film 1181694 item 4.)

Additional dictionaries are listed in the subject section of the Family History Library Catalog under FRENCH LANGUAGE—DICTIONARIES.

A helpful guide for reading genealogical records written in French is: *French Records Extraction*. Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d. (FHLfiche 6068523.) In addition to being a glossary of names and genealogical words, this guide includes examples of French documents and instructions in reading the handwriting.

KEY WORDS

To find and use specific types of French records, you will need to know some key words in French. This section gives key genealogical terms in English and the French words with the same or similar meanings.

For example, in the first column you will find the English word *marriage*. In the second column you will find French words with meanings such as *marry*, *marriage*, *wedding*, *wedlock*, *unite*, *legitimate*, *joined*, and other words used in French records to indicate marriage.

English	French
banns	publications, bans
baptism	baptême
birth	naissance, né, née
burial	sépulture, enterrement, enterré, inhumé, enseveli, funèbre
Catholic	catholique romaine
child	enfant
christening	baptême
civil registry	registres de l'état civil, mairie, maison communale, hôtel de ville
death	décès, mort, expiré, inanimé, défunt
father	père
husband	mari, époux, marié
index	tables, répertoire
Jewish	juif, juive, israélite, hébreu
marriage	mariage, alliance, unir, épouser
month	mois, mensuel
mother	mère
name, given	prénom, nom de baptême
name, surname	nom, nom de famille
parents	parents, père et mère
parish	paroisse, paroissiaux, paroissiale
Protestant	protestant, réformé, huguenot, R.P.R., luthérien, calviniste
town, village	ville, village, hameau, commune
wife	femme, épouse, mariée
year	an, année, annuel

GENERAL WORD LIST

This general word list includes words commonly seen in genealogical sources. Numbers, months, and days of the week are listed both here and in separate sections that follow this list. Words with the same spelling and meaning in English and French, such as *confirmation* or *date*, are not included in this list.

In this list, optional versions of French words or variable endings are given in parentheses. A few phrases are listed under the key word, not necessarily the first word. Words in parentheses in the English column clarify the definition. Feminine or masculine meanings of French words are indicated by (f.) or (m.).

A

à	at, to, in
a	has
abjurations	renunciations of Protestant faith
absolution	absolution, last rites
accoucher	give birth
accoucheuse	midwife
à cet endroit	in this place
acheter	to buy
acte de baptême	baptismal record
acte de décès	death record
acte de naissance	birth certificate, record
acte de sépulture	burial record
adjoint du maire	mayor's assistant
adopté(e)	adopted
adultère	adulterer
affiché	posted (on door)
afficher les bans	post banns
âgé(e)	aged
ai (ay)	I have
aïeul	grandfather
aïeule	grandmother
aîné (l'aîné)	the older, senior
ainsi que	as well as
à jour	current
Algerie	Algeria
alité	bedridden

Allemand(e)	German
alliance	marriage
Alsacien(ne)	Alsatian
ami(e)	friend
an (année)	year
anabaptiste	Mennonite
anglais(e)	English
anniversaire	anniversary
annuaire	directory
annuel	annual, yearly
août	August
apparu	appeared
appelé(e)	named
apprenti	apprentice
approuvé	approved
après	after
après-midi	afternoon
arbre généalogique	family tree, pedigree
archives	archive
Archives du Royaume	state archives (Belgium)
Archives Nationales	state archives (France)
a reçu	has received
armoiries	coat of arms
arpent	acre
arpenteur	surveyor
arpète	errand boy, apprentice
arrière	great (as in great-grandparents)
arrondissement	district (administrative division of a French <i>département</i>)
attaque	seizure
au	at the, in the
aubergiste	innkeeper
aucun(e)	no, none
au dessus	over
aujourd'hui	today
au même endroit	at the same place
auparavant	former
aussi	also, as, since

autant	as much
autorisation	permission
autour	around
autre	other
avant	former, before
avant-hier	the day before yesterday
avec	with
avocat	attorney
avoir	to have
avons	(we) have
avril	April
ayant	having

B

ban (le)	the territory
bans	marriage banns, announcement(s)
baptême	baptism
baptême d'urgence	emergency baptism
baptisé	baptized
baptisé sous condition	conditionally baptized
Baptiste	Baptist
bas	low, lower
batisseur	builder
beau-fils	son-in-law, stepson
beau-frère	brother-in-law, stepbrother
beau-père	father-in-law, stepfather
bêcheur	field worker
Belge	Belgian
belle-fille	daughter-in-law, stepdaughter
belle-mère	mother-in-law, stepmother
belle-soeur	sister-in-law, stepsister
berger	shepherd
bien	well
biens	goods, property
biographie	biography
blanc (blanche)	white

bon (bonne)	good
bonne	maid, female servant
boucher	butcher
boulangier	baker
bourgeois	citizen, member of the middle class
bourguignon	Burgundian
bouvier	herdsman, cowherd
brasseur	brewer
brassier	farmworker, laborer (old word)
Bretagne	Brittany
[oncle à la mode de Bretagne]	[first cousin of one's parent]
briquetier	brick maker
bru	daughter-in-law
brumaire	<i>See</i> "Months"
bureau	office

C

cabaretier	barkeeper
canton	administrative division of an <i>arrondissement</i> (in France), province (in Switzerland), township (in French Canada)
carte	map
catholique romaine	Roman Catholic
ce, c'	it
ce, cet, cette	this, that
céans	here within
cejourd'hier	yesterday
cejourd'hui	today
célèbre	famous
célibataire	bachelor, unmarried, single
celle	this one, she
celle-ci	the latter (f.)
celle-là	the former (f.)
celui	this one, he
celui-ci	the latter (m.)
celui-là	the former (m.)
cent	hundred

centième	hundredth
certificat	certificate
ceux	those
charbonnier	charcoal burner
charcutier	pork merchant
charretier	cart or carriage man
charron	cartwright, wheelwright
chasseur	hunter
château	castle
châtelain	owner of a castle
chaudronnier	cooper, barrel maker
chez	at the home of
chirurgien	surgeon
ci-dessous	below here
ci-dessus	above here
cimetière	cemetery
cinq	five
cinquante	fifty
cinquantième	fiftieth
cinquième	fifth
citoyen(ne)	citizen
clergé	clergymen
colline	hill
communauté	community (of goods), religious community
commune	town, commune (smallest political division in France)
communion	communion
compagnon	journeyman, partner
comparu	appeared
comprend	includes
comte	count
concubine	concubine
congestion cérébrale	stroke
conjoint	spouse, assistant
connaissance	acquaintance
conseil d'état civil	civil registrar's
conseiller	councilor
consentement	consent
contenu	content

contractant	the groom (in a marriage record)
contractante	the bride (in a marriage record)
contrat de mariage	marriage contract
contre	against
coqueluche	whooping cough
cordier	rope maker
cordonnier	shoemaker
côte	hill
couches	bed, marital bed
[morte en couches]	[died in childbirth]
coup de sang	paralytic stroke
cour	court
courant	current
cousin(e)	cousin
cousin(e) germain(e)	first cousin
couvreur	roofer
culte	religion
cultivateur	farmer, cultivator
curateur	guardian
curé	parish minister, pastor, priest, clergyman

D

d'	of
dame	lady
dans	in
de	of, from, out
décapité	decapitated
décédé	the deceased
décembre	December
décennal(e)	decennial
décennie	decade
décès	death, deaths
déclarant	informant
déclaré	declared, stated
décrépitude	old age
défunt(e)	deceased
dehors	outside

de la	of the, some
demain	tomorrow
demeurant	living at
demi	half
demi frère	stepbrother, half brother
demi soeur	stepsister, half sister
demoiselle	Miss (of well-to-do parents, may be a married woman)
département	department (French “county” since 1790)
depuis	since
derniers sacrements	last rites
des	of the, some
desdits	of the said (pl.)
dessous	lower, below
dessus	above
deux	two
deuxième	second
devant	in front of
devenir	to become
devoir	should
d’hier	yesterday’s
dictionnaire	dictionary
dictionnaire des communes	gazetteer
dimanche	Sunday
dîme	tithing
diocèse	diocese
dispense	exemption, dispensation
dit(e) (ditte)	said, also known as, aforementioned
divers(e)	various
divorcé(e)	divorced
dix	ten
dix-huit	eighteen
dix-huitième	eighteenth
dixième	tenth
dix-neuf	nineteen
dix-neuvième	nineteenth
dix-sept	seventeen
dix-septième	seventeenth

domaine	estate
domestique	servant girl, maid
domicile	home, residence, domicile
donné	given
donner	to give
dons	donations
dont	of whom, of which
double	duplicate record
douze	twelve
douzième	twelfth
droguiste	druggist
droit(e)	right
du	of the, some
duc	duke
duché	duchy
duchesse	duchess
durant	during

E

eaux-et-forêts	waters and forests, forestry service
ébéniste	cabinetmaker, furniture maker
échevin	alderman, municipal magistrate
école	school
écrire	to write
écrit	written, document
écrivain	scribe, writer
église	church
elle	she, her
elles	they (f.)
émigrant(e)	emigrant
émigré(e)	emigrant
empêchement	prevention
employé(e)	clerk
en	in
enceinte	pregnant
encore	again
endroit	place

enfant	baby, child
enfant exposé	foundling
enfant trouvé	foundling
enflement	swelling
ensemble	together
entend	intends, hears
enterré(e)	buried
enterrement	burial, interment
entre	between, among
environ	about, approximately
épicier	grocer, spice merchant
épousailles	wedding
épouse	bride, wife
époux	bridegroom, husband
Espagnol(e)	Spanish
est	is, east
et	and
étaient	were
était	was
étant (estant)	being
état	state
état civil	civil registration
été	been, summer
étranger	foreign, foreigner, strange
être	to be
[un être]	[a being]
évêché	diocese
évêque	bishop
exécuté	performed
expédié(s)	sent
extérieur	outside
extrait	extract

F

fabricant de bas	maker of stockings
fabricant de savon	maker of soap
facteur	postman, mailman

facture	account, bill
faiblesse	weakness
fait(e)	made, done
famille	family, relative(s)
féminin	female
femme	wife, woman
ferblantier	tin man, tinsmith
fermier	farmer
fête	holiday, feast
feu(e)	deceased, the late
feuille	folio, leaf, page
février	February
fiançailles	engagement
fiancé	betrothed, engaged, fiancé (m.)
fiancée	betrothed, engaged, fiancée (f.)
fiancer	to become engaged
fichier	card index
fièvre	fever
fileuse	spinster
fille	daughter, girl
fille de mauvaise vie	prostitute
fil	son
floréal	<i>See "Months"</i>
fonction	duty, occupation, function
[faisant les fonctions]	[doing the functions (occupation), serving as]
fonts	(baptismal) font
forestier	forester
forêt	forest
forgeron	smith
forteresse	fortress
frais	fee
Français(e)	French
franc-tenancier	freeholder, yeoman
frère	brother
frère consanguin	brother by the same father but different mother
frère germain	brother by the same mother and father
frère utérin	brother by the same mother but different father
frimaire	<i>See "Months"</i>

fromager	cheese merchant or maker
frontière	border
fructidor	<i>See</i> “Months”
funèbre	funeral
furent	were
fut	was
futur	fiancé, the intended groom
future	fiancée, the intended bride

G

garçon	boy, unmarried young man
garde champêtre	field guard
garde forestier	forest guard
gardien	herdsman
gauche	left
gendarme	policeman
gendre	son-in-law
généalogique	genealogical
géomètre	surveyor
germinal	<i>See</i> “Months”
goutte	gout
grand(e)	large, great, tall
grandmère	grandmother
grandparents	grandparents
grandpère	grandfather
greffier	clerk of the court, registrar

H

habitant	residing
habitation	residence
habiter	to inhabit
haut	high, upper
hectare	acre
héraldique	heraldry
héritage	inheritance

heure	hour, time
hier	yesterday
histoire	story, history
Hollandais(e)	Dutch
homme	man
homme de main	day worker
honnête	honest
horloger	clock merchant or maker
houilleur	coal miner
Huguenot(te)	Huguenot
huissier	usher, doorman
huit	eight
huitante	eighty
huitantième	eightieth
huitième	eighth
hydropisie	dropsy, edema

I

icelle	this one (f.)
icelui	this one (m.)
ici	here
id. (Latin)	the same
identique	same, alike, similar
il	he
illégitime	illegitimate
immigrant(e)	immigrant
imposé	imposed, gave
impôts	taxation
inconnu(e)	unknown
inférieur(e)	lower
instituteur	schoolteacher (m.)
institutrice	schoolteacher (f.)
intérieur	inside
inventaire après décès	inventory after death
Italien(ne)	Italian

J

jamais	never
janvier	January
jardinier	gardener
je	I
jeudi	Thursday
jeune	young, the younger, junior
jeûne	fasting, fast day
jour	day
jour de baptême	day of baptism
jour d'hier, le	yesterday
journalier	day laborer, farmworker
jour suivant	the following day
judge	judge
Juif	Jewish, Jew
juillet	July
juin	June
Juive	Jewish, Jewess
jumeaux	twins (male, or male and female)
jumelles	twins (female)
juré	juryman

K

kilomètre	kilometer
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L

l'	the (m. and f.)
la	the (f.)
là	there
laboureur	plowman, farmer (man with team and plow)
lac	lake
laisser	let, leave, allow

laquelle	which (f.)
le	the (m.)
lecture	reading
légal(e)	legal
légitime	legitimate
lendemain	following day
lequel	which (m.)
les	the (plural)
lesquels	which (plural)
leur	their, to them
lieu	place
livre	book
livret de famille	family register
loi	law
lui	him, to him
lundi	Monday
Luxembourgeois(e)	Luxembourger

M

M.	sir, Mr.
maçon	mason, bricklayer
Madame	Mrs.
Mademoiselle	unmarried woman, Miss
magister	village schoolmaster
mai	May
maire	mayor
mairie	town hall
mais	but
maison	house
[maison communale]	[town hall]
maître	master
maître d'école	schoolteacher
majeur	of legal age, (older)
majorité	legal age, majority
maladie	disease, sickness
maraîcher	market gardener
marchand	merchant

marchant	trader, merchant
marché	market
mardi	Tuesday
maréchal ferrant	blacksmith
mari	husband
mariage	marriage, wedding
marié	groom, husband, married (m.)
mariée	bride, wife, married (f.)
marier (se marier)	to get married
mariés	the married ones
marin	sailor
Marocain(e)	Moroccan
marraine	godmother
mars	March
masculin	male, masculine
matin	early (a.m.), morning
mégisseur	tanner
membre	member
même	the same, even
mendiant	beggar
menuisier	joiner, carpenter
mercredi	Wednesday
mère	mother
mériter	to be worthy
messe	Catholic mass
messidor	<i>See "Months"</i>
métayer	dairy keeper, cowherd, sharecropper
métier	trade, occupation, profession
métis, métisse	mixed blood
meunier	mill
midi	noon
mil	thousand
militaire	military
mille	thousand
millième	thousandth
mineur	under legal age, younger, minor
minorité	under legal age, minority
minuit	midnight

mis(e) en terre	buried
Mlle	Mademoiselle, Miss
Mme	Madame, Mrs.
moi	me
mois	month
Monsieur	sir, Mr.
montagne	hill, mountain
mort(e)	dead, death
mort né	stillborn
moulin	mill
mourant	dying
mourir	to die
moyen(ne)	middle, median, central
mulâtre	mulatto
muni des sacrements de l'Eglise	furnished with the (last) rites of the church

N

naissance	birth
naturel	illegitimate (not always true)
né(e)	born
née	maiden name
négociant	trader, businessman
neuf	nine
neuvième	ninth
neveu	nephew
ni	neither, nor
nièce	niece
nivôse	<i>See "Months"</i>
noble	nobleman
noblesse	nobility
noces	wedding
noir(e)	black
nom	name, surname
nom de famille	surname, last name
nommé(e)	named, alias
non	not

nonante	ninety
nonantième	ninetieth
nord	north
Norman(de)	Norman
notaire	notary
notes	remarks
nôtre (nostre)	our
nous	we, us
nouveau, nouvelle	new
novembre	November
noyé(e)	drowned
nuît	night
numéro	number
nuptial(e)	bridal, pertaining to a wedding

O

obsèques	funeral, burial
octante	eighty
octantième	eightieth
octobre	October
oncle	uncle
ondoyé(e)	baptized provisionally
ont	(they) have
onze	eleven
onzième	eleventh
orphelin(e)	orphan
ou	or
où	where
ouest	west

P

page	page
Palatinat	Palatinate, Pfalz
par	by

pareil(le)	same, alike, similar
parent	parent, relative
paroisse	parish (office)
parrain	godfather
part	portion, part
[d'une part]	[on the one hand]
[et d'autre part]	[and on the other hand]
pas	not
pas encore	not yet
passé	past
pasteur	pastor
pâtissier	pastry maker
pâtre	herdsman
pauvre	indigent, poor
pays	land, country
paysan(ne)	small farmer, peasant
pêcheur	fisher
peintre	painter
penultième	day before the last
percer des dents	teething
père	father
petit	small, little
petite-fille	granddaughter
petite noblesse	gentry
petit-fils	grandson
petit propriétaire	yeoman
peuple	citizens
peut-être	maybe, perhaps
pharmacien	pharmacist
pièces	documents
pied terrier	land record
place	place
plus, en	besides, in addition to
plus âgé(e)	older, elder, oldest, eldest
plus vieux	older, elder, oldest, eldest
pluviôse	<i>See "Months"</i>
policier	policeman
pont	bridge

population	population
porte	door
Portugais(e)	Portuguese
poser	place, put
pour	for
pourquoi	why
prairial	<i>See</i> “Months”
précédent(e)	previous, preceding
préfet	prefect (the head of a <i>département</i> in France)
premier, première	first
prénom	given (first) name
près de	next to
présenté	presented
prêtre	clergyman, priest
preuve	proof
principalité	principality
prochain(e)	following, next, nearest
proche parent	close relative
professeur	professor, teacher
propos de, à	about, concerning
propriétaire	owner, proprietor
protestant	Protestant
provincial(e)	provincial
Prussien(ne)	Prussian
publié	published, announced
publier	publish

Q

quand	when
quarante	forty
quarantième	fortieth
quartier	district or neighborhood in a city
quatorze	fourteen
quatorzième	fourteenth
quatre	four
quatre-vingt-dix	ninety
quatre-vingt-dixième	ninetieth

quatre-vingt	eighty
quatre-vingtième	eightieth
quatrième	fourth
que (qu')	what, which, that
qui	who, whom
quinze	fifteen
quinzième	fifteenth
quoi	what

R

recensement	census
recherche	research
reconnu	recognized, acknowledged
reçu(e)	received
réformé(e)	Reformed/Calvinist
régisseur	farm manager, steward
registre	register
registres d'état	civil registers of births, civil marriages, and deaths
registres paroissiaux	parish registers
reine	queen
religion	religion
religion prétendue réformé (R.P.R.)	Reformed Church, Huguenot
rentier(e)	retired person living from rents, landlord
répertoire	register, index
répertoire toponymique	gazetteer
République Française	French Republic
retraité	formerly employed, retired
revue	periodical
rien	nothing
rivière	stream, river
roi (roy)	king
rouge	red
rougeole	measles
royaume	kingdom
rue	street

Russe

Russian

S

sa	his, her, its
sabotier	wooden-shoe maker
sacristain	sacristan, sexton
sage-femme	midwife
saignement	bleeding
sain	sane, healthy
saints sacrements	last rites d'absolution
samedi	Saturday
sans	without
sans vie	without life, lifeless
savoir	to know, namely
savonnier	soap merchant, soapmaker
saxon	Saxon
scarlatine	scarlet fever
sceau	seal
scieur	sawyer
Seigneur	the Lord
seize	sixteen
seizième	sixteenth
selon	according to
semaine	week
sénilité	old age
sept	seven
septante	seventy
septantième	seventieth
septembre	September
septième	seventh
sépulture	burial
seront	(they) will be
serrurier	locksmith
servante	maid, servant girl
ses	his, her, its
seul(e)	single, alone
seulement	only

sexe	sex
siècle	century
signature	signature
signé	signed
six	six
sixième	sixth
société	society
soeur	sister
soeur consanguine	sister by the same father but different mother
soeur germaine	sister by the same mother and father
soeur utérine	sister by the same mother but different father
soir (soirée)	evening
soixante	sixty
soixante-dix	seventy
soixante-dixième	seventieth
soixantième	sixtieth
soldat	soldier
son	his, her, its
sont	are
sous	under, low
soussigné	the undersigned
souvent	often
statut légal	status, condition
statut personnel	status, condition
sud	south
Suisse	Swiss
suivant(e)	next, following, according to
supérieur(e)	upper
sur	on, above, upon, at
surlendemain	two days later
survivant	surviving
sus-dit	aforementioned
susnommé	aforementioned

T

table	index
tables décennales	ten-year indexes

tailleur	cloth maker, draper
tailleur de pierre	stonecutter
tailleur d'habits	tailor
tanneur	tanner
tant	as, so much
tante	aunt
tantôt	afternoon
tavernier	tavern owner
teinturier	dyer
témoin	witness
temps	time
tenir un enfant sur les fonts	to act as godfather or godmother to a child
terre	earth, land
terres	estate
testament	last will
thermidor	<i>See "Months"</i>
tisserand	weaver
tisserand de lin	linen weaver
tisseur	weaver
tome	volume
tonnelier	cooper
tôt	early (a.m.)
toujours	always
tournier	turner, woodworker
tous	all
tous les deux	both
toux	cough
travailleur	worker, laborer
travers, à	through, across
treize	thirteen
treizième	thirteenth
trente	thirty
trente-et-un	thirty-one
trente-et-unième	thirty-first
trentième	thirtieth
tribunal	court
trois	three

troisième	third
tuilier	tile maker
tumeur	tumor
tuteur	guardian

U

un, une	a, an, one
unième	first
unis en mariage	united in marriage

V

valet	servant
vallée	valley
varie	various
variole	smallpox
veille	previous evening or day
vendémiaire	<i>See</i> “Months”
vendeur	seller, salesman
vendeuse	seller, saleslady
vendredi	Friday
ventôse	<i>See</i> “Months”
vérole	venereal disease, syphilis
vérole, petite	smallpox
verrier	glassmaker
vers	toward
vert	green
veuf	widowed, widower
veuve	widowed, widow
vie	life
vieillesse	old age
vierge	virgin, unmarried woman
vieux (vielle)	old
vieux garçon	bachelor
vigneron	grape grower

village	hamlet, village
ville	village or town, city
vingt	twenty
vingt-cinq	twenty-five
vingt-cinquième	twenty-fifth
vingt-deux	twenty-two
vingt-deuxième	twenty-second
vingt-et-un	twenty-one
vingt-et-unième	twenty-first
vingt-huit	twenty-eight
vingt-huitième	twenty-eighth
vingtième	twentieth
vingt-neuf	twenty-nine
vingt-neuvième	twenty-ninth
vingt-quatre	twenty-four
vingt-quatrième	twenty-fourth
vingt-sept	twenty-seven
vingt-septième	twenty-seventh
vingt-six	twenty-six
vingt-sixième	twenty-sixth
vingt-trois	twenty-three
vingt-troisième	twenty-third
vivant	living, lifetime
vivant, de son	during his (her) life
vivre	to live
voir	see
voisin(e)	neighbor
vouloir	to wish, to want

NUMBERS

In some genealogical sources, numbers are written out. This is especially true with dates. The following list gives the cardinal (1, 2, 3) and the ordinal (1st, 2nd, 3rd) versions of each number. Dates are usually written in ordinal form. Ordinal numbers are made by adding *ième* to the cardinal form of a number. If the number ends in an *e*, drop the *e* before adding *ième*.

From 60 to 99, the French count by twenties rather than by tens. Thus, 70 in French is sixty-ten, and 71 is sixty-eleven. The number 80 is *four-twentie*; 81 is *four-twenties-one*; 91 is *four-twenties-eleven*; and so on through 99, which is *four-twenties-nineteen*. In

some areas, however, you will see the older style of 70 (*septante*), 80 (*octante* or *huitante*), and 90 (*nonante*).

Cardinal		Ordinal	
1	un	1st	premier
2	deux	2nd	deuxième
3	trois	3rd	troisième
4	quatre	4th	quatrième
5	cinq	5th	cinquième
6	six	6th	sixième
7	sept	7th	septième
8	huit	8th	huitième
9	neuf	9th	neuvième
10	dix	10th	dixième
11	onze	11th	onzième
12	douze	12th	douzième
13	treize	13th	treizième
14	quatorze	14th	quatorzième
15	quinze	15th	quinzième
16	seize	16th	seizième
17	dix-sept	17th	dix-septième
18	dix-huit	18th	dix-huitième
19	dix-neuf	19th	dix-neuvième
20	vingt	20th	vingtième
21	vingt-et-un	21st	vingt-et-unième
22	vingt-deux	22nd	vingt-deuxième
23	vingt-trois	23rd	vingt-troisième
24	vingt-quatre	24th	vingt-quatrième
25	vingt-cinq	25th	vingt-cinquième
26	vingt-six	26th	vingt-sixième
27	vingt-sept	27th	vingt-septième
28	vingt-huit	28th	vingt-huitième
29	vingt-neuf	29th	vingt-neuvième
30	trente	30th	trentième
31	trente-et-un	31st	trente-et-unième
40	quarante	40th	quarantième
50	cinquante	50th	cinquantième
60	soixante	60th	soixantième
70	soixante-dix,	70th	soixante-dixième

	septante		septantième
71	soixante-onze, septante-un	71st	soixante-onzième septante-et-unième
80	quatre-vingt(s) octante	80th	quatre-vingtième octantième
	huitante		huitantième
90	quatre-vingt-dix nonante	90th	quatre-vingt-dixième nonantième
99	quatre-vingt-dix- neuf, nonante- neuf	99th	quatre-vingt-dix- neuvième, nonante- neuvième
100	cent	100th	centième
1000	mil, mille	1000th	millième

DATES AND TIME

In French records, dates are often written out. For example:

Le vingt-trois mars mil sept cent soixante dix-neuf [on the twenty-third day of March, in the year one thousand seven hundred sixty and nineteen (1779)]

To understand French dates, use the following lists as well as the preceding “Numbers” section.

Months

English	French
January	janvier
February	février
March	mars
April	avril
May	mai
June	juin
July	juillet
August	août
September	septembre, 7bre
October	octobre, 8bre
November	novembre, 9bre
December	décembre, 10bre, Xbre

During the years 1792 to 1806, the French used a unique calendar that related to the founding of the French Republic. It included the following months:

vendémiaire	brumaire	frimaire
nivôse	pluviôse	ventôse
germinal	floréal	prairial
messidor	thermidor	fructidor

These month names cannot be translated because they do not correspond to the months we know as January to December. See the [*French Republican Calendar Research Outline*](#) (34046).

Days of the Week

English	French
Sunday	dimanche
Monday	lundi
Tuesday	mardi
Wednesday	mercredi
Thursday	jeudi
Friday	vendredi
Saturday	samedi

Times of the Day

In French birth and death records, the registrar often indicated the exact time of day when the birth or death occurred. This is usually written out.

French	English
à cinq heures	at 5 o'clock
au matin	in the morning
au soir	in the evening
après-demain	the day after tomorrow
après-midi	afternoon
avant-veille	two days before
avant-hier	day before yesterday
demain	tomorrow
du matin	in the morning, a.m.
du soir	in the evening, p.m.
heure	hour
hier	yesterday
hier soir	yesterday evening
hier au soir	yesterday evening

jour	day
lendemain	next day
matin	morning
midi	noon
minuit	midnight
nuît	night
soir	evening
surlendemain	two days later
veille	previous evening

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Fance, Church Record Baptism 1792-Present

Guide

Introduction

After 1792, the churches still required the clergy to keep christening (or baptism) records. The records may include birth dates. Information may be recorded on or after the date of birth. Information found in a baptism record depends on how detailed the minister made his record.

For more information on church christening records, see Background.

What You Are Looking For

The following information may be found in a christening entry:

- The name of your ancestor.
- The date of your ancestor's christening or baptism.
- The name of your ancestor's parents.
- The names of the witnesses or godparents.
- The date of your ancestor's birth.
- The place of your ancestor's birth.
- The residence of the parents.
- The occupation of the father.
- Whether your ancestor was of legitimate or illegitimate birth.

Steps

These 5 steps will guide you in finding your ancestor in French church records.

Step 1. Find the year of your ancestor's christening or baptism record.

To find the christening records available at the library, look in the Family History Library Catalog. Go to **What to Do Next**, select the **Family History Library Catalog**, and click on the tab for **Town Records** to see if your ancestor's parish is listed.

If you don't know which parish your ancestor lived in, see the French gazetteer. *Bottin des communes*.

When looking for your ancestor's christening or baptism record, remember:

- Christening records are arranged chronologically.
- Christening records may be intermixed with marriage or burial records.
- Christening entries of illegitimate children may be listed separately.

For helps in finding the year, see Tip 1.

Step 2. Find the entry for your ancestor.

Look for the last name, which is often clearly written and underlined; then look for the given name.

If you do not know the names of your ancestor's parents, you may have to check further to make sure you find the correct entry:

- Find the entries for all the children with the same given name and last name as your ancestor. Start with the year you think your ancestor was born. Then check the entries for five years before and five years after. You may find several entries for children with the same name but with different parents.
- Eliminate the entries that contradict what you know about your ancestor. Check death records to see if any of the children died before your ancestor did. Check marriage records to see if any of the children married someone other than your ancestor's spouse (but remember that your ancestor may have married more than once).
- Try to make sure the christening entry is of your direct line ancestor. Because names are so common, you must be sure you have the correct entry.

For more help in finding the record entry, see Tip 2.

For help in reading the record entry, see Tip 3.

For help in verifying that you have the correct record entry, see Tip 5.

Step 3. Find the entries for each brother and sister of your ancestor.

Once you have the entry for your ancestor, find the entries for your ancestor's brothers and sisters:

- Search the christening records for entries of your ancestor's brothers and sisters.
- Search local death records or the christening records from surrounding parishes, especially if gaps of 3 or more years are between the christening of siblings. Gaps of 3 or more years may indicate there was another child.
- To make sure you have found entries of all the family members, search death records and christening records of surrounding parishes for any additional children.
- Search for children born before the parents' marriage. Children may have been christened under the mother's maiden name. Often the father's name is not given.

For help in finding the entries for the ancestor's brothers and sisters, see Tip 4.

Step 4. Copy the information, and document your sources.

If you can, photocopy the record. If you can't, be sure to copy all the information in the entry, including:

- All the people listed and their relationships to each other. (Remember, witnesses are often relatives.)
- All the dates in the entry and the events they pertain to. (Sometimes birth, marriage, and death information pertaining to the child or parents may be included. The minister may use symbols such as * for birth, oo for marriage, and + for death.) Be sure to look for additional dates in the entry's margin.
- All the localities in the entry and who was from the places listed.

On the copy, document where the information came from. List:

- The type of source (a paper certificate, a microform, a book, an Internet site, and so forth).
- All reference numbers for the source. Carefully record any microfilm, book, or certificate numbers or the name and Internet address of the site you used.

Step 5. Analyze the information you obtain from the christening record.

To effectively use the information from the christening record, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is this the christening entry of my direct line ancestor? Because names are so common, you must be sure you have the correct record.
- Did the minister identify both parents, and is the mother's maiden name given?
- Were additional event dates, such as marriage and death given in the entry's margin? (The minister may use symbols such as * for birth, oo for marriage, and + for death.)
- Did more than 3 years pass since the christening of the last child? If so, another child may have been born and christened in a neighboring parish or born and died before it could be christened.
- Did you search 5 years without finding any earlier christening entries of children? If you find no other entries, then begin looking for the parents' marriage record.
- Did the minister identify the order and gender of the child being christened, such as "the 5th child and 2nd son"?

For help in verifying that you have the correct record entry, see Tip 5.

Background

Description

Christening records may go back to the 1500s, the keeping of baptismal records started in 1539 after the decree of Villers Cotterêts, but records were not regularly kept until 1579 after the decree of Blois. After the Royal declaration of April 9, 1736 a second copy was also kept. Because of wars and natural disasters, many churches were destroyed, along with all or part of their records.

Tips

Tip 1. How do I find the year my ancestor was Christened?

The following types of records may give the age of the ancestor if they are available:

- Confirmation records
- Marriage records
- Death or burial records
- Census records
- Probate records
- Citizenship records

By subtracting the ancestor's age from the year of the record in which they appear, you can determine the approximate year of christening.

Tip 2. How do I find the entry of my ancestor?

Look for the Latinized name. In Alsace Lorraine, Germans commonly Latinized their surnames. A person born and christened under the German name of "Bäcker," for example, may have later married and had children under the name "Pistorius," which was the Latin form of Bäcker.

For help with name variations, see the Names, Personal section of the *French Research Outline* and the *Germany Research Outline*.

Tip 3. What if I can't read the record?

Catholic church records may be written in French or Latin, and most Protestant church records are written in French. The language used in the record may also be affected by:

- The language of bordering countries.
- An invasion by foreign countries.

Prior to 1945, records in Alsace Lorraine while under German rule were written in Gothic script.

Also, the French Republican calendar was used for twelve years, from 24 October 1793 to 31 December 1805.

For publications that can help you read the languages and Gothic script, see the *Latin Word List*, *German Word List*, *French Word List*, the "Handwriting" section of the *Germany Research Outline* and the *French Republican Calendar*.

Tip 4. How do I find the record for each brother and sister?

Remember, within the family, one or more children may have the same given name(s).

When more than one set of parents has the same given names and surnames (for example two John and Mary Smiths), use the following identifiers and records to separate the families:

- The place of residence of the family.
- The father's occupation.
- The witnesses or godparents.
- Other sources, like census and probate records, that list family members as a group.

Tip 5. How do I verify the christening of my direct-line ancestor?

Often more than one family in a parish has the same family name. Because the same children's given names are used in every family, several children with the same given and family names could be christened within a few years of each other. To identify the correct direct-line ancestor and his or her parents:

- Check 5 years on each side of the supposed christening year, and copy the entry of every child with the same given name and surname as the ancestor.
- If one or more entries exist, check church burial records to eliminate those entries of children that died before your ancestor.
- If burial records do not exist or you are not able to eliminate all of the possible entries, check marriage records to eliminate those who married someone other than your ancestor's spouse.

- If you still cannot eliminate 2 or more possibilities, trace all lines to see if they go back to a common ancestor. Then continue research back from the common ancestor.
- If you eliminate all the possibilities, check the surrounding parishes, and repeat the above process until you find the christening entry for your ancestor.

Where to Find It

Family History Centers

Many Family History Centers can borrow microfilms of christening records from the Family History Library. There is a small fee to have a microfilm loaned to a Family History Center.

Family History Centers are located throughout the United States and other areas of the world. For the address of the Family History Center nearest you, see *Family History Centers*.

Family History Library

The Family History Library has microfilmed many of the French christening records. There is no fee for using these microfilms in person.

You may request photocopies of the record from the library for a small fee. You will need to fill out a Request for Photocopies—Census Records, Books, Microfilm, or Microfiche form. The Family History Library microfilm number is available on the Family History Library Catalog. Send the form and the fee to the Family History Library.

See *Family History Library Services and Resources* for information about contacting or visiting the library.

Parish Offices

If the Family History Library has not microfilmed the christening records for your locality, you will need to write in French to the parish office. For assistance in writing, please see the *French Letter Writing Guide*.



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France, Church Record Marriage 1564-1791

Guide

Introduction

Beginning in 1564, the catholic church required their clergy to keep marriage records. Information found in a marriage depends on how detailed the minister made his record.

For more information on church marriage records, see Background.

What You Are Looking For

The following information may be found in a marriage entry:

- The names of your ancestors.
- The date of your ancestors' marriage.
- The names of your ancestors' parents (usually the father's).
- The names of the witnesses.
- The dates of your ancestors' birth (usually their age at the time of marriage).
- The place of your ancestors' birth (or where they were residing when married).
- The residence of the parents.
- The occupation of the father.
- The date of the marriage proclamations or banns.

Steps

These 4 steps will guide you in finding your ancestor in French church records.

Step 1. Find the year of your ancestor's marriage record.

To find the marriage records available at the library, look in the Family History Library Catalog. Go to **What to Do Next**, select the **Family History Library Catalog**, and click on the tab for **Town Records** to see if your ancestor's parish is listed.

If you don't know which parish your ancestor lived in, see the French gazetteer *Bottin des communes*.

When looking for your ancestor's marriage record, remember:

- Marriage records are arranged chronologically.
- Marriage records may be intermixed with baptism or burial records.
- Marriages occurred about one year before the first child was born.

For helps in finding the year, see Tip 1.

Step 2. Find the entry for your ancestor.

Look for the last names, which are often clearly written and underlined; then look for the given names.

You may have to check further to make sure you find the correct entry:

- If the entry gives the ages of the bride and groom, they should be compatible with their ages at death.

For more help in finding the record entry, see Tip 2.

For help in reading the record entry, see Tip 3.

For help in verifying that you have the correct record entry, see Tip 4.

Step 3. Copy the information, and document your sources.

If you can, photocopy the record. If you can't, be sure to copy all the information in the entry, including:

- All the people listed and their relationships to each other. (Remember, witnesses are often relatives.)
- All the dates in the entry and the events they pertain to. (Sometimes birth, marriage, and death information pertaining to the child or parents may be included. The minister may use symbols such as * for birth, oo for marriage, and + for death.) Be sure to look for additional dates in the entry's margin.
- All the localities in the entry and who was from the places listed.

On the copy, document where the information came from. List:

- The type of source (a paper certificate, a microform, a book, an Internet site, etc.).
- All reference numbers for the source. Carefully record any microfilm, book, or certificate numbers or the name and Internet address of the site you used.

Step 4. Analyze the information you obtain from the marriage record.

To effectively use the information from the marriage record, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is this the marriage entry of my direct line ancestors? Because names are so common, you must be sure you have the correct record.
- Did the minister identify both parents, and are the mothers' maiden names given?
- Were additional event dates, such as baptism, death, etc., given in the entry's margin? (The minister may use symbols such as * for birth, oo for marriage and + for death.)

For help in verifying that you have the correct record entry, see Tip 4.

Background

The keeping of marriage records started in 1563 after the Council of Trent, but records were not regularly kept until 1579 after the decree of Blois. After the Royal declaration of April 9, 1736 a second copy was also kept.

Tips

Tip 1. How do I find the year my ancestor was married?

The following types of records may give the age of the ancestor if they are available:

- Baptism record of the first child
- Death or burial records of the first child

By subtracting the first child's age plus one year from the year of the record in which they appear, you can determine the approximate year of the parent's marriage.

Tip 2. How do I find the entry of my ancestor?

Look for the Latinized name. In Alsace Lorraine, Germans commonly Latinized their surnames. A person born and christened under the German name of "Bäcker," for example, may have later married and had children under the name "Pistorius," which was the Latin form of Bäcker.

For help with name variations, see the Names, Personal section of the *French Research Outline* and the *German Research Outline*.

Tip 3. What if I can't read the record?

Catholic church records may be written in French or Latin, and most Protestant church records are written in French. The language used in the record may also be affected by:

- The language of bordering countries.
- An invasion by foreign countries.

Prior to 1945, records in Alsace Lorraine while under German rule were written in Gothic script.

Also, the French Republican calendar was used for twelve years, from 24 October 1793 to 31 December 1805.

For publications that can help you read the languages and Gothic script, see the *French Word List*, *Latin Word List*, and *German Word List*, the Handwriting section of the *Germany Research Outline*, and the *French Republican Calendar*.

Tip 4. How do I verify the marriage of my direct-line ancestor?

Often more than one family in a parish has the same family name. Because the same children's given names are used in every family, several children with the same given and family names could be married within a few years of each other. To identify the correct direct-line ancestor and his or her parents:

- Check 5 years before the birth of the first child.
- If one or more entries exist, check church burial records to eliminate those entries of couples that died before or after your ancestor.
- If you eliminate all the possibilities, check the surrounding parishes, and repeat the above process until you find the marriage entry for your ancestors.

Where to Find It

Family History Centers

Many Family History Centers can borrow microfilms of marriage records from the Family History Library. There is a small fee to have a microfilm loaned to a Family History Center.

Family History Centers are located throughout the United States and other areas of the world. For the address of the Family History Center nearest you, see [Family History Centers](#).

Family History Library

The Family History Library has microfilmed many of the French marriage records. There is no fee for using these microfilms in person.

You may request photocopies of the record from the library for a small fee. You will need to fill out a Request for Photocopies—Census Records, Books, Microfilm or Microfiche form. The Family History Library microfilm number is available from the Family History Library Catalog. Send the form and the fee to the Family History Library.

See *Family History Library Services and Resources* for information about contacting or visiting the library.

Parish Offices

If the Family History Library has not microfilmed the marriage records for your locality, you will need to write in French to the parish office. For assistance in writing, please see the *French Letter Writing Guide*.



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France Church Record Baptisms

Guide

Introduction

Beginning in 1534, many churches required their clergy to keep christening (or baptism) records. The records may include birth dates. Information may be recorded on or after the date of birth. Information found in a christening depends on how detailed the minister made his record.

For more information on church christening records, see Background.

What You Are Looking For

The following information may be found in a christening entry:

- The name of your ancestor.
- The date of your ancestor's christening or baptism.
- The name of your ancestor's parents.
- The names of the witnesses or godparents.
- The date of your ancestor's birth.
- The place of your ancestor's birth.
- The residence of the parents.
- The occupation of the father.
- Whether your ancestor was of legitimate or illegitimate birth.

Steps

These 5 steps will guide you in finding your ancestor in French church records.

Step 1. Find the year of your ancestor's christening or baptism record.

To find the christening records available at the library, look in the Family History Library Catalog. Go to **What to Do Next**, select the **Family History Library Catalog**, and click on the tab for **Town Records** to see if your ancestor's parish is listed.

If you don't know which parish your ancestor lived in, see the French gazetteer *Bottin des communes*.

When looking for your ancestor's christening or baptism record, remember:

- Christening records are arranged chronologically.
- Christening records may be intermixed with marriage or burial records.
- Christening records of illegitimate children may be listed separately.

For helps in finding the year, see Tip 1.

Step 2. Find the entry for your ancestor.

Look for the last name, which is often clearly written and underlined; then look for the given name.

If you do not know the names of your ancestor's parents, you may have to check further to make sure you find the correct entry:

- Find the entries for all the children with the same given name and last name as your ancestor. Start with the year when you think your ancestor was born. Then check the entries for five years before and five years after. You may find several entries for children with the same name but with different parents.
- Eliminate the entries that contradict what you know about your ancestor. Check death records to see if any of the children died before your ancestor did. Check marriage records to see if any of the children married someone other than your ancestor's spouse (but remember that your ancestor may have married more than once).
- Try to make sure the christening entry is of your direct line ancestor. Because names are so common, you must be sure you have the correct entry.

For more help in finding the record entry, see Tip 2.

For help in reading the record entry, see Tip 3.

For help in verifying that you have the correct record entry, see Tip 5.

Step 3. Find the entries for each brother and sister of your ancestor.

Once you have the entry for your ancestor, find the entries for your ancestor's brothers and sisters:

- Search the christening records for entries of your ancestor's brothers and sisters.
- Search local death records or the christening records from surrounding parishes, especially if there are gaps of 3 or more years between the christening of siblings. Gaps of 3 or more years may indicate there was another child.
- To make sure you have found entries of all the family members, search death records and christening records of surrounding parishes for any additional children.
- Search for children born before the parents' marriage. Children may have been christened under the mother's maiden name. Often the father's name is not given.

For help in finding the entries for the ancestor's brothers and sisters, see Tip 4.

Step 4. Copy the information, and document your sources.

If you can, photocopy the record. If you can't, be sure to copy all the information in the entry, including:

- All the people listed and their relationships to each other. (Remember, witnesses are often relatives.)
- All the dates in the entry and the events they pertain to. (Sometimes birth, marriage, and death information pertaining to the child or parents may be included. The minister may use symbols such as * for birth, oo for marriage, and + for death.) Be sure to look for additional dates in the entry's margin.
- All the localities in the entry and who was from the places listed.

On the copy, document where the information came from. List:

- The type of source (a paper certificate, a microform, a book, an Internet site, etc.).
- All reference numbers for the source. Carefully record any microfilm, book, or certificate numbers or the name and Internet address of the site you used.

Step 5. Analyze the information you obtain from the christening record.

To effectively use the information from the christening record, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is this the christening entry of my direct line ancestor? Because names are so common, you must be sure you have the correct record.
- Did the minister identify both parents, and is the mother's maiden name given?
- Were additional event dates, such as marriage, death, etc., given in the entry's margin? (The minister may use symbols such as * for birth, oo for marriage and + for death.)
- Did more than 3 years pass since the christening of the last child? If so, another child may have been born and christened in a neighboring parish or born and died before it could be christened.
- Did you search 5 years without finding any earlier christening entries of children? If you find no other entries, then begin looking for the parent's marriage record.
- Did the minister identify the order and gender of the child being christened, such as "the 5th child and 2nd son"?

For help in verifying that you have the correct record entry, see Tip 5.

Background

Description

Christening records may go back to the 1500s, the keeping of baptismal started in 1539 after the decree of Villers Cotterets, but records were not regularly kept until 1579 after the decree of Blois. After the Royal declaration of April 9, 1736 a second copy was also kept.

Tips

Tip 1. How do I find the year my ancestor was christened?

The following types of records may give the age of the ancestor if they are available:

- Confirmation records
- Marriage records
- Death or burial records
- Census records
- Probate records
- Citizenship records

By subtracting the ancestor's age from the year of the record in which they appear, you can determine the approximate year of christening

Tip 2. How do I find the entry of my ancestor?

Look for the Latinized name. In Alsace Lorraine, Germans commonly Latinized their surnames. A person born and christened under the German name of "Bäcker," for example, may have later married and had children under the name "Pistorius," which was the Latin form of Bäcker.

For help with name variations, see the Names, Personal section of the *French Research Outline* and the *German Research Outline*.

Tip 3. What if I can't read the record?

Catholic church records may be written in French or Latin, and most Protestant church records are written in French. The language used in the record may also be affected by:

- The language of bordering countries.
- An invasion by foreign countries.

Prior to 1945, records in Alsace Lorraine while under German rule were written in Gothic script.

Also, the French Republican calendar was used for twelve years, from 24 October 1793 to 31 December 1805.

For publications that can help you read the languages and Gothic script, see the *French Word List*, *Latin Word List*, and *German Word List*, the Handwriting section of the *Germany Research Outline*, and the *French Republican Calendar*.

Tip 4. How do I find the record for each brother and sister?

Remember, within the family, one or more children may have the same given name(s).

When more than one set of parents has the same given names and surnames (for example two John and Mary Smiths), use the following identifiers and records to separate the families:

- The place of residence of the family.
- The father's occupation.
- The witnesses or godparents.
- Other sources like census and probate records that list family members as a group.

Tip 5. How do I verify the christening of my direct-line ancestor?

Often more than one family in a parish has the same family name. Because the same children's given names are used in every family, several children with the same given and family names could be christened within a few years of each other. To identify the correct direct-line ancestor and his or her parents:

- Check 5 years on each side of the supposed christening year, and copy the entry of every child with the same given name and surname as the ancestor.
- If one or more entries exist, check church burial records to eliminate those entries of children who died before your ancestor.
- If burial records do not exist or you are not able to eliminate all of the possible entries, check marriage records to eliminate those who married someone other than your ancestor's spouse.
- If you still cannot eliminate 2 or more possibilities, trace all lines to see if they go back to a common ancestor. Then continue research back from the common ancestor.
- If you eliminate all the possibilities, check the surrounding parishes, and repeat the above process until you find the christening entry for your ancestor.

Where to Find It

Family History Centers

Many Family History Centers can borrow microfilm(s) of christening records from the Family History Library. There is a small fee to have a microfilm loaned to a Family History Center.

Family History Centers are located throughout the United States and other areas of the world. For the address of the Family History Center nearest you, see [Family History Centers](#).

Family History Library

The Family History Library has microfilmed many of the French christening records. There is no fee for using these microfilms in person.

You may request photocopies of the record from the library for a small fee. You will need to fill out a Request for Photocopies—Census Records, Books, Microfilm or Microfiche form. The Family History Library microfilm number is available from the Family History Library Catalog. Send the form and the fee to the Family History Library.

See *Family History Library Services and Resources* for information about contacting or visiting the library.

Parish Offices

If the Family History Library has not microfilmed the christening records for your locality, you will need to write in French to the parish office. For assistance in writing, please see the *French Letter Writing Guide*.



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France, Civil Registration Birth 1792-Present

Guide

Introduction

Beginning in 1792, the government required civil registrars to keep birth records. Information found in a birth entry depends on how detailed the civil registrar made his record.

For more information on civil registry birth records, see Background.

What You Are Looking For

The following information may be found in a birth entry:

- The name of your ancestor.
- The date of your ancestor's birth.
- The name of your ancestor's parents.
- The names of the witnesses.
- The place of your ancestor's birth.
- The residence of the parents.
- The occupation of the father.
- Whether your ancestor was of legitimate or illegitimate birth.

Steps

These 5 steps will guide you in finding your ancestor in French civil registry records.

Step 1. Find the year of your ancestor's birth record.

To find the birth records available at the library, look in the Family History Library Catalog. Go to **What to Do Next**, select the **Family History Library Catalog**, and click on the tab for **Town Records** to see if your ancestor's town is listed.

If you don't know which civil registry district your ancestor lived in, see the French gazetteer.
Bottin des communes

When looking for your ancestor's birth record, remember:

- Birth records are arranged chronologically.
- Birth records may be intermixed with marriage or death records.
- Birth entries of illegitimate children may be listed separately.

For helps in finding the year, see Tip 1.

Step 2. Find the entry for your ancestor.

Look for the last name, which is often clearly written on printed forms; then look for the given name.

If you do not know the names of your ancestor's parents, you may have to check further to make sure you find the correct entry:

- Find the entries for all the children with the same given name and last name as your ancestor. Start with the year you think your ancestor was born. Then check the entries for five years before and five years after. You may find several entries for children with the same name but with different parents.
- Eliminate the entries that contradict what you know about your ancestor. Check death records to see if any of the children died before your ancestor did. Check marriage records to see if any of the children married someone other than your ancestor's spouse (but remember that your ancestor may have married more than once).
- Try to make sure the birth entry is of your direct line ancestor. Because names are so common, you must be sure you have the correct entry.

For more help in finding the record entry, see Tip 2.

For help in reading the record entry, see Tip 3.

For help in verifying that you have the correct record entry, see Tip 5.

Step 3. Find the entries for each brother and sister of your ancestor.

Once you have the entry for your ancestor, find the entries for your ancestor's brothers and sisters:

- Search the birth records for entries of your ancestor's brothers and sisters.
- Search local death records or the birth records from surrounding civil registries, especially if gaps of 3 or more years are between the birth of siblings. Gaps of 3 or more years may indicate there was another child.
- To make sure you have found entries of all the family members, search death records and birth records of surrounding civil registries for any additional children.
- Search for children born before the parents' marriage. Children may have been born under the mother's maiden name. Often the father's name is not given.

For help in finding the entries for the ancestor's brothers and sisters, see Tip 4.

Step 4. Copy the information, and document your sources.

If you can, photocopy the record. If you can't, be sure to copy all the information in the entry, including:

- All the people listed and their relationships to each other. (Remember, witnesses are often relatives.)
- All the dates in the entry and the events they pertain to. (Sometimes birth, marriage, and death information pertaining to the child or parents may be included. The civil registrar may use symbols such as * for birth, oo for marriage, and + for death.) Be sure to look for additional dates in the entry's margin.
- All the localities in the entry and who was from the places listed.

On the copy, document where the information came from. List:

- The type of source (a paper certificate, a microform, a book, an Internet site, and so forth).
- All reference numbers for the source. Carefully record any microfilm, book, or certificate numbers or the name and Internet address of the site you used.

Step 5. Analyze the information you obtain from the birth record.

To effectively use the information from the birth record, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is this the birth entry of my direct line ancestor? Because names are so common, you must be sure you have the correct record.
- Did the civil registrar identify both parents, and is the mother's maiden name given?
- Were additional event dates, such as marriage and death given in the entry's margin? (The civil registrar may use symbols such as * for birth, oo for marriage, and + for death.)
- Did more than 3 years pass since the birth of the last child? If so, another child may have been born in a neighboring civil registry district.
- Did you search 5 years without finding any earlier birth entries of children? If you find no other entries, then begin looking for the parents' marriage record.
- Did the civil registrar identify the order and gender of the child being christened, such as "the 5th child and 2nd son"?

For help in verifying that you have the correct record entry, see Tip 5.

Background

Description

Because of wars and natural disasters, some civil registries were destroyed, along with all or part of their records.

Tips

Tip 1. How do I find the year my ancestor was born?

The following types of records may give the age of the ancestor if they are available:

- Confirmation records
- Marriage records
- Death or burial records
- Census records
- Probate records
- Citizenship records

By subtracting the ancestor's age from the year of the record in which they appear, you can determine the approximate year of birth.

Tip 2. How do I find the entry of my ancestor?

Look for the Latinized name. In Alsace Lorraine, Germans commonly Latinized their surnames. A person born under the German name of "Bäcker," for example, may have later married and had children under the name "Pistorius," which was the Latin form of Bäcker.

For help with name variations, see the "Names, Personal" section of the *French Research Outline* and the *Germany Research Outline*.

Tip 3. What if I can't read the record?

Civil registry records are written in French. The language used in the record may also be affected by:

- The language of bordering countries.
- An invasion by foreign countries.

Prior to 1945, records in Alsace Lorraine while under German rule were written in Gothic script.

Also, the French Republican calendar was used for twelve years, from 24 October 1793 to 31 December 1805.

For publications that can help you read the languages and Gothic script, see the *Latin Word List*, *German Word List*, *French Word List*, the "Handwriting" section of the *Germany Research Outline* and the *French Republican Calendar*.

Tip 4. How do I find the record for each brother and sister?

Remember, within the family, one or more children may have the same given name(s).

When more than one set of parents has the same given names and surnames (for example two John and Mary Smiths), use the following identifiers and records to separate the families:

- The place of residence of the family.
- The father's occupation.
- The witnesses or godparents.
- Other sources, like census and probate records, that list family members as a group.

Tip 5. How do I verify the birth of my direct-line ancestor?

Often more than one family in a civil registry district has the same family name. Because the same children's given names are used in every family, several children with the same given and family names could be born within a few years of each other. To identify the correct direct-line ancestor and his or her parents:

- Check 5 years on each side of the supposed birth year, and copy the entry of every child with the same given name and surname as the ancestor.
- If one or more entries exist, check civil registry death records to eliminate those entries of children that died before your ancestor.
- If death records do not exist or you are not able to eliminate all of the possible entries, check marriage records to eliminate those who married someone other than your ancestor's spouse.
- If you still cannot eliminate 2 or more possibilities, trace all lines to see if they go back to a common ancestor. Then continue research back from the common ancestor.
- If you eliminate all the possibilities, check the surrounding civil registry districts, and repeat the above process until you find the birth entry for your ancestor.

Where to Find It

Family History Centers

Many Family History Centers can borrow microfilms of birth records from the Family History Library. There is a small fee to have a microfilm loaned to a Family History Center.

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You may request photocopies of the record from the library for a small fee. You will need to fill out a Request for Photocopies—Census Records, Books, Microfilm, or Microfiche form. The Family History Library microfilm number is available on the Family History Library Catalog. Send the form and the fee to the Family History Library.

See *Family History Library Services and Resources* for information about contacting or visiting the library.

Civil Registry Offices

If the Family History Library has not microfilmed the birth records for your locality, you will need to write in French to the civil registry office. For assistance in writing, please see the *French Letter Writing Guide*.



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France, Civil Registration Marriage 1792-Present

Guide

Introduction

Beginning in 1792, the government required civil registrars to keep marriage records. Information found in a marriage record depends on how detailed the civil registrar made his record.

For more information on civil registry marriage records, see Background.

What You Are Looking For

The following information may be found in a marriage entry:

- The names of your ancestors.
- The date of your ancestors' marriage.
- The names of your ancestors' parents.
- The names of the witnesses.
- The dates of your ancestors' birth.
- The place of your ancestors' birth.
- The residence of the parents.
- The occupation of the father.
- The occupation of the groom.

Steps

These 4 steps will guide you in finding your ancestors in French church records.

Step 1. Find the year of your ancestor's marriage record.

To find the marriage records available at the library, look in the Family History Library Catalog. Go to **What to Do Next**, select the **Family History Library Catalog**, and click on the tab for **Town Records** to see if your ancestor's town is listed.

If you don't know which civil registry your ancestor lived in, see the French gazetteer *Bottin des communes*.

When looking for your ancestors' marriage record, remember:

- Marriage records are arranged chronologically.
- Marriages occurred about one year before the first child was born.

For helps in finding the year, see Tip 1.

Step 2. Find the entry for your ancestor.

Look for the last names, which are often clearly written and underlined; then look for the given names.

You may have to check further to make sure you find the correct entry:

- If the entry gives the ages of the bride and groom, they should be compatible with their ages at death or on census or other records.

For more help in finding the record entry, see Tip 2.

For help in reading the record entry, see Tip 3.

For help in verifying that you have the correct record entry, see Tip 4.

Step 3. Copy the information, and document your sources.

If you can, photocopy the record. If you can't, be sure to copy all the information in the entry, including:

- All the people listed and their relationships to each other. (Remember, witnesses are often relatives.)
- All the dates in the entry and the events they pertain to. (Sometimes birth, marriage, and death information pertaining to the child or parents may be included. The civil registrar may use symbols such as * for birth, oo for marriage, and + for death.) Be sure to look for additional dates in the entry's margin.
- All the localities in the entry and who was from the places listed.

On the copy, document where the information came from. List:

- The type of source (a paper certificate, a microform, a book, an Internet site, etc.).
- All reference numbers for the source. Carefully record any microfilm, book, or certificate numbers or the name and Internet address of the site you used.

Step 4. Analyze the information you obtain from the marriage record.

To effectively use the information from the marriage record, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is this the marriage entry of my direct line ancestors? Because names are so common, you must be sure you have the correct record.
- Did the civil registrar identify both parents, and are the mothers' maiden names given?
- Were additional event dates, such as birth, death, etc., given in the entry's margin? (The minister may use symbols such as * for birth, oo for marriage and + for death.)

For help in verifying that you have the correct record entry, see Tip 4.

Background

Because of wars, natural disasters, and accidents, many churches were destroyed, along with all or part of their records.

Tips

Tip 1. How do I find the year my ancestor was married?

The following types of records may give the year of marriage if they are available:

- Birth record of the first child
- Death records of the first child

Subtracting the first child's age plus one year from the year of the record in which they appear, you can determine the approximate year of the parent's marriage.

Tip 2. How do I find the entry of my ancestor?

Look for the Latinized name. In Alsace Lorraine, Germans commonly Latinized their surnames. A person born under the German name of "Bäcker," for example, may have later married and had children under the name "Pistorius," which was the Latin form of Bäcker.

For help with name variations, see the Names, Personal section of the *French Research Outline* and the *German Research Outline*.

Tip 3. What if I can't read the record?

Civil registry records will be written in French. The language used in the record may also be affected by:

- The language of bordering countries.
- An invasion by foreign countries.

Prior to 1945, records in Alsace Lorraine while under German rule were written in Gothic script.

Also, the French Republican calendar was used for twelve years, from 24 October 1793 to 31 December 1805.

For publications that can help you read the languages and Gothic script, see the *French Word List*, *Latin Word List*, and *German Word List*, the Handwriting section of the *Germany Research Outline*, and the *French Republican Calendar*.

Tip 4. How do I verify the marriage of my direct-line ancestor?

Often more than one family in a civil registry has the same family name. Because the same children's given names are used in every family, several children with the same given and family names could be married within a few years of each other. To identify the correct direct-line ancestor and his or her parents:

- Check 5 years before the birth of the first child.
- If one or more entries exist, check death records to eliminate those entries of couples that died before or after your ancestor.
- If you eliminate all the possibilities, check the surrounding civil registries, and repeat the above process until you find the marriage entry for your ancestors.

Where to Find It

Family History Centers

Many Family History Centers can borrow microfilms of marriage records from the Family History Library. There is a small fee to have a microfilm loaned to a Family History Center.

Family History Centers are located throughout the United States and other areas of the world. For the address of the Family History Center nearest you, see *Family History Centers*.

Family History Library

The Family History Library has microfilmed many of the French marriage records. There is no fee for using these microfilms in person.

You may request photocopies of the record from the library for a small fee. You will need to fill out a Request for Photocopies—Census Records, Books, Microfilm or Microfiche form. The Family History Library microfilm number is available from the Family History Library Catalog. Send the form and the fee to the Family History Library.

See *Family History Library Services and Resources* for information about contacting or visiting the library.

Civil Registry Offices

If the Family History Library has not microfilmed the marriage records for your locality, you will need to write in French to the civil registry office. For assistance in writing, please see the *French Letter Writing Guide*.



FRENCH FAMILY AND URBAN HISTORY IN THE CENSUS

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Members of the general public, as well as historians and other social scientists involved in the growing field of family history, share an interest in historical sources that permit them to reconstruct the lives of individuals. By reconstruction we mean the linking-together of information about individuals in the past to tell us about certain "vital events" or life conditions.¹ For the demographer as well as the genealogists "vital events" refer primarily to the events of birth, marriage, and death. These are times in people's lives of the relatively recent past when they were likely to have left written evidence about the event they experienced. Genealogists are, of course, interested in the fate of specific individuals. Amateur genealogists are usually concerned about the lives of individuals related to them by blood or marriage. Like genealogists, historians have for many years been interested in tracing the lives of particular people—usually men and women whose noteworthy achievements were believed to be the stuff of which history is made. In more recent years, however, a new kind of historian or historical demographer has been attracted to the study of a variety of source materials previously used by genealogists and biographically oriented historians—not for the study of people who were especially noteworthy or atypical, but rather those whose lives are thought to be representative of the typical experience of large social groups.

The main subject of this discussion is the nature, quality, and availability of one particular type of historical source which may be used to uncover information

about people in the French past—the listes nominatives (nominative lists) of the French censuses. My talk will concentrate on the nineteenth century documents. However, I will also mention one earlier census-type document which permits the identification of a large number of individuals, and also try to give you some insight into the ways historical demographers and social historians use these sources to reconstruct individual and community life of the past.

As is well known, France is a country with a reputation as a forerunner in the creation of a modern, bureaucratic system for the administration of state affairs. The great nineteenth-century historian Alexis de Tocqueville was one of the more insightful in describing the French monarchy's progressive efforts to create a centralized administration, one which generated a massive amount of written information describing the kingdom in great detail for the consumption of the monarch and his advisors.² While it has historically been fashionable, particularly in Anglo-Saxon countries, to deplore bureaucratic structures and the masses of paperwork they generate, the fact is that highly bureaucratized societies are a boon for the historical researcher. Those of us alive now would have little information about our ancestors had organizations such as the Roman Catholic church or the rulers of the French state not exercised their passion for recording events and keeping track of people in rather systematic ways.

The French church and state have

historically been engaged in the recording of different kinds of information about individuals and families of the past. The French and French-Canadian Roman Catholic parish registers that recorded the events of baptism, marriage, and burial are rightly known as among the best in the world. The French state, on the other hand, was the main agency for the formulation and implementation of the practice of census taking.³ From their inception, censuses have been used primarily for administrative purposes. Historically, they have given ambitious governments information on the geographical distribution of its population, the numbers of young men liable for military service, and insight into the number of people from whom resources could be expropriated in the form of taxes. It is for these reasons that census taking sometimes led to civil disturbances or rioting. Humble people of the past knew very well that the arrival of the census taker often meant that the tax collector was not far behind. One of the generalizations we might make about the possibilities of carrying out a reliable census is that they grow greater in direct relation to the people's conviction that cooperation with the census taker will not substantially increase their liability to be taxed more heavily.

In the case of the French national censuses of the nineteenth century, there was still some linkage between the size of cities and the rate of certain indirect taxes—an unfortunate relation which as late as 1895 still resulted in certain cities systematically underreporting the number of their inhabitants.⁴ While the period before the nineteenth century saw many efforts to count the number of people inhabiting the French kingdom, these efforts were usually local or regional, organized on an ad hoc basis to help deal with a temporary problem—the feeding of local populations during times of food shortage or famine, the levying of special taxes for the raising of armies, and so on. During the period of the French Revolution, until 1815, there was an increased

desire on the part of successive groups of revolutionary leaders to have an accurate count of the new nation's citizens. However, conditions of internal unrest which marked so many areas of the country were hardly conducive to the carrying out of a national census—an administrative undertaking which demands a large degree of social peace in order to be accurate, especially in a nation which numbered some twenty-eight million people in 1789.⁵

The first national census in France worthy of the name was carried out in 1801. Between 1801 and 1836, there were a number of efforts to keep a count of the national population, notably in 1806, in 1817-21, in 1826, and 1831. However, the first three of these projects were not really censuses—house-to-house counts organized for a specific day or within a limited set of days—but rather attempts to estimate the population by updating old counts with total of births and deaths which had occurred between the time of the two counts. It was not until 1836 that a truly national and organized census took place with specific and detailed instructions going out to all parts of the nation detailing how the census should be taken.⁶

One of the most important criteria for assessing the usefulness of a census for research into family history or historical demography is, of course, the information on individuals it contains. Before addressing this subject, I want to voice one caveat. When describing the kind of information available on individuals in the French nominative lists, I am referring to the general case—what is generally available if the census returns of the whole nation are taken into consideration. In the period up to say 1851, the year of a particularly informative census, there are unpredictable, often local variations in the way census takers filled out the forms with which they had been supplied. Particularly in small, rural areas, there was often a shortage of literate and qualified personnel to carry out the wishes of the central government. This problem tended

to decline in importance as the nineteenth century progressed, but though we are looking at a nationwide, fairly uniform census system from 1836 on, the historical researcher should be aware that the degree to which census enumerators carried out their written instructions often varied. One example from my own work on the Alsatian city of Mulhouse may illustrate this. In no scholarship concerning the contents of the nominative lists from the censuses of the 1830s and 1840s with which I am working is there any mention of a census question on religion. However, the census manuscripts for this particular city and its suburbs do contain indications of the inhabitants' religion--perhaps as the result of the fact that unlike most of France, this area was a religiously heterogeneous one, containing important numbers of Lutherans, members of the Reformed church, Jews and Anabaptists, as well as Roman Catholics. Clearly, though the censuses were supposed to be uniform throughout the nation, the interests of local authorities could and did find their way into the questions which individuals were asked in the censuses. The generally available kinds of information on individuals for the censuses between 1836 and 1896 are indicated in Table 1.

In general, one can depend on finding the following data: first name and family name, marital status (single, married, or widowed); age or date of birth (with the exception of the 1841 census); and some indication of occupation. Until the census 1846, there was no specific street address given for households--the basic census unit. Information on place of birth has been cited as unavailable by one scholar until the census of 1872. In those returns which I have worked with--again for the city of Mulhouse--there is information on country of birth, if outside France, in the census of 1851. Beginning in 1836, individuals were listed by name in their household of residence. Like most national censuses of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the French lists individuals not by families but by households or dwelling units. In general, individuals were

supposed to be listed in the following order: head of household, spouse of head, if present, followed by children of the head. Then would follow any other ascending, descending, or collateral kin and employees of the head of household, such as apprentices and servants living there. Several other features of these census manuscripts should be mentioned. Age data are often unreliable--a problem which exists in many nations' censuses until this day. It has been suggested that the reason that the question on age was dropped from the census of 1841 was its director's citing of the famous story of Rickman, the British census director, who thought that questions on age were a waste of time since he himself had never been able to determine the age of his wife or his servant.⁸ In fact, females in the past did seem either less able or willing to give their correct ages to the census takers than men. This may be the result of their generally lower rates of literacy in the past and/or men's greater awareness of age because of the demands of military service. In any case, it has been statistically demonstrated that in societies where literacy is not the universal experience, and/or where large numbers of people have little familiarity with written documents, there will be a tendency for people to "round off" their ages--often, for example, to the nearest number ending in zero or five.

Information on occupation is quite variable within the French nation, raising many ambiguities. Female and child employment is typically under represented, married women often being listed simply as wife, and children who can reasonably be predicted to have been engaged in paid labor outside the home listed simply as son or daughter in the "occupation" space. On the other hand, census returns from certain rural areas would often take the occupation of the household head--usually one of the many terms referring to a land cultivator--and list all members of the household under that same occupation. The specificity of occupational data tends to increase over time. A man who was listed simply as "baker" in the censuses of 1841 or 1846

would appear in the census of 1851 and after not merely as "baker" but with more detailed information about his status within that occupational group, for example, "apprentice baker" or "master baker," the latter indicating that he owned his own shop and was an employer of labor rather than an employee. One final comment about the contents of the earlier nominative lists. The census of 1836 was taken by commune of legal domicile, not by actual presence in the place. That is, if a person was legally domiciled in a commune but absent from his or her legal place of residence at census time, he or she would still be counted in the census at the place of legal residence. This practice was changed for the census of 1841 and after. People were counted where they actually were at the time of the census. However, what was referred to as the "floating population"—the nonresident but physically present population was not listed in the census by name, but their total numbers merely summarized at the end of the census. This practice, which counted institutional populations such as soldiers garrisoned in a particular town, was a response to the taxation problem. The number of "floating" people was not counted as part of the city population for the purposes of assessing their rate of indirect taxation referred to before.

In addition to knowing the kinds of information available on individuals from an historical source, we must also know about the source's availability. Though there is no exhaustive inventory published which indicates the availability of census manuscripts, we do have information about the kinds of places which are most likely to have preserved the manuscripts of the censuses I have been discussing. See Table 2.

Research undertaken at the Institut National d'Etudes Demographiques (National Institute for Demographic Studies) under the direction of Louis Henry has shown that in general, the likelihood of finding extant nominative lists is much higher for towns than for rural areas. A combination of administrative rules and

human neglect as well as the destruction of records in wars has been responsible for the paucity of records preserved in particular regions of the country. A list of the most favored departments in this respect is given in Table 3.

How, specifically, can these nominative lists be used in the writing of family history? Here, we must distinguish sharply between the researcher interested only in tracing the minimum amount of information on his or her own ancestors and the persons who, like social historians or demographers, might be interested in learning about a whole community. For those concerned only with their own four-generation genealogies, the French census manuscripts remain a source inferior to the vital registration records, that is, parish registers up to 1792 and civil registration records after that. There are several reasons for this. The first and most important is that the Genealogical Society of Utah collects vital registration materials in preference to census records. Thus, the consultation of individual nominative lists must take place at departmental or city archives in France or ordered on microfilm from those archives. Secondly, unlike French civil registration series, census lists are not indexed by name. In order to locate a specific individual or household in a locality, the researcher must look through all the names. Though I have noted that cities are more likely than rural areas to have conserved their census manuscripts, the time it takes to locate individuals obviously rises directly with the size of the community whose records are being searched. These drawbacks might be thought to detract from any possible use of the nominative lists for the history of individual families. However, while recognizing that the vital registration records are to be highly preferred for the formulation of family genealogies, I think there is some useful role to be played by this type of source for the person engaged in genealogical research. First, the census manuscripts offer the possibility of help for the truly desperate—those individuals who simply

cannot locate their ancestors in the civil registration records. If information on place of the ancestor's residence is known, the work of looking through the census manuscript may be the only way to locate "lost" individuals. Secondly, the nominative lists offer the possibility of research for those who wish to push their family history research beyond the establishment of a four-generation genealogy. Let me give an example of the kind of information one might uncover. The discovery of a census household containing one's ancestors might reveal family members whose existence was never known of before. At any one census date, the researcher lucky enough to discover the relevant household or households containing his or her kin may also gain information on more than one generation of the family. While households containing grandparents may have represented only a minority of a community's households at any one point in time, it was also the practice in nineteenth-century Europe for aged parents of adult children to reside with one of their children—particularly if the parent was a widow.⁹ One may thus have a three-generational portrait of the coresiding group in one census year—the adult child as head of the household along with young children plus a coresiding parent or collateral kin. The consultation of the census manuscripts, particularly for small historical communities, provides the foundation on which local histories may be based. Occupational information on community inhabitants, in particular, gives the researcher who wishes to go beyond the history of his or her own family an insight into the nature of the settlement in which their ancestors lived.

One additional asset of the French nominative lists I have worked with for the 1830s and 1840s is the information they give on women, who are usually more difficult than men to trace through historical records. Married and widowed women are in general listed under their own family names. For example, a woman named Marie Dupont who is married to Jean Lefebvre will be listed in the nominative

lists on the line below the name of her husband as Marie Dupont, femme (wife of) Lefebvre. Similarly, widows are generally listed under their own family names, with the addition "widow of" so-and-so. This kind of information is invaluable in identifying whether the couple whom one discovers in the census manuscripts is, in fact, the one that is being searched for. Knowing that there is information on wives' maiden names makes identifying ancestors much less ambiguous.

As I mentioned in the beginning of my talk, I want to discuss, if only briefly, an earlier series of nominative lists of French individuals which are a relatively underexploited source for genealogical and family history research. For the seventeenth and eighteenth century, in many areas of northern France, in particular, there exist series of tax lists which contain the names of taxpayers and the sums they owed to the annual collection of the main tax of the pre-Revolutionary period—the taille (literally, "cut" or share).¹⁰ Jacques Dupaquier, the scholar who has done the most to bring this type of source to the attention of historical demographers, has recently based an extraordinary study of the population of the Paris basin in large part upon these tax lists.¹¹ What the lists offer is essentially the name of the responsible taxpayer of each household, usually the household head, who was obliged to pay a share of the tax which was levied on whole communities, and then divided up among the households roughly by their ability to pay. If households were omitted from the calculation or the taille lists, their share of the tax had to be made up by the other households. The manner in which the tax was allocated thus encouraged a very complete listing of names. Certain categories of individuals were exempt from the taille, though they were supposed to be listed at the bottom of the roster of taxpayers. Those exempt included members of the clergy, nobility, unmarried domestics living in the homes of their employers, and the poor and destitute who were unable to pay. Certain towns, which had in essence

bought off their responsibility to pay this tax, have no lists either. Dupaquier has published data which indicate generally the availability of these lists by geographical regions, showing what proportion of them refer to the seventeenth and what proportion to the eighteenth centuries. See Table 4.

These seventeenth and eighteenth century records are obviously inferior to the manuscript censuses of the nineteenth century, since they exclude all family members except the taxpayer himself, as well as a variety of often large social groups, particularly the poor and the domestic servants in urban areas. However, studies of local communities in the eighteenth century have revealed that males indicated in parish registers as having died, for example, within a particular year will nearly always be found on the tax lists.¹² In areas where parish registers are missing or have been destroyed, these records of the taille may thus serve as surrogates for tracing a certain restricted category of individuals. While not censuses, the taille lists are annually revised lists of the household heads of France in the last two centuries of the Old Regime. Like the nineteenth-century nominative lists of the national censuses, they may be used by those individuals who have no luck tracing ancestors in the parish registers, or who are studying communities for which the parish registers have been lost.

In the final section of this talk, I want to discuss the ways that census or census-type data are used by the historian or historical demographer to carry out the kind of family history based explicitly on the study of groups of people. Historical-demographic studies based on census manuscript lists are now well advanced in both England and the United States, at least in part because of the impossibility of gaining access to the vital registration of England for scholarly purposes, and the very late development of a comprehensive vital registration in the United States. In contrast, for the past twenty years or

so, French historical demographers, with a few exceptions, have been engaged in the reconstruction of France's demographic history based on the country's parish registers of baptisms, marriages, and burials. The French vital registration system, in contrast to the British or the American, was quite good both before and after the French Revolution, which secularized vital registration, making it the responsibility of the mayors of the various *communes* beginning in 1792. Interest in determining the demographic history of France in the latter part of the Old Regime has led to the relative neglect of the nineteenth century, which one French historical demographer not long ago referred to as the "forgotten century" in French historical-demographic studies.¹³

The kind of family history possible using the nominative lists of nineteenth-century French censuses consists first in knowing about the composition of households which existed at one point in time in a particular community. Instead of taking a few individuals and tracing their longitudinal history--that is, across time, historical demography based on census manuscripts emphasizes a cross-sectional perspective, meaning simply that we take a whole community, organized into households, and investigate the nature of these household groups at one point in time. The difference here is between a moving picture of a few people, compared with a large group portrait. Of course, the nature of the household groups we discover at any one time is the result of a number of continuous social processes. At any one time, the different households of an historical community will be at different stages of development--some will be composed of young couples just married who live by themselves; others will have adult parents with their young children and a widowed grandmother; still others will be composed of unrelated individuals or of families with boarders and/or lodgers, who are often times young people living in this situation until they establish households of their own. The kind of information available on households at

any one time, like a family portrait, incorporates the effects of the past—the number of children born and surviving at the time the portrait is taken, the customs of the community, and the financial success of the household—all of which dictate the number of people who can live within it. The advantage of this kind of family history is that it permits historians to view an entire community in depth, to see, for example, what relationship may have existed historically between the occupation(s) of the household head and the other members and the number of people who coresided in that household; whether the households of the rich were very different from the households of the poor; whether different regional customs persisted in determining different household types.

Households in the past often included nonfamily members: apprentices, boarders and lodgers, as well as an aged parent. Though historical research has determined that in the past, the majority of households at any one time were composed of only two generations living together—usually parents and their children—this kind of finding fails to illuminate what may have been distinctive kinds of household formations within urban communities. This is particularly the case in the nineteenth century, when many European communities were being affected by the process of industrialization, during which many people were shifting from a rural to an urban living place, or in the American case across an entire continent. During times of social change, human beings' adaptive capabilities are tapped, changes—perhaps only temporary adjustments—are made in the way they live, including their household arrangements. We still have a great deal to learn about the variety of adaptations people made in the past at the household level to sometimes adverse conditions. However, it has become quite clear, in large part through the systematic study of census manuscripts, that in the past, household size and composition—the number and kind of people with whom one resided—reflect the manner in which people tried to

strike balance between the needs of individuals and those of the household group.

Historians had formerly believed that the dual processes of industrial growth and urbanization led, in a rather direct way, to the adoption of the nuclear household form. The work of several innovative historians has tended to show, rather, that these processes, at least in their earlier stages, may have contributed to making many working and lower middle-class households more complex, that is creating extended family patterns in households and increasing the proportion of households that included boarders and lodgers.¹⁴ This happened as the result of several conditions. The migration of young people into urban areas in search of work often led to their boarding or lodging—oftentimes with a family from their home town, or from the same region where they began. An extended household could also arise when the aged parent, usually a widow, chose to dwell in the house of her married daughter. The widowed mother's presence might often provide the child-care services needed to permit the mother to earn wages outside of the home. In the nineteenth century, these wages, contributed to the household income, often provided a small margin of comfort to the families of urban, working-class people. Some of the recent historical research into urban family life has tended to modify our notions of the nineteenth-century city as an inherently lonely and alienated environment for the migrant. A view of individuals in the street may have conjured up images of masses of people unconnected to one another or to family and kin of their own—a stark contrast, it was thought, to the rich and warm family life believed to have prevailed in rural areas. However, by giving us a detailed picture of coresiding groups and the family bonds that often knit them together, census records have been used to document the importance of kin in an urban industrial world.

The systematic study of household census lists from urban areas usually demands the use of the computer to analyze indi-

viduals or groups of individuals—we're often talking about tens of thousands of people. Ideally, what we would want to do is trace the history of households and their members time to incorporate a longitudinal as well as cross-sectional approach into the subject. Any of you who have attempted to trace one individual over time through historical records can well imagine the kind of task this represents. We can, of course, enter all the information about each household: the names, ages, occupations of the members into the computer, take the next census for that community and attempt to find out what those individuals were doing five or ten years later. If the history of English and many American communities is any indication, chances are very good that a fairly substantial proportion of those people will be gone before ten years are over.¹⁵ One of the ways of dealing with the human propensity to migrate is to undertake regional research to study clusters of communities together, so that one doesn't lose so many individuals through migration.

One of the more interesting methods of using census records on individuals and households is in conjunction with the vital registration records. This

strategy does not remedy the problem of losing people through migration, but does allow us to reconstruct in greater depth the progress of individual lives.¹⁶ Linking together the census and vital registration records of individuals using the computer is the procedure which comes closest to the ideal of investigating the particular universe of the individual, and the wider world of the community to which that person belongs.

The reconstruction of the historical lives of one's own family and the reconstruction of a large number of households across time for the purpose of writing social history of communities are pursuits which may spring from quite different interests and ambitions. However, amateur and professional genealogists and historical demographers all share the desire to have the freest possible access to the wide range of historical documents on which our work depends. Informing members of the public interested in family history about the nature and qualities of different types of historical documents and their uses in one way that scholars in the field can, we hope, share some of our knowledge and enthusiasm about the work that we do.

NOTES

¹Alan MacFarlane in collaboration with Sarah Harrison and Charles Jardine, Reconstructing Historical Communities (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1977).

²Alex de Tocqueville, The Old Regime and the French Revolution (New York: Doubleday 1955).

³Jacques Dupaquier and Eric Vilquin, "Le pouvoir royal et la statistique démographique," pp. 83-104 in Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques, Pour une histoire de la Statistique (Paris: I.N.S.E.E. n.d.).

⁴Etienne van de Walle, The Female Population of France in the Nineteenth Century (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1974), p. 22.

Table 2. Conservation of Nominative Lists By Type of Community, Censuses of 1836-1936*

Percent of Nominative Lists Conserved for:				
<u>Census Year</u>	<u>Rural Communes</u>	<u>Small Towns</u>	<u>Medium Towns</u>	<u>Large Towns</u>
1836	50.1	55.8	76.7	50.0
1841	47.9	53.9	73.3	50.0
1846	52.9	53.9	83.3	50.0
1851	55.1	63.5	80.0	50.0
1856	50.2	57.7	73.3	40.0
1861	50.8	61.5	73.3	60.0
1866	53.8	57.7	76.7	50.0
1872	56.9	63.5	76.7	70.0
1876	55.9	67.3	80.0	70.0
1881	58.4	69.2	80.0	60.0
1886	60.4	71.2	80.0	60.0
1891	62.5	73.1	90.0	60.0
1896	64.5	80.8	90.0	60.0

*Based on a sample of communes. For the names of the sample communes and definitions of place categories, see Michel Fleury and Louis Henry, "Pour connaître la population de la France depuis Louis XIV." Population 13, 4 (1958): 663-686.

Source: Jean-Noel Biraben, "Inventaire des listes nominatives de recensement en France." Population 18, 2 (1963): 305-328

Table 3. A List of French Departements Possessing Complete (1) and Nearly-Complete (2) Series of Nominative Lists, Censuses of 1836-1936*

<u>(1)</u>	<u>(2)</u>
Basses-Alpes	Allier
Eure-et-Loir	Hautes-Alpes
Finistere	Aube
Herault	Bouches-du-Rhone
Loire-Inferieure	Calvados
Haute-Marne	Charente
Oise	Cote-d'Or
Puy-de-Dome	Cotes-du-Nord
Rhone	Drome
Saone-et-Loire	Indre
<i>Seine</i> Seine -et-Marne	Indre-et-Loire
Seine-et-Oise	Loir-et-Cher
Vaucluse	Loire
Vendee	Lot-et-Garonne
Territoire de Belfort	Marne
	Mayenne
	Pas-de-Calais
	Basses-Pyrenees
	Var
	Vienne
	Haut-Rhin **
	Bas-Rhin **

* Based on a sample of communes. For the names of the sample communes, see Michel Fleury and Louis Henry, *Pour connaitre la population de la France depuis Louis XIV.* Population 13, 4 (1958): 663-686.

** From 1836-1866

Source: Jean-Noel Biraben, "Inventaire des listes nominatives de recensement en France." Population 18, 2 (1963): 305-328.

Table 4. Regional Distribution of Extant Roles de Tailles in French Archives Departementales

<u>Region</u>	<u>Modern Departments Comprising the Region</u>	<u>Number of Dossiers¹</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Northeast	Ardennes, Aube, *Cote d'Or, Doubs, Jura, Marne, Haute- Marne, Meurthe-et- Moselle, Meuse, Mo- selle, Bas-Rhin, Haute- Rhin, Haute Saone, Vosges, Yonne	2,400	More than 800 of these from the 17th century
West	Calvados, Cotes-du- Nord, Deux-Sevres, Eure, Finistere, Ill-et-Vilaine, Loire-Atlantique, Maine-et-Loire Manche, Mayenne, Morbihan, Orne, Sarthe, *Seine- Maritime, Vendee	1,925	300 for the 17th century
Center	Allier, Cantal, Cher Correze, Creuse, Indre, Indre-et-Loire, Loire, Haute-Loire, Loir-et-Cher, Lozere, Nièvre, Puy- de-Dome, Vienne, Haute-Vienne	1,500	250 for the 17th century
Southeast	Ain, Basses-Alpes, Hautes-Alpes Ardèche, Drome, Isère, Rhone, Saone-et-Loire, Savoie, Haute-Savoie	600	120 for the 17th century
Paris Region	Eure-et-Loir Loiret, Seine , <i>Seine</i> <i>Seine</i> Seine -et-Marne, former Seine -et Oise <i>Seine</i>	475	35 for the 17th century

Table 4. (continued from previous page)

Southwest	Ariege, Aveyron, Charente, Charente- Maritime, Dordogne, Haute-Garonne, Gers, Gironde, Landes, Lot, Lot-et-Garonne, Basses-Pyrenees, Haute- Pyrenees, Tarn, Tarn- et-Garonne	350	12 for the 17th century
South	Alpes-Maritime, Aude, Bouches-du-Rhone, Corse, Gard, Herault, Pyrenees-Orientales, Var, Vaucluse		Almost all for the 18th century
North	Aisne, Nord, Oise, Pas- de-Calais, Somme	100	

¹ Each dossier contains approximately 50-100 nominative lists.

* Indicates a particularly-rich collection

Source: Jacques Dupaquier, "Des roles de tailles a la demographie historique:
L'exemple de Crulai." Population 24, 1 (1969): 101-102.

French Republican Calendar

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How Dates Were Recorded

How To Calculate The Standard Date For A French Republican Date

These instructions will help you convert dates from the French Republican calendar to the standard (Gregorian) calendar.

HISTORY OF THE CALENDAR

The French Republican calendar (also known as the Revolutionary calendar) was introduced during the French Revolution to replace the Gregorian calendar and begin a new era. The calendar was based on scientific rather than Christian principles.

This calendar was used for twelve years, from 24 October 1793 to 31 December 1805. (An attempt was made in 1871 to reinstate it, but this attempt failed.) It was used for civil registration records, notarial records, and other government records throughout France and other areas under French rule, including modern Belgium, Luxembourg, and parts of the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. It also affected records in other areas ruled by the French government, such as Egypt, Malta, Reunion, Louisiana, Guiana, and some Caribbean islands.

PRINCIPLES OF THE NEW CALENDAR

- Each year began on the autumn equinox, and the years were counted from the founding of the French Republic on 22 September 1792.
- Each year had twelve months of thirty days each.
- Five days, called complementary days, were added to the end of the year to bring the total to 365.
- Every four years, beginning with the third year of the Republic, an extra complementary day was added. (Days were added to years 3, 7, 11, and so forth.) During this period, the standard calendar had only two leap years (in 1796 and 1804).

THE MONTHS

The twelve months of the French Republican calendar were based on the natural events of the seasons of the year. They do *not* correspond to the standard months of January through December.

In areas that were not French-speaking, the names of the months were often translated into the language of the record, as shown by the following chart:

Months of the French Republican Calendar					
English	French	German	Dutch	Italian	Latin
Autumn months:					
grape harvest	Vendémiaire	Weinlesemonat	Wijnoogstmaand	vendemmaio	mensis vindemiarum
fog	Brumaire	Nebelmonat	Mistmaand	brumaio	mensis brumarum
frost	Frimaire	Reifmonat	Rijpmaand	frimaio	mensus frimarum
Winter months:					
snow	Nivôse	Schneemonat	Sneeuwmaand	nevoso	mensis nivium
rain	Pluviôse	Regenmonat	Regenmaand	piovoso	mensis pluviarum
wind	Ventôse	Windmonat	Windmaand	ventoso	mensis ventorum
Spring months:					
germination	Germinal	Keimmonat	Kiemmaand	germinale	mensis germinum
flowering	Floréal	Blütenmonat	Bløemmaand	floreale	mensis florum
pasture	Prairial	Wiesenmonat	Grasmaand	pratile	mensis prætorum
Summer months:					
harvest	Messidor	Erntemonat	Oostmaand	messidoro	mensis messium
heat	Thermidor*	Hitzemonat	Hittemaand	termidoro	mensis thermarum

fruit	Fructidor	Fruchtmonat	Vruchtmaand	fruttidoro	mensis fructuum
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* Occasionally, the name Fervidor (heat) was used for Thermidor.

Complementary or Feast Days						
	English	French	German	Dutch	Italian	Latin
	Feast of...	Fête de...	Fest der...	Feest der...	giorno della...	Festum...
First day	virtue	la vertu	Tugend	Deugd	virtù	virtutis
Second day	genius	le genie	Geistes	Vernuft	genio	ingenii
Third day	labor	le travail	Arbeit	Werkzaamheid	lavoro	laboris
Fourth day	opinion	l'opinion	Meinung	Gezindheid	opinione	opinionis
Fifth day	rewards	récompenses	Belohnungen	Beloning	ricompense	pretiorum
Sixth day*	revolution	la révolution	Umsturz/Revolution	Revolutie	rivoluzione	revolutionis

*Only used in leap years

COMPLEMENTARY DAYS

The extra days at the end of the year were called *jours complémentaires* (complementary days or holidays) or *jours-sansculottides* (days of the revolutionaries). The complementary days were feast days and each had a name. The above chart shows the names in each language where the calendar was used.

HOW DATES WERE RECORDED

Dates were usually written out in French or the local language. For example:

Le treizième jour du mois de Pluviôse l'an sept de la République Française (The 13th of Pluviose in the seventh year of the French Republic).

The years of the Republic were often designated by Roman numerals. For example:

13 Pluviôse VII (13 Pluviose, seventh year of the Republic).

The complementary (feast) days were recorded in two ways:

- By the name of the feast.

Example: the feast day of Labor in the ninth year of the French Republic.

- By the number (first, second, third, and so on) of the day.

Example: the third complementary day of the ninth year of the French Republic.

HOW TO CALCULATE THE STANDARD DATE FOR A FRENCH REPUBLICAN DATE

Four calendars are on the following pages. Each calendar has the French Republican months across the top, and thirty days on the left-hand column.

1. Find the French Republican year for the date you are converting at the top of one of the four calendars.
2. Find the day (of the French month) in the left column, and move across the page to the French month (abbreviated at the top of the chart). This will give you the standard (Gregorian) month and day.
3. Return to the top of the calendar. The corresponding standard years are on the same horizontal line as the French Republican year. The correct standard year for the date you are converting is on the same side of the heavy black line as the month and day you found in step 2.

Example: 10 Vendémiaire de l'an IX

Year IX is on Calendar Three.

On Calendar Three, find the number 10 in the left column and move across the page to the column for *Vendémiaire*. This box says 2 Oct. Dates on the left side of the heavy black line for the ninth year of the Republic correspond to 1800. Thus 10 Vendémiaire IX corresponds to 2 October 1800.

Calendar Four

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GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH SOURCES IN FRANCE EXCEPT FOR PARIS AND ALSACE-LORRAINE

By

Baron Pierre Durye

From their beginning to 1969 French genealogical research sources offer a wide field of which the amplitude can be evaluated. For the most basic sources, first the modern vital statistics, there are 600 million entries from 1792 to our days; parish registers from the 16th century to our time contain 200 million entries (births, marriages, deaths, acknowledgements of illegitimate births (*reconnaisances*), and legitimations. On the other hand notarial records (*minutes des notaires*) contain for the last four centuries over 300 million marriage contracts, records of divisions of estates and inheritances (*partages de succession*), or inventories after death. The latter analyze and identify vital statistics referring to deceased persons.

Finally a third official source, the archives of the *enregistrement* (dealing with real estate transactions and inheritances) certainly give, especially for the last two centuries, 200 million probate records, which play the same role.

Other sources, official or unofficial, printed or manuscript, contain perhaps 200 million record entries (*actes*) which give complementary information of the highest importance, if one wishes to know more about persons and draw the necessary conclusions.

One can say that most of this immense domain of a billion 500 million documents is neither collected together, analyzed or represented by convenient indexes.

My intention today is double: first to make an inventory of the principal groups of records and of the modest keys which we have to do fragmentary research.

Second, to give a perspective of the future, and to indicate both favorable and unfavorable tendencies toward genealogy which are with us now, and the accomplishments which would permit us to give to all of our contemporaries, as to all our descendants, friends or enemies of genealogy or simply indifferent people, a research aid which will respond to all the questions which they could ask.

I. *The present status of sources*

The events of these last years have brought notable increases and upheavals in the material put at our disposition. First notaries are more and more depositing their records in

public depositories. Next deeds and probate records (*les archives de l'enregistrement*) are beginning to be better known and used more. Finally the changes which have taken place in the status of our territories beyond the seas have assembled many vital statistic records in France and administrative transformations under way are completely changing the problem of research in this domain.

Quite detailed studies of genealogical sources for Paris and Alsace-Lorraine will be treated in separate seminars by my excellent colleagues and friends, Christian GUT and Francois HIMLY.

A. *Basic source collections*

These are essentially those which contain basic documents for all research: vital statistics, notarial records, and the archives of the *enrgistrement*.

1. Civil Vital Statistics (*L'état-civil*) and Parish Records.

Research is differently oriented depending on whether one is in continental France (except Paris, the former Province of Savoie and the former County of Nice (in the department of Alpes-Maritimes) or in a former overseas territory.

a. *In France*

Before the decree of 20 September 1792, the recording of baptisms, marriages and deaths was assigned to ministers of religion by the royal orders of 1539, 1579, 1667 and 1736, two copies being recorded at the time. But the Jews not being submitted to these orders, one finds nothing on them except at Avignon, foreign country at the period, and only beginning in 1763. For the members of the Reformed Church there is also very little that remains between 1559 and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), and very little between 1685 and 1787, during which time protestants were deprived of legal authority to record vital statistics. For these two religious groups one must contact the Archives of each department.

The great majority of church records are Catholic, but their collections are only relatively complete since 1667. For them also, one must contact the Archives of the department in question to learn of the present availability of their records. One can do nothing if one does not know the department of origin of the person sought. Once discovered, one must identify the old parish and the present community (*commune*), and there are about 300 towns in each department.

In the Departmental Archives there are no general indexes to these records, but one finds there a copy of the parish registers, which comes from the archives of the former tribunals. There is also a listing by towns of what remains of the original records, usually older and more complete; it is generally preserved in the archives of each town but sometimes deposited in the Departmental Archives. One should examine both series with care, since their gaps are sometimes unforeseeable and poorly indicated on the covers of the registers.

The consultation of parish records is open to all, but easier in Departmental Archives; copies or extracts are delivered both by the municipality and by the director of the Departmental Archives (*le Directeur des services d'archives du département*),

The Genealogical Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is microfilming the departmental and municipal series and leaving a microfilm in each Departmental Archives.

Records for the period after 1792 are conserved in communal archives, except in rare cases when an early section has been deposited in the Departmental Archives. However, in the latter archives in their series M are ten year indexes (*tables décennales*) by towns, from 1792 to 1902. Since 1902 there are no ten year indexes except in the towns, which only rarely can be consulted.

We are referring to the communal copy of vital statistics, because the copy and ten year indexes which are found in court archives (*greffes des tribunaux*), collected there on an arrondissement basis, may not be consulted.

Towns and cities give copies of records, but if one is not a descendant one can never obtain a birth record less than 100 years old and rarely a complete marriage record, with names of parents; but it is easy to obtain a death record.

Except for a few gaps resulting from the destructions of the 1939-1945 War, which have generally been filled thanks to one series or the other, France has a virtually complete and well kept ensemble of vital statistics.

Besides, various reforms have made birth records more interesting. In fact, since 1897 they give the dates, in marginal entries, of a person's marriage, divorce and re-marriage; since 1922

they give also dates and places of birth of the parents, and since 1945 the date and place of the death of the person in question.

For the present departments of Savoie, Haute-Savoie and Alpes-Maritimes, territories annexed to France in 1860, the problem presents itself the same as in other departments, for the records from 1860 to our days. Before 1860, the keeping of vital statistics was in the hands of ministers of religion and many of the parishes have not turned their records into the local civil authorities. The best procedure is to contact the directors of the Departmental Archives in question, who are aware of the situation.

b. *The Vital Records of overseas French Colonies and of French Nationals In Foreign Lands.*

A considerable administrative reform is under way which has modified the system of research:

- 1) If the territory is still French (Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guyane, Réunion, Comores, Djibouti) one addresses for research the overseas section (*Section Outre-Mer*) of the French National Archives (27, rue Oudinot, Paris 7^e). It has a rather complete collection, especially since 1776, when the regular sending of a third copy of vital records to France was instituted which has continued to our days.
- 2) If the territory is no longer French and the record is older than 100 years, one finds the records where they were made. The records are more or less numerous depending on whether the territory's loss to France was before or after 1776. For Canada, we only have parish records of Louisbourg from 1722 to 1758, and a few records of Louisiana after 1721.

On the other hand for *St. Dominique* (Haiti), for *l'Île de France* (Maurice) and for French India (Pondichéry, Chaudernagar, Mahé, Karikal and Yanam) holdings of vital records in France's *Archives d'Outre-Mer* are quite complete.

- 3) If the territory is no longer French and the record desired is less than one hundred years old, one can write to the vital records service of France in other lands (*Service de l'état-civil des français à l'étranger*) at 7 allée Brancas, 47 Nantes, France. This is the case with states of former Indo-China, new African states and India.

- 4) If it is a territory under mandate which has become independant (Syria, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia) one may contact the above mentioned depository.
- 5) If it is a country which has always been foreign (Great Britain, U.S.S.R., etc.) the vital records of French people who lived there are in the same depository.
- 6) For Algeria and Sahara, vital records have remained where they were kept, but the archives under discussion is in the process of acquiring microfilm copies of them.

2. Notarial Archives (*Archives des notaires*)

These archives contain very important records of genealogical importance since the 16th century, which complete and sometimes replace parish registers which have disappeared.

They contain marriage contracts, formerly in vogue more than today, inventories after decease, and divisions of property to heirs. The vast majority has remained in the hands of notaries, who own their own records.

Part of the notarial collections was turned over to the government in 1792 and a more important part deposited beginning in 1928 in departmental archives.

One can contact the director of archival services of the department which interests you to learn where the notarial records of each region are kept. Whether or not they may be made available to searchers depends on the authorization of notaries. There is in almost all cases a chronological inventory in manuscript form, but usually no index, called repertory (*répertoire*).

If one is interested in an overseas territory, there is a relatively complete collection in the *Section Outre-Mer* of the National Archives (27 rue Oudinot, Paris, 7^e) with good indexes.

It should be stated that concern for their preservation and especially the lack of space, more and more cause notaries to deposit their records in Departmental Archives.

For example, the collection of old notarial records is completed for Paris. They are deposited in the central depository of notarial records of Paris and the former Department of Seine (*Minutier Central des Notaires de Paris et de l'ancien Département de la Seine*) at 87 rue Vieille du Temple, Paris 3^e , where

they can be consulted. These records from 1450 to about 1850 represent 90 million documents, of which a part have direct genealogical application.

3. The Archives of the *Enregistrement*.

From the end of the 17th century to our time, the archives of Domains (*Domaines*), then, after 1791, of the *enregistrement* contain registers and indexes that are precious to the genealogist: the registration (*contrôle*) of all notarial documents from their origin to the present time, (always analyzed and sometimes copied in full) and of numerous simple contracts without recourse to notaries (*actes sous seing privé*), inheritance records (*déclarations de successions*), etc.

- a) If the record is dated before 1 Feb. 1791, one may consult these registration registers in each Departmental Archives in the series C or II C. Filed by offices having jurisdiction over what is now an *Arrondissement* or a *canton*, often provided with indexes, they have the advantage of permitting more extended and rapid research than can be done in the repertories of each notary.
- b) Records since 1 Feb. 1791 and older than 100 years can be consulted in Departmental Archives, series Q [3 sections: public civil acts (*actes civils publics*), property transfers because of deaths (*mutations par décès*), and inheritance records (*déclarations de successions*).]
- c) Records less than 100 years old remain in each department in the Archives of Registration and Domains (*Archives de la Direction de l'Enregistrement et des Domaines*). The directors permit researchers to consult their indexes.

B. Other Sources

It is very useful to have access to other sources to replace basic ones when they are missing, or to discover therein a document more rapidly. These are chiefly family records, personnel files, naturalization papers, printed genealogies and yearbooks (*annuaires*).

- a) Family records: They are found in Series E of the archives of each department, in series M and MM of the National Archives, in the genealogical manuscripts of the National Library (*Bibliothèque Nationale*), 58 rue de Richelieu, Paris. Their value and importance obviously differ widely. They usually pertain to notable families.
- b) The personnel files of governmental institutions: They are found in the National Archives (*Archives Nationales*), 60 rue des Francs-Bourgeois, Paris 3. They are personnel files of the Ministry of the Interior (*Ministère de l'Intérieur*) (prefects, assistant prefects, general

secretaries, counselors of the préfecture); of the Police (persons suspected in the period of the 1789 Revolution, and émigrés); of National Educational institutions, the Navy and of Colonies, before 1789 and generally of almost all of the ministries.

One should consult the *Guide des recherches généalogiques aux Archives Nationales* (Guide to genealogical research in the French National Archives) by Jacques MEURGEY DE TUPIGNY, Paris, 1956.

For sailors before 1789 one can consult the historical service of the Navy (*Service historique de la marine*), 3 avenue Octave Gréard, Paris 7, and for soldiers since the 18th century, the historical service of the Army (*Service historique de L'Armée*), Château de Vincennes, Vincennes, Val de Marne. For diplomats one can contact the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Ministère des Affaires Etrangères*) on the Quai d'Orsay, Paris.

For administrative personnel of departments and towns one can address the Archives of each department.

Together these records pertain to hundreds of thousands of personnel files.

- c) Naturalization files: There are several millions of them which are conserved in the National Archives, in sub series BB11.

I published a small research guide about these files in the report on the 7th International Congress of genealogy and Heraldry at The Hague in 1964 (pages 187 to 199) entitled, "Sources in the French National Archives which permit one to study the immigration of important personages" ("*Les sources permettant d'étudier dans les Archives de France l'immigration des personnages importants.*")

- d) Printed genealogies: They are available especially for notable families and are generally found in the National Library (*Bibliothèque Nationale*). A very good guide for this material by M. Gaston SAFFROY is currently appearing with the title: *Bibliographie généalogique, héraldique et nobiliaire de la France, des origines à nos jours*, Vol. 1, 1968.

- e) Yearbooks (*Annuaire*s): Neither should one neglect administrative or professional yearbooks from the *Almanach Royal* published in France from the end of the 17th century down to the present administrative directory (*Bottin Administratif*), from the commercial

directories (*Bottins commerciaux*) to the telephone directories of each department.

One generally finds these books in the National Library.

There exists for the period before 1789 (Ancien Régime) a good inventory also of M. Gaston SAFFROY and entitled, *Bibliographie des Almanachs et annuaires administratifs, ecclésiastiques et militaires de l'Ancien Régime*, Paris 1959.

II. New Tendencies and the Future of Genealogical Research.

A. Unfavorable phenomena

Some searchers still consider genealogy as a pastime for vain persons, as a means of discovering or publishing nothing but boring or indiscreet stories about certain families, or to seek in an insipid way the refuge of missing persons sought for abandoning their family or for another cause.

This state of mind causes defensive reactions on the part of those in charge of public archives or in possession of private records, which tend to limit the authorizations which they give to researchers.

It is becoming very difficult to obtain copies of vital records less than 100 years old, especially since complete adoptions have multiplied and that under pretext to better integrate the adopted child into his new family, it is arranged to cut off all means of knowing the identity of his real parents.

Still for the same reason new archives whose study would be of the highest interest are destroyed such as the personnel cards of censuses or are nonconsultable like the indexed records of the Department of Social Security.

Finally for the same purposes and also for the conservation of vital statistics, it is becoming very difficult to cause registers to be loaned by one department to another, which considerably limits research.

B. Favorable Tendencies

On the other hand a powerful movement is becoming manifest in favor of genealogy since scientists have discovered its usefulness: it is thus that the team of the National

Institute of Demographic Studies led by the learned Louis HENRY, on a route opened by him and by Michel FLEURY has undertaken by village or by region the analysis of vital records in order to study social mobility, movements of population, fertility, heights of families and other subjects.

At the same time dozens of serious searchers have published with great attention paid to social history or demography precious data on certain families. The most interesting present effort is the doctoral dissertation of Père BERNARD MAITRE, on the history of three or four families that participated in the industrial expansion of the 19th century.

It is obviously as interesting to study the history of a family as that of a village. Research on its social mobility and fertility are perhaps more precise because in 300 years a village experiences immigrations and departures which falsify certain conclusions, while during this same period all of the members of a family are followed into diverse regions and social situations. Many strange ideas on the so-called permanent stratification of social classes are automatically condemned.

One now sees in France a regrouping of searchers. All of the societies of genealogy, heraldry and sigillography have just been federated thanks to the untiring and persuasive tenacity of the Duc de la FORCE, creator and president of this French Federation of societies of genealogy, heraldry and sigillography. With meetings and a publication in common, an additional step has been made towards combining resources and research.

C. *Perspectives for the future.*

The work of the Conference which we are attending opens immense perspectives for the future. The Genealogical Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is gathering at Salt Lake City in microfilm form not only French but worldwide genealogical information.

I believe that I am expressing the wish of all genealogists, not only in France but everywhere in saying that we hope to work, thanks to the central international collectors, obviously liberated from regional limitations, in three essential directions:

- a) Perform all imaginable biographic studies thanks to a central index which would be created at Salt Lake City and be put instantly at the disposition of all with the aid of modern means of data transmission.
- b) Pass by the same means to the study of families and of social history.
- c) And still by the same route to open the way to all studies of demography and social history on the level of large or small geographical areas where families spread out before crossing over national boundaries .

Conclusion

Thus the French effort of grouping both on the level of searchers and on that of sources could contribute to an international effort for which the Genealogical Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints could be the animating force.

At a period of great social changes, of mixtures and movements of populations, and of changes in ways of living, it is not without interest to know the past and present status of families and individuals, and to follow the repercussions of world wide phenomena.

Genealogy will benefit by asserting itself truly as a science and by doing what has never yet been done, that is, to study by means of the history of families the history of nations.

GENEALOGICAL SOURCES IN FRENCH DEPARTMENTAL ARCHIVES (ARCHIVES DEPARTMENTALES)

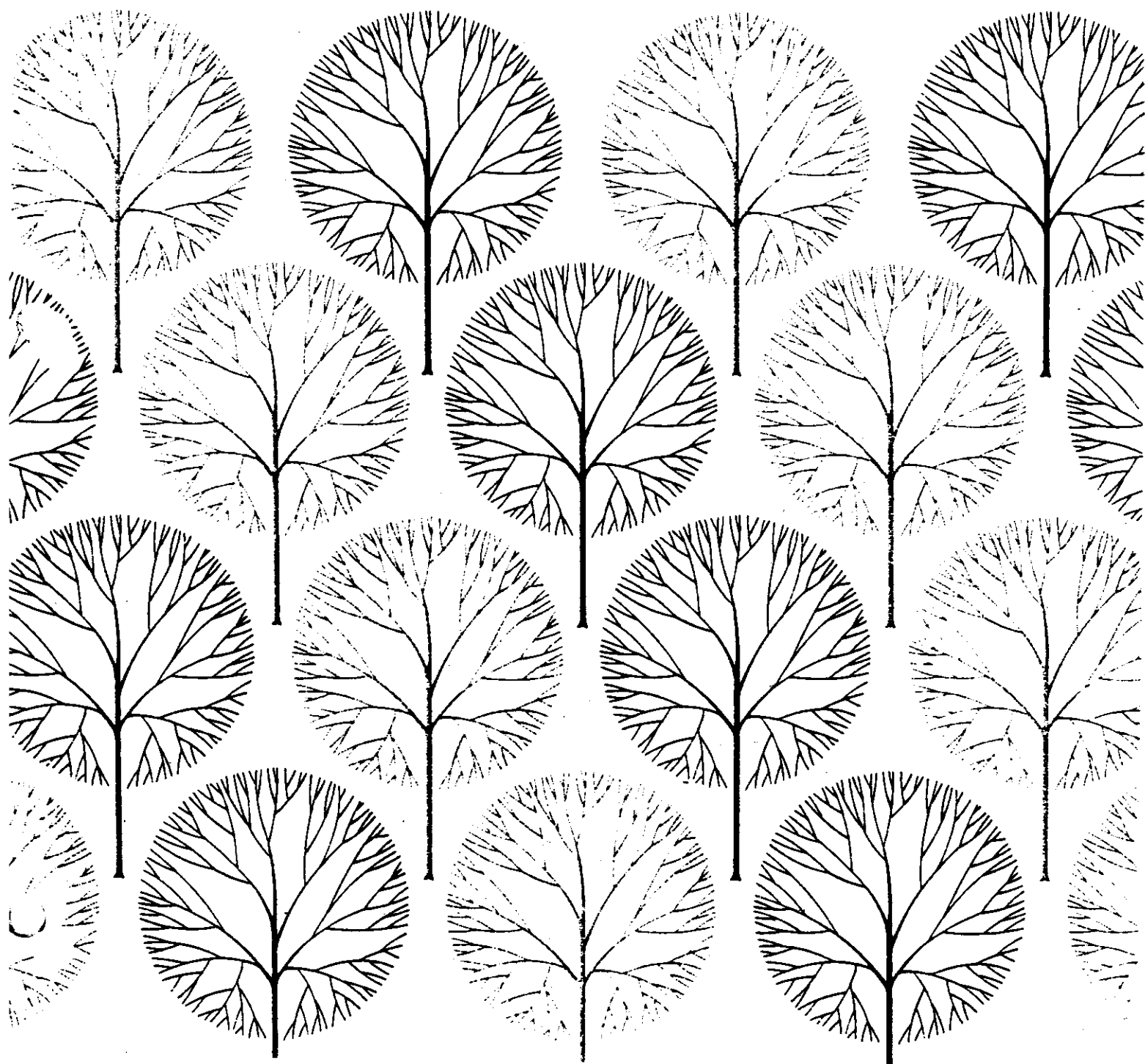
- SERIES B Judicial records (of Parliaments, regional and local civil and religious authorities); collections of recorded wills, marriage contracts, orphan records, property divisions among heirs, legitimations of children, naturalizations of foreigners, feudal records such as "foi et hommage" (avowal and homage of serfs to lords); (1500's to 1790, with feudal records often from the 1200's).
- SERIES C Frequently early nominal censuses, sometimes data on Jews and Protestants.
- II C Indexes to marriage contracts, wills, sales, leases, property divisions, deaths, etc. for the 1700's. VERY HELPFUL IN SHOWING WHERE A DEATH OR MARRIAGE TOOK PLACE OR WHERE ONE'S ANCESTRAL SURNAME WAS ESPECIALLY WELL KNOWN.
- SERIES D Records of educational institutions, often with lists of students, their birthdates, birth places, parentage; sometimes in alphabetical order.
- SERIES E Parish registers from the 1500's, 1600's or 1700's; civil registration (état civil) of births, marriages and deaths from 1792 to 100 years ago; notarial records; collections of notarial and other records of families called "Titres de Familles", frequently dating from the 1400's or earlier.
- SERIES F and J Manuscript or typewritten collections of local scholars, frequently containing genealogies which trace families back into the Middle Ages.
- SERIES G and H Secular and Regular Clergy from the 1200's to 1790: Records of donations of property by persons to monasteries, convents, churches, religious orders, etc.; renting of church property to individuals; records of church courts; foundations of masses for the dead, death records of clergy and others; hospital records, sometimes with lists of patients and their residences.
- SERIES L Revolutionary period. Data on political refugees (émigrés); lists of passports delivered.
- SERIES M Records of passports delivered and censuses during the 1800's.
- SERIES Q Continuation of the indexes in sub-series II C above.
- SERIES R Conscription lists with names of twenty-year old males, their dates of birth, places of birth, parentage, sometimes with indexes. 1798-present. Like Series II C and Q, these records when indexed are very helpful in showing where one's ancestral surname was especially well represented and where research should therefore begin.

Departmental Archives publish inventories (with abstracts of selected records) and repertories (brief listing of documents). These are available in the Library of Congress in Washington, at university libraries and at the Genealogical Society Library. Many are available to branch libraries on microfilm. By consulting these inventories and repertories one may more successfully do research in microfilms or by correspondence to France.

Records of Genealogical
Value for

France

The Genealogical Department of
The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints
Series G, No. 1 1978



Introduction

In identifying ancestors, genealogical researchers need the answers to four key questions regarding record sources:

1. What type of records exist that will aid in identifying ancestors?
2. What periods of time do the existing records cover?
3. What genealogical information appears in the existing records?
4. What is the availability of existing records for searching?

The chart and table that follow contain answers to the above questions for the major genealogical

records sources of France. The types of records are listed, together with the periods covered, type of information given, and source availability.

Table A shows at a glance the record sources available for a research problem in a particular century.

Table B provides more detailed information about the major records available. For example, if a pedigree problem is in the seventeenth century, Table A indicates what sources are available for that period. Table B then provides more complete information.

General Information

Abbreviations Used

The term *Guide* refers to Meurgey de Tupigny's *Guide des Recherches Généalogiques aux Archives Nationales* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1956), Genealogical Department call number 944 A2f.

The abbreviation "Gen. Dept." used in this paper refers to the Genealogical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA.

Most Important Sources

- 1792 to present—
 - Civil registration (*état-civil*) See no. 4
- Sixteenth century to 1792—
 - Parish registers See nos. 16, 17
- Fourteenth or fifteenth centuries to present—
 - Notarial records See nos. 10, 20, 22-27

Surname Indexes

The following indexes are useful in locating places in France where certain surnames were prominent:

Les Combattants Français de la Guerre Américaine, 1778-1783 [The French Combatants of the American Revolutionary War]. Reprint. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1969. Indexed and contains the names of about 48,000 French soldiers and sailors with their birthplaces. (In print at Gen. Dept., call number Q 973 M2FM.)

Alphabetical lists of French *Emigrés* (about 1789-1800). (On film, Gen. Dept.)

Beujon Hospital of Paris. Indexed patient registrations with birthplaces throughout France as well as other countries. (On film, Gen. Dept.) A survey of these records revealed that only about 3 percent of the patients were born in the Department of Seine.

Alsace Emigration Index. (On film, Gen. Dept. call number 1.125.002 to 1.125.007.)

Archives de la Guerre, 75-Vincennes, France. Pensions of 1817 in alphabetical order with birthplaces of about 150,000 soldiers; indexed or alphabetically arranged records of military personnel.

Archives Nationales, 60 rue des Francs-Bourgeois, Paris 3. (See *Guide*, pp. 37-69.)

Archives de la Ville de Paris et de l'Ancien Département de la Seine, 71 Rue du Temple 75003 Paris, France. *Listes électorales* and military conscription records. Both are indexed or alphabetized and give birthplaces throughout France.

French department (state) archives. Various indexes, including indexes to the registration of notarial records in the 1700s in their series C and subseries 2C; military conscription records of the 1800s (partially indexed).

NOTE: Correspondence to French archives should be brief and should be accompanied by International Reply Coupons (available at local post offices) or preferably by French stamps (available by writing to a friend or through an accredited French researcher).

Genealogical Sources

An excellent work on genealogical sources throughout France is Pierre Durye's "Que sais-je?"-Series no. 917, *La Généalogie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963). (Available at Gen. Dept.)

Another important work is Christian Wolff's *Guide des Recherches Généalogiques en Alsace* (Strasbourg, France: Oberlin, 1975). (Available at Gen. Dept.)

Also important is an international directory of archives entitled *Archivum* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1972-73). This gives addresses for archives in France and other countries.

AID TO GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH IN FRANCE

TABLE A

MAJOR SOURCE AVAILABILITY BY CENTURY

TYPE OF RECORD	9-10th	11th	12th	13th	14th	15th	16th	17th	18th	19th	20th
1. Voter Lists											
2. Passports for Travel within France											
3. Conscription Lists											
4. Civil Registration											
5. Emigration Records											
6. Hospital Records											
7. Records of Jews											
8. Passenger Lists											
9. Naturalization Records and Changes of Names											
10. Indenture Records											
11. Military Records											
12. Naval Records											
13. Pension Records											
14. Census Records											
15. Huguenot Records											
16. Catholic Parish Registers											
17. Protestant Parish Registers											
18. Records of Public Officials											
19. Prison and Police Records											
20. Orphan Records											
21. Court Records											
22. Inventories after Death											
23. Donations to Heirs											
24. Land and Property Records											
25. Administration of Estates											
26. Wills											
27. Marriage Contracts											
28. Educational Institutions											
29. Feudal Tax Records											
30. Records of Monasteries, Convents, etc.											
31. Obituaries											
32. Cemetery Inscriptions											
33. Burgess and Guild Records											
34. Feudal and Allegiance Records											
35. Genealogical Collections											
36. Cartularies											

Table B: Major Sources Chronologically Arranged

TYPE OF RECORD	PERIOD COVERED	TYPE OF INFORMATION GIVEN	AVAILABILITY
1. VOTER LISTS (Listes électorales)	19th century to present	Names, residences, dates and places of birth, occupations	Departmental archives; town and city halls (mairies)
2. PASSPORTS FOR TRAVEL WITHIN FRANCE (Passeports pour l'intérieur)	Approx. 1800-1870	Names, dates, ages, occupations, places of birth and residence, destinations, physical descriptions	Some departmental archives
3. CONSCRIPTION LISTS (Registres de conscription dossiers d'exemptions, listes des déserteurs)	Approx. 1800 to present	Annual lists giving names of twenty-year-old males, listed by cantons and towns and stating whether they served, emigrated, died, or deserted; usually place and date of birth or age, occupation, and names of parents; sometimes indexed or in alphabetical order	Serie R in the departmental archives
4. CIVIL REGIS- TRATION (Etat-civil)	1792 to present	Pertains to persons living in France and to French citizens in other countries; similar to parish regis- ters with additional data (see 16 and 17 below) Birth records: age of parents; sometimes informa- tion on child's marriage and death; since 1922, dates and places of parents' birth Marriage records: birth dates or ages and birth- places of bride and groom, names of previous spouses and their dates and places of death; names, dates, and places of death or residences of parents Death records: date and place of birth, names of parents and spouse, date and place of death of previous spouse NOTE: This is the single most important source from 1792 forward	Some on film at the Gen. Dept. (they are cataloged under "France," the department, and the specific towns or cities); 1792 to present, town and city archives; 1792 to approx. 1870, depart- mental archives; approx. 1870 to present, greffe du tribunal de première instance (court clerk of first instance) at each préfecture and souspréfecture The mairies (town and city halls) and the departmental archives have yearly and ten-year indexes to births, mar- riages, and deaths (tables annuelles et décennales) For records of French citizens who lived in America or other countries, write: Service Central de l'Etat-Civil, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 44 Nantes, France
5. EMIGRATION RECORDS (Registres d'émigrés, souches de passeports pour l'étranger, etc.)	Approx. 1788 to present (mostly since abt. 1820 in departmental archives)	Names, birth dates or ages, places of birth or residence, occupations, dates and places where passports were requested and issued, destina- tions, physical descriptions, sometimes names of family members	Departmental archives, especially Serie M; National Archives, 80 Rue des Francs-Bourgeois, Paris III, see Guide, pp. 36-37; some at Gen. Dept. on film, such as the Alsace Emigration Index and the records of French consulates of U.S. cities in the East and Gulf Coast NOTE: The marriage and death records filed by foreign consulates in the Service Central de l'Etat-Civil, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 44 Nantes, France, are excellent sources for places of origin of French citizens who resided in other countries

TYPE OF RECORD	PERIOD COVERED	TYPE OF INFORMATION GIVEN	AVAILABILITY
6. HOSPITAL RECORDS <i>Registres des hôtels-Dieu et des hôpitaux</i>	18th century to present; some records earlier	Names, ages, residences; dates and places of birth of patients and welfare recipients; sometimes names of parents or spouses; dates of admission, release, death; names, ages or birth dates, and sometimes parentage	National archives; departmental archives; municipal archives; some on film (Gen. Dept.) A list of hospital archives and addresses appears in <i>Archivum</i> , vol. 5, pp. 117-119, published by the Conseil International des Archives (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1956) (Gen. Dept.)
7. RECORDS OF JEWS <i>(Israélites)</i>	18th century to present	Changes of names in 1808; circumcision records; census of Jewish families in Alsace in 1784, with residence and name of each family member; genealogical and biographical data See also "Civil Registration" (no. 4 above) and notarial records (nos. 20, 22-27 below)	Town and departmental archives; national archives, <i>Sous-Série F 19</i> , see <i>Guide</i> , p. 59; local synagogues: Alliance Israélite Universel, 45 Rue La-Bruyère, 75 Paris IX (see under "France, Bas Rhin" and "France, Haut Rhin" in the Gen. Dept. card catalog)
8. PASSENGER LISTS <i>(Rôles des passagers)</i>	Since 1686, but mostly early 18th century to present	Names; sometimes ages and towns of origin of adult male French emigrants (sometimes of complete families); countries and sometimes provinces or cities of origin of emigrants from other countries leaving French ports; occupations; dates and places of embarkation and debarkation	Departmental archives at Rouen for records of Le Havre (1732-1880), at Bordeaux (1713-1787), and at Nantes (crew lists with some passengers, 1800s); regional naval archives at Brest, Cherbourg, Rochefort, and Toulon; some copies often lacking birthplaces in Series F5B of the French National Archives
9. NATURALIZATION RECORDS AND CHANGES OF NAMES <i>(Lettres de naturalisation et changements de noms)</i>	1635 to present; a few since 14th century	Names, dates, residences, places of origin, former names and nationalities, relationships, sometimes birth dates	National archives, see <i>Guide</i> , pp. 39, 50, 59, 76; departmental and court archives; published in the <i>Bulletin des Lois</i> in departmental archives For naturalizations of foreigners in Alsace in the 1600s and 1700s, see Gen. Dept. films 1.069.949 and 1.069.950; the index is in the <i>Répertoire Numérique de la Sous-série 1B</i> (Gen. Dept. film 962.196)
10. INDENTURE RECORDS <i>(Registres d'engagements)</i>	1634 to early 18th century	Names of indentured passengers to French colonies, usually their towns or cities of origin in France, dates, destinations, and sometimes ages and relationships	Departmental or port archives in various seacoast cities, including St. Malo, Dieppe (1654-1681), Rouen, Nantes, La Rochelle (1634-1715), and Bordeaux Some microfilms of these records of La Rochelle are at the Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
11. MILITARY RECORDS <i>(Registres militaires)</i>	17th century to present	Names, dates, and places of birth; residences; dates and places of death of officers and sometimes of enlisted men; physical descriptions; sometimes names of parents, children, and wives; personnel files on officers	National archives, see <i>Guide</i> , pp. 46, 47, 56, 58; departmental archives: Service Historique de l'Armée, Château de Vincennes, 75 Vincennes, France (for data on officers and enlisted men who served, especially since 1789); some photostats and microfilms at Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., USA

TYPE OF RECORD	PERIOD COVERED	TYPE OF INFORMATION GIVEN	AVAILABILITY
11. MILITARY RECORDS (<i>cont.</i>)	19th century to present	Discharge papers, certificates of good conduct: name, rate or rank, name of military unit, date and place of birth, sometimes names of parents, residence, physical description, date of certificate, and place issued	Originals often among family papers in possession of descendants
12. NAVAL RECORDS (<i>Registres de la marine</i>)	17th century to present	Similar to military records	National archives, see <i>Guide</i> , pp. 47, 48, 60; archives of the Ministère de la Marine, 3 Avenue Octave Gérard, 75 Paris VII; some photostats and microfilms at Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., USA
13. PENSION RECORDS	1817	Soldiers: data same as above: alphabetically arranged	Service Historique de l'Armée, Château de Vincennes, 75 Vincennes, France NOTE: This archive does not have personnel to perform searches. It is suggested that a researcher be employed to make personal visits
14. CENSUS RECORDS (<i>Recensements ou listes nominatives</i>)	1390 to present: since 1836 at 5-year intervals	Some pre-nineteenth century censuses name complete families; others merely name family heads: since 1836 all persons are named with age, residence, sometimes occupation and religion: normally without birthplaces except in municipal censuses beginning about 1795 and general censuses since 1872	Departmental (state) and municipal archives: some have been lost through war and other causes The departmental archives of Bas-Rhin, 5 rue Fischart, 67 Strasbourg, France, has census records as early as 1390
15. HUGUENOT RECORDS	1560 to abt. 1840	<i>Publications of the Huguenot Society of London</i> : parish records, marriage contracts (see no. 27 below), wills, etc., of Huguenots in England, Ireland, and France: an excellent source for learning places of origin in France	Library of the Huguenot Society of London and many other libraries in Europe and America: 47 indexed volumes; Gen. Dept. call no. 942.1 L1 B4h
	1550-1828	<i>Walloon Library card files</i> : birth, marriage, admission, release, and death records in alphabetical order pertaining to French, Belgian, and Waldensian Protestants who lived in Holland and some cities of France, Germany, and Belgium: an excellent source to learn places of origin of Huguenots and Roman Catholics	Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie Nassaulaan 18, The Hague, Netherlands: on film (Gen. Dept.), serial nos. 26809, pts. 1-199; 26812 pt. 1021; 26810, pts. 1-3; 26811, pts. 1-2
	1685-1786	<i>Refugee lists</i> : names, dates, relationships, and places of origin of Protestants who emigrated: sometimes names of relatives who remained and inherited their property	French National Archives, especially the TT series, see <i>Guide</i> , p. 54; departmental archives, especially the section called " <i>archives des intendances provinciales</i> "
	Abt. 1550 to abt. 1800	<i>Biographical and historical data</i> : names, dates, relationships, places of origin, places of residence	Municipal, departmental, national, and other public archives and libraries, especially those mentioned under "Protestant Parish Registers" (see no. 17 following)

TYPE OF RECORD	PERIOD COVERED	TYPE OF INFORMATION GIVEN	AVAILABILITY
	1685-1855	<p>Frankfurt am Main assistance records: names; dates; places of origin, destination, or residence; some relationships: vol. 107 is especially valuable for learning places of origin of Protestants from France and Piedmont</p> <p>NOTE: An excellent guide for Huguenot research is Auguste Lacoste's booklet, <i>Le Grand Refuge, particulièrement en Suisse, 1685-1700</i> [The Great Exodus. Particularly in Switzerland] (Bern, Switzerland: Société Suisse d'Etudes généalogiques, 1951) Gen. Dept. call no. 949.9Bss. ser. I. = 19; it refers to many of the numerous published works on Huguenots found in libraries of Europe and America</p>	City archives of Frankfurt am Main, Germany; on film: Gen. Dept. serial no. 44139, pts. 2-18
16. CATHOLIC PARISH REGISTERS	Approx. 1539 to present; some earlier	Christening, confirmation, marriage, and burial records giving names, dates, parentage (often in marriage and death records as well as in christenings), occupations, residences, ages (confirmation at about 12 years); names and residences of god-parents, sometimes their relationships to the family	Some in print, some on film (Gen. Dept.); earliest records often in local <i>mairies</i> (town and city halls), sometimes in churches; copies from about 1667 in departmental archives; registers since 1792 are in local church custody; indexes in Series C and Subseries 2C serve as partial indexes to parish registers in the 1700s
17. PROTESTANT PARISH REGISTERS	Lutheran since 1525; Calvinist since 1559	<p>Similar to Catholic parish registers except children are confirmed at about age 16</p> <p>NOTE: For Protestant families also consult Catholic parish records for the period before 1787 because of the persecution prior to 1685 and the illegality of Protestant records from then to 1787</p> <p>Baptism, marriage, and burial records of 37 Protestant parishes for certain years before 1685 are in Series TT. 230 to 276B, in the French National Archives</p> <p>The Centre de documentation d'histoire protestante, Archives départementales du Gard, 20 rue des Chassaintes, 30 Nîmes, France, has Protestant registers for some of southern France, including records kept in the <i>désert</i> (secretly) prior to 1787</p>	<p>Some in <i>mairies</i>, departmental archives (especially for the department of Gard) and national archives; rare before 1787 except in Alsace and in the former <i>Comté de Montbéliard</i>; since 1792 in local church custody; family archives</p> <p>Some preserved in Bibliothèque de la Société d'histoire du Protestantisme Français, 54 rue des Saint-Pères, 75 Paris VII; Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 1 Rue de Sully, 75 Paris IV; Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie, Nassaulaan 18, The Hague, Netherlands</p> <p>Some in print: <i>Publications of the Huguenot Society of London</i>, in various libraries (Gen. Dept.)</p>
18. RECORDS OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS (<i>Dossiers personnels des fonctionnaires</i>)	Approx. 1525 to present	Names and miscellaneous genealogical and biographical data pertaining to government employees, priests, bishops, pastors, rabbis, doctors, property owners, notaries, school teachers, artists, men of letters, etc.	National archives, see <i>Guide</i> , pp. 43-46, 48, 55-60; departmental archives (especially 19th century)
19. PRISON AND POLICE RECORDS	16th century to present	Names, addresses, birthplaces, relationships, sometimes ages of persons arrested or imprisoned and of police personnel	National archives, especially <i>Sous-Série F7</i> ; departmental archives; <i>Série M</i> : archives of the <i>préfectures de police</i>
20. ORPHAN RECORDS (<i>Tutelles, curatelles, émancipations</i>)	16th century to present	Names of deceased persons, minor heirs and guardians; relationship of guardians to orphans is often given; ages of orphans, dates, residences	National archives, see <i>Guide</i> , p. 39; municipal and departmental archives; offices of notaries; hospitals; some inventories in print (Gen. Dept.)

TYPE OF RECORD	PERIOD COVERED	TYPE OF INFORMATION GIVEN	AVAILABILITY
21. COURT RECORDS (Archives judiciaires: tribunaux révolutionnaires)	15th century to present in some areas	Names, ages, occupations, residences, dates, often names of close relatives of plaintiffs and defendants	Town and city archives; departmental archives; national archives. see <i>Guide</i> , pp. 44-46 Some inventories in print for before 1790: town archives. <i>Série FF</i> ; departmental archives. <i>Série B</i> Some inventories in print for revolutionary period (1789-1799): town archives. <i>Série J</i> ; departmental archives. <i>Série L</i>
22. INVENTORIES AFTER DEATH (Inventaires après décès)	14th century to abt. 1850	Genealogical data concerning deceased persons, their parents, and their children; inventories of principal notarial acts	National, departmental, and municipal archives; offices of notaries; some extracts in print (Gen. Dept.) NOTE: These records and those listed under record types 23-27 are the French notarial records most useful in genealogical research; partial indexes to these records for the 1700s are in Series C and Subseries 2C in the departmental archives (some on film at Gen. Dept.)
23. DONATIONS TO HEIRS (Donations entre vifs)	14th century to present in some places in southern France, but mostly from 15th century	Usually gifts of property from elderly parents to children; contain names, dates, residences, and relationships between donors and recipients	National, departmental, and municipal archives; offices of notaries; some extracts in print (Gen. Dept.) (See note under no. 22. "Inventories after Death")
24. LAND AND PROPERTY RECORDS (Papiers terriers: droits domaniaux, ventes de terres, bâtiments, etc.)	14th century to present in some places of southern France, but mostly from 15th century	Names, dates, residences of holders of fiefs, renters, buyers and sellers of land, sometimes relationships	National archives; departmental archives, <i>fonds de l'enregistrement et insinuations</i> ; offices of notaries; some extracts in print (Gen. Dept.) (See note under no. 22. "Inventories after Death")
25. ADMINISTRATIONS OF ESTATES (Partages de succession)	14th century to present in some places of southern France, but mostly from 15th century	Names and residences of deceased persons, their legal heirs, relationships, actual or approximate death dates	National, departmental, and municipal archives; offices of notaries; some extracts in print (Gen. Dept.) (See note under no. 22. "Inventories after Death")
26. WILLS (Testaments)	14th century to present in some places of southern France, but mostly from 15th century	Names and residences of testators and beneficiaries, dates, and relationships	National archives; departmental archives (see both notarial and episcopal wills); municipal archives; offices of notaries; some extracts in print (Gen. Dept.) (See note under no. 22. "Inventories after Death")

TYPE OF RECORD	PERIOD COVERED	TYPE OF INFORMATION GIVEN	AVAILABILITY
34. FEUDAL AND ALLEGIANCE RECORDS (<i>Fiefs, terriers, aveux, dénombrements, hommages, reconnaissances des tailles; records of seignorial justice</i>)	11th to 18th centuries	Names of lords, serfs, renters, tax payers, and parties engaged in disputes; lists of men owing allegiance to lords; dates of feudal contracts and investitures, judicial decisions; some relationships	Some extracts in print. (Gen. Dept.); national archives, see <i>Guide</i> , pp. 30-33; departmental archives; sometimes indexed
35. GENEALOGICAL COLLECTIONS	11th century to present	Names; relationships; residences; occupations; pedigrees; titles; dates and places of birth, death, and marriage; pertain especially to royalty, nobility, knighthood orders, and prominent families	Libraries and archives; national archives, see <i>Guide</i> , chapter 3, especially pp. 63-68; departmental archives, particularly <i>Série E</i> ; Bibliothèque Nationale, especially the <i>Cabinet des manuscrits</i> ; some on film (Gen. Dept.)
36. CARTULARIES (<i>Cartulaires</i>)	9th to 18th centuries	Names of ecclesiastical and lay persons involved in property contracts, residing in manors or hospitals, or belonging to military or religious orders; dates of contracts; some birth, death, and marriage records; residences; some relationships	National archives; departmental, municipal, and religious archives; some in print (Gen. Dept.)

TYPE OF RECORD	PERIOD COVERED	TYPE OF INFORMATION GIVEN	AVAILABILITY
27. MARRIAGE CONTRACTS (<i>Contrats de mariage</i>)	14th century to present in some places of southern France, but mostly from 15th century	Names of bride and bridegroom, and often names of their parents; names of witnesses and any relationships to bride or bridegroom; residences and sometimes places of origin	National, departmental, and municipal archives; offices of notaries; some extracts in print (Gen. Dept.) (See note under no. 22. "Inventories after Death")
28. EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (<i>Registres de l'instruction publique, des universités, collèges, sociétés académiques</i>)	14th century to present	Information varies with the period of time: often names of school officials and students, sometimes their birth dates and names of parents; residences; dates of enrollment	National archives; departmental archives, <i>Série D</i> ; municipal archives; archives of educational institutions; Bibliothèque Nationale, 58, rue de Richelieu, 75 Paris II
29. FEUDAL TAX RECORDS (<i>Centième denier, registres de la taille</i> and other seignorial and royal tax records)	14th century to 1792	Names, dates, residences of tax payers; mention of deaths and changes of residence	National archives, see <i>Guide</i> , p. 50; departmental archives; municipal archives
30. RECORDS OF MONASTERIES, CONVENTS, ABBEYS, EVECHES (DIOCESAN CENTERS), ETC.	13th century to present	Genealogical data concerning the clergy and members of religious orders; ecclesiastical tax records, land records, wills, inheritance records, etc., of the laity; court records of various kinds	National archives; departmental archives; archives of évêchés, abbeys, missionary congregations, etc.
31. OBITUARIES (<i>Obituaires</i>)	12th to 16th centuries	Name of deceased; date and place of death or burial; some family relationships	Series C and H in departmental archives; some in print (Gen. Dept.)
32. CEMETERY INSCRIPTIONS (<i>Inscriptions mortuaires</i>)	12th century to present	Name, date, and place of death; age at death, or birth date; title; sometimes relationships	Some in print (Gen. Dept.); cemeteries; archives of churchyards and cemeteries; <i>Bureau des cimetières</i> in larger cities; sometimes extracts and indexes are in departmental archives
33. BURGESS AND GUILD RECORDS (<i>Registres de bourgeoisie et des corporations de métiers</i>)	12th to 18th centuries	Names, dates, ages, relationships, residences, occupations, and sometimes death dates	Pertain only to certain cities; records in national, departmental, and municipal archives

NEXT TIME IN PARIS... RESEARCHING FRENCH ANCESTORS

by Donna Evleth

France is a rich mine for genealogical research. The centralized governmental system has encouraged record keeping, and documents in some cases even go back to the twelfth century. The problem lies in knowing where this treasure is stored and how to tap it.

The main genealogical resources in France are the archive system (National, Departmental, and Military), the National Library, and smaller specialized libraries.

National Archives

The Archives Nationales (or National Archives) are at 60 rue des Francs-Bourgeois, 75003 Paris. They are open to foreigners who present an identity card, such as a passport, and state their research objective.

Documents in the Archives Nationales are cataloged by letters of the alphabet. For genealogists, the most useful letter series are J, M, P, Q, TT, V, Y, and Z in the ancient section (pre-French Revolution) and AJ, BB, F, and the Legion of Honor file (LH) in the modern section (post-French Revolution).

Series J contains charters, land grants, and cartularies. It includes the names of people involved in property contracts who lived in manors or hospitals, and people belonging to

military or religious orders. There is an alphabetical name index for this series.

Series M is, by the archives' own definition, a mixture. It contains records, including name lists, of military and hospital orders such as the Order of Malta, student and faculty rolls of universities and colleges, and titles of nobility.

Series P and Q are land and property records from all over France. Series Q involved property confiscated at the time of the French Revolution from the nobility, condemned prisoners, and religious institutions.

Americans who have French Huguenot ancestors will find the Series TT (religious fugitives) useful. This series contains individual files constituted when the fleeing Protestants's property in France became subject to confiscation. An alphabetical name index makes finding individual files easy.

Series V (the archives of the Grand Chancellery) is most useful for its chronological, alphabetical list of royal office holders, from hay loaders to judges, for the years from 1674 to the Revolution. Series Y contains notarial records registered with the Châtelet de Paris from the fourteenth century to the Revolution. Series Z contains similar records for the provinces. Here the genealogist can find guardianship of minor children, wills, and marriage contracts. An alphabetical name list exists for these series.

In the modern section, for the period after the French Revolution, the AJ series contains the same kind of documents as the M series in the ancient section, notably student and faculty rolls. The BB series (the archives of the Ministry of Justice) contains not only files on criminals but also on members of the legal profession. In this series you can also find naturalizations, name changes, marriage dispensations, nationality options of Alsations and Lorrainers in 1871, and some Legion of Honor files. There is also a special Legion of Honor Series (LH), which has records on deceased members from the Legion's founding to the present.

The richest storehouse of the modern series, however, is Series F (administration). It contains personal and pension files on people employed in a vast number of civil service categories, such as departmental and communal administration, accounting, police agriculture, commerce, public works, hospices, prisons, public instruction, fine arts, and labor. The F Series also contains passport records from the nineteenth century. Unfortunately, they are rather poorly cataloged, which makes finding individual passports difficult though not impossible.

For those with ancestors from Louisiana or Canada, the Colonies Series at the Archives Nationales is particularly rich. There are thousands of documents dealing with the his-

tory of these areas when they were French colonies, including military muster rolls, personal files for civilians, and passenger lists. The main series of historical documents, correspondence, and reports, have name indexes. Documents on Louisiana and Canada can also be found in the Marine Series.

The Minutier Central is a special department of the Archives Nationales. It contains records of 122 Paris notaries going back to the sixteenth century: marriage contracts, wills, inventories of property made after death, donations to heirs, property acquisitions, and proxies. However, there is a problem with tapping this source, however. The documents are cataloged, not by the name of the client, but by the name of the notary. A client name file does exist for a part of these documents, those dating from the Revolutionary period (the First Empire) and the early years of the Restoration. There are also some name files for clients connected with art, literature, music, and the family of Molière. However, if the ancestor you are looking for does not fit into one of these categories, and you don't know the name of the notary, he will be impossible to find at the Minutier Central.

Departmental Archives

Each of France's ninety-five governmental departments has its own Archives Départementales (or Departmental Archives). Access conditions are the same as for the Archives Nationales. The Archives Départementales contain land and property records in their series C (ancient) and Q (modern), files on municipal and departmental employees, military draft, census and voter registration lists, and taxpayer rolls. They also have the same kind of notarial documents as the Minutier Central. But, most importantly, they keep the birth, marriage, and death registers for the cities in their departments prior to 1880. (After 1880, these registers are kept by the cities themselves.)

Military Archives

The Military Archives are at the Château de Vincennes; the Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre (army) is in the Pavillon du Roi, and the Service Historique de la Marine (navy) is in the Pavillon de la Reine. Foreigners can obtain access by writing ahead and explaining their research needs. These archives are most useful for their very complete personal files. Officer files are listed by name. If you're looking for a common soldier you must know his regiment. The Service Historique de l'Armée de la Terre also has a very useful name list book of Frenchmen who fought in the American Revolution.

Libraries

The main library in France with genealogical resources is the National Library, Bibliothèque Nationale, 58 rue de Richelieu, 75002 Paris. Long term access to this library is very difficult to obtain, but it is easy to get a two-day pass. However, with only two days, it's important to know exactly what you're looking for. The Bibliothèque Nationale has, in its manuscript department, a few birth, marriage, and death registers for Paris (eighteenth century and earlier), and, more importantly, the genealogies and proofs of nobility for the noble families of France prior to 1789, contained in the *Carrés d'Hozier*. The *d'Hozier Armorial Général Officiel* contains the arms of all the notable families in France in 1696, from the great lords to the artisans judged important enough to pay the obligatory registration tax on their arms. Alphabetical name lists exist for these collections.

There are specialized libraries that are useful for certain categories of ancestors. The Bibliothèque de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français, 54 rue des Saint-Pères, 75007 Paris can help trace Protestant ancestors. The Alliance Israelite Universelle, 45 rue de la Bruyère, 75009 Paris may also be of assistance. Access to both libraries is available on payment of a fee.

Finally, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has a computerized genealogical center in Versailles, at 5 rond-point de l'Alliance. You can get access by writing ahead. The principal research tool this center offers is a catalog, on microfilm, of the genealogical material (books, manuscripts, etc.) available for each French department. Some of the sources are in English, and the center can tell you where the sources are located, and how to consult them.

If you can't come to France yourself to do your genealogical research, you can often have it done for you. A letter to the Archives Nationales, or to the Archives Départementales, will be referred to professional researchers, whose rates vary from ten to twenty dollars an hour. They will do their best for you, but be sure to give them all the information you can, and don't expect miracles. The best will in the world cannot trace that ancestor "named Jean Durand, who was born somewhere in France, maybe Picardy, maybe in the eighteenth century." Durand is the French equivalent of Smith, and everyone, including myself, has an ancestor name Jean Durand.

Donna Evleth is a native Californian who lived in France for almost thirteen years. She has been doing genealogical research for eight years and does historical research for universities in the United States and Canada.

APPENDIX A

TRANSACTIONS COMMONLY FOUND IN EARLY MODERN FRENCH NOTARIAL RECORDS
(ca. 1500-1800)*

Accord (Agreement or Settlement)
Achat (Purchase)
Acte (Acte, Deed)
Amortissement de Pension (Amortization, reduction, of pension)
Antichresis (Pledging of real estate revenue as security for debt)
Apposition de Scellés (Fixing of seals to a document)
Apprentissage (Apprenticeship)
Arrentement (Renting, Letting out)
Arrête du Compte (Settlement of Account)
Association (Association, partnership)
Atermolement (Deferred Payment, Arrangement with creditors)
Aveu de Mandat (Inventory of Obligations due a seigneur, especially when land tenure was transferred)

Banement du Somme (Cancellation of Debt)
Billet à Ordre (Promissory Note)
Brevet d'Apprentissage (Certification of Apprenticeship)
Bail (Lease)

Cabal (Personalty, as opposed to Realty -- a term widely used in southern France)
Cautionnement (Security, Deposit, Caution Money)
Chalet (Transference of goods)
Cession (Transfer, Assignment)
Chargement (Bill of Lading or Registered Letter)
Codicil
Compromis (Bond, Compromise, Compound)
Compte (Account)
Compte Final (Closing of Account)
Concession (Concession, Franchise)
Concordat (Certificate of Bankruptcy, Contract, Debt Agreement)
Constitution de Rente (Settlement of Rent)
Contrat (Contract, Agreement, Deed)
Contre Pledgment (Counterpledge, Security)
Convenance (Purchase or Sale of Property)
Convention (Agreement, Contract, Stipulation, Clause, Covenant)
Conversion de Rente Perpetuelle (Abolition of Fixed Rent)
Créance (Debt, Claim, Trust, Credit)

Décharge (Indemnity)
Déclaration (Proclamation, Announcement)
Déguerpissement (Eviction)
Délaissement (Renunciation, Relinquishing of Rights, Foreclosure)
Délégation (Delegation of Authority)
Délibération (Proceedings, Deliberation, Resolution)
Délivrance de Legs (Issue of Legacy, Bequest)
Démission (Resignation)

*Modern French spelling has, in general, been employed in this compilation.

Dénandation (Withdrawal of Collateral)

Dénonciation (Notice of Termination)

Dépôt (Deposit, Lodgement)

Désistement (Waiver, Withdrawal)

Donation

Donation Spirituelle (Endowment of Church)

Droit Cédé (Right, Duty, Obligation, etc. Transferred or Waived)

Émancipation (Emancipation)

Enregistrement (Registration, Incorporation)

Faculté (Option, Right)

Faisance (Fees paid by a peasant as part of his lease, in cases in which the land was leased rather than owned outright)

Hommage (Tribute, Fee, Token Payment for Services or Obligations)

Hypotèque (Mortgage)

Indemnité (Compensation for Loss, Indemnity, Allowance)

Inféodation (Enfeoffment)

Inventaire (Inventory)

Levée de Scellés (Removal of Seals)

Licitation (Sale at Auction)

Liquidation (Clearing of Accounts, Liquidation)

Lods et Ventes (Seigniorial Tax on Property Transferred)

Louage (Hiring Out)

Loyer (Rental)

Mainlevée (Withdrawal of Foreclosure, Restoration of Goods)

Mariage

Mobiliare (Personalty, Personal Estate)

Nolisement (Cost of Freight, Shipping Charges)

Nomination et Presentation (Nomination, Appointment, Introduction)

Notification (Notice, Serving of Legal Summons, Notification)

Notoriété (Affidavit, Credit Obtained by Affidavit, i.e., without security)

Obligation (Obligation, Duty, Bond)

Opposition (Legal Attachment, Opposition, Objection)

Option (Buyer's Option)

Ouverture du Testament (Opening of a Will)

Pacte (Compact, Pact, Agreement, Covenant)

Partage (Allotment, Share, Division, Apportionment of Profits)

Position de Scellés (Affixing of Seals)

Pouvoir (Petition, Appeal, Provision)

Présentation (Presentation, Production, Authority to collect certain types of taxes by proxy)

Prise or Mise de Possessions Latines et Françaises.

Prix Fait (Fixed or Agreed Price, Wages, Costs, etc.)

Procès-Verbal (Official Report, Minutes, Proceedings)

Procuration (Power of Attorney, Proxy)

Promesse (Promissory Note, Promise)

Prorogation (Extension, of various types)
Protestation (Legal Protestation)

Quittance (Receipt)

Raison Feodalle (Pertaining to feudal or seigneurial rights)
Rapport (Return, Yield, Income, Profit)
Ratification (Ratification, Confirmation, Approval)
Reconnaissance (Acknowledgment of Indebtedness)
Réitération de Grades (Confirmation of Rank, Degree, etc.)
Relâchement (Removal of Fees, Work, etc.)
Rémission (Discount, Rebate, Allowance)
Rendition (Repayment, Return on Investment)
Renonciation (Waiver, Renunciation, Disclaimer)
Rente (Rent, Income, Annuity)
Rente Constitutée (Fixed Rent)
Répétition (Repetition, Reclaiming)
Répudiation (Repudiation of Debt, etc.)
Réquisition (Requisition, Levy, Demand, Summons)
Résignation (Resignation, Transference of Office)
Résiliation (Termination, Full Disclosure, Cancellation)
Retâchement (Reestablishment of Credit, Rehiring, etc.)
Rétraction (Release from Obligations, Debts)
Retrait (Cancellation, Pre-emption, etc.)
Rétrocession (Transfer of Property Previously Transferred)

Sentence Arbitrale (Judgement, Decree, etc. by Arbitration)
Séparation de Biens (Separate Maintenance)
Serment de Bénéfice (Oath of Fealty in return for a Benefice)
Signification (Notification)
Société (Company, Firm, Partnership, Trust)
Sommaire à Prise (Summary of Goods Purchased)
Soumission (Tender, Bid)
Souscription (Subscription, Application, Underwriting, Signing of Deed)
Subrogation (Delegation of Authority)

Testament (Will)
Titre (Title, Deed, Bond, Warrant, Certificate, Security, etc.)
Tirage au Sort (Lottery, Tontine)
Traité (Bill of Exchange, Company Charter, etc.)
Transaction (Transaction, Business, Dealing)
Translation d'Hypothèque (Transfer, Conveyance of Mortgage)

Vente (Sale)
Verbal de, sur, . . . (Word-of-Mouth Agreement, Transaction)

APPENDIX B

SOME USEFUL AIDS IN THE STUDY OF NOTARIAL RECORDS
(WITH EMPHASIS UPON FRANCE)

Available in the Library of the Genealogical Society of Utah:

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NOTES

- ¹Grand Dictionnaire Universel, II (Paris, n.d.), p. 1103.
- ²R. Doehaerd, Les Relations Commerciales entre Gênes, La Belgique et L'Outremer, I (Bruxelles, 1941), p. 15.
- ³Mario Amelotti and Giorgio Costamagna, Alle Origini de Notariato Italiano (Rome, 1975), p. 33.
- ⁴Doehaerd, Les Relations Commerciales, p. 15.
- ⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.
- ⁶Amelotti and Costamagna, Origini de Notariato, pp. 156-57.
- ⁷Robert S. Lopez, "The Unexplored Wealth of the Notarial Archives in Pisa and Lucca," in Mélanges d'histoire de moyen âge dédiées à la mémoire de Louis Halphen (Paris, 1951), pp. 417-19.
- ⁸*Ibid.*, p. 417.
- ⁹Henri Bautier and Janine Sornay, Les Sources de l'histoire économique et sociale du moyen âge, II (Paris, 1971), p. 1142.
- ¹⁰Doehaerd, Les Relations Commerciales, p. 21.
- ¹¹Ferdinand Lot and Robert Fawtier, Histoire des Institutions Françaises au moyen âge, II (Paris, 1958), p. 86.
- ¹²F. Girondon, "Notaire," in La Grande Encyclopedie (Paris, n.d.), p. 63.
- ¹³Lot and Fawtier, Histoire des Institutions, p. 92.
- ¹⁴Girondon, "Notaire," p. 64.
- ¹⁵John Pryor, "Stephanus Demonasterio and the Notariat at Aubenas in the early Fifteenth Century," Medieval Studies, 36 (1974): 35-38.
- ¹⁶Marvin B. Becker, "An Essay on the 'Novi Cives' and Florentine Politics, 1343-1382," Medieval Studies, 24 (1962): 75.
- ¹⁷Doehaerd, Les Relations Commerciales, p. 22.
- ¹⁸See, for example, Archives départementales de Lot-et-Garonne, série 3, Minutes de Notaire, Notaire: Gadiot, 1738-80.
- ¹⁹Pryor, "Stephanus Demonasterio," p. 35.
- ²⁰Diane Owen Hughes, "Toward Historical Ethnography: Notarial Records and Family History in the Middle Ages," Historical Methods Newsletter, 8 (1975): 65.
- ²¹Amelotti and Costamagna, Origini de Notariato, p. 61f.

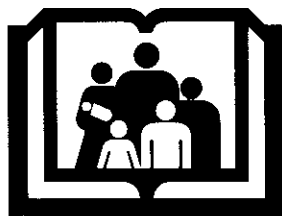
- ²²Hughes, "Historical Ethnography," p. 63.
- ²³Lopez, "Notarial Archives," pp. 418-19.
- ²⁴Amelotti and Costamagna, Origini de Notariato, pp. 220-21.
- ²⁵On the functions of the public notary as apostolic notary, see, Geoffrey Baraclough, Public Notaries and the Papal Curia (London, 1934), pp. 17-20.
- ²⁶Grand Dictionnaire Universal, p. 1104.
- ²⁷*Ibid.*
- ²⁸Lopez, "Notarial Archives," p. 417.
- ²⁹Not. Bartholomeo de Fornari, reg. II, fol. 249-249, May 29, 1252: cf., reg. IV, fol. 148-148, July 7, 1253.
- ³⁰Robert S. Lopez, "Market Expansion: The Case of Genoa," Journal of Economic History, 24 (1964): 446-50. In this article, Lopez discusses many of the other factors contributing to Genoese expansion in the thirteenth century. However, that which he elsewhere (*supra*) attributes to luck was at least partially the result of the superiority in naval warfare to which skill with the crossbow contributed greatly.
- ³¹Bautier and Sornay, Les Sources de l'histoire, p. 145.
- ³²Jean Paul Poisson, "Le rôle socio-économique du notariat au XVIII^e siècle: Quatre offices parisiens en 1749," Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations, 27 (1972): 758-771. See also, "L'Activité notariale comme indicateur socio-économique: L'Exemple de la Fronde," Annales. E.S.C., 31 (1976): 996-1009.
- ³³Hughes, "Historical Ethnography," p. 66f. See also, "Domestic Ideals and Social Behavior: Evidence from Medieval Genoa," in The Family in History, ed. Charles E. Rosenberg (Philadelphia, 1975), pp. 115-43.
- ³⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 65-67.
- ³⁵M. Robine, "Les Archives notariales, complement des registres paroissiaux," Annales de démographie historique, 29 (1974): 60-61.
- ³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 61.
- ³⁷Marcel Marion, Dictionnaire des Institutions de la France au XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles (Paris, 1969), p. 55.
- ³⁸Pierre Goubert, The Ancien Regime: French Society 1600-1750, trans. Steve Cox (London, 1973), pp. 114-15.
- ³⁹See, for example, dowry sizes from 1740-1780 as found in Archives départementales de Lot-et-Garonne, série 3, minutes de notaire, notaire: Gadiot.

⁴⁰Horizontal mobility as defined here differs from the term coined by Pitirim Sorokin in 1927 to the extent that no movement from group to group, which his definition encompassed, is involved. Cf., "Social Mobility," in Structured Social Inequality: A Reader in Comparative Social Stratification, ed. Celia S. Heller (New York, 1969), p. 317.

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The Role of the
Notary in European
Family Life

C. Russell Jensen

Series 528

THE ROLE OF THE NOTARY IN EUROPEAN FAMILY LIFE

C. Russell Jensen

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As the title suggests, this paper will review, briefly, the origin and social role of the notary, particularly in the later medieval and early modern periods (ca. 1200-1800) when the public notary developed in Europe. Particular attention will be accorded Italy and France, since notarial records originated in the former and the latter is of special interest in view of the rather extensive collection of notarial documents held by the Genealogical Society of Utah. Thereafter, the basic structure and content of notarial records will be discussed, and finally, the survey will conclude with a consideration of some of the more important ways in which these resources have been and can be utilized.

Although scribes, who exercised what would today be regarded as at least some of the functions of a public notary, have been traced to ancient Greece, Egypt, and the Near East, their most prominent role as forerunners of the medieval and early modern notaries was played within the Roman Empire.¹ In imperial Italy, there were three types of Roman functionaries who influenced the subsequent emergence of public, ecclesiastical, or royal notaries, namely, the tabellio, the tabularius, and the notarius. The first two terms derived ultimately from the tabella, or writing tablet, while the last is traceable to notae, or shorthand notes.

The tabelliones were free public scribes, as opposed to civic officials or slaves, usually organized into corporations or guilds in the later Roman Empire. Initially the contracts and other acts they

redacted were structured according to legal customs and traditions or current protocol. With the appearance of the Justinian law code (A.D. 528-38), however, the form of acts written by these individuals fell under specific regulations regarding organization, signatures, witnesses, etc.

The transactions recorded by the tabelliones became valid only after they were entered into the local municipal registry of justice by another type of scribe, the tabularius, a true public official. This individual resembled the modern notary public in that he took and kept evidence. By contrast, the notarius was generally a slave or freedman who kept notae of judicial proceedings and acted in the capacity of a stenographer to the more influential Roman citizens or as a private scribe.

The tabellio persisted into early medieval Italy, especially in the central portion. By the tenth century, tabelliones were evident in Naples, Amalfi, and other nearby cities, organized into colleges (guilds) or curia and transcribing, with the aid of clerks, acts of ecclesiastical or government officers as well as those of ordinary citizens.

In the seventh century, during the period of Lombard rule, a new type of scribe appeared in northern Italy, who bore the name notarius but had many of the same or similar functions as the tabellio or tabularius (the latter seems, in general, either to have disappeared completely during the early medieval era or to have merged with the tabellio). He was a pub-

~~During the medieval era, the notary was a public functionary, protected and controlled by Lombard law, who served not only the Lombard nobility but also the church in northern Italy.~~

At the end of the eighth century, when the Carolingian empire had absorbed the Lombard Kingdom, Frankish law proclaimed notaries of this type to be a kind of royal or imperial official, assigned to each count or bishop within the empire and permitted to collect a tax for the transcription of all documents redacted. Approximately one century later, notaries for counts, dukes, and other members of the nobility were a more or less permanent fixture of the Carolingian empire. Many of their activities were subsequently assumed by royal and imperial notaries within the so-called Holy Roman Empire. In this same period, notaries became increasingly attached to the papal chancellory, primarily as papal secretaries.⁶

By the twelfth century, however, notaries in Italy had assumed the status of public officials, especially those not associated directly with the papacy or other branches of the medieval church, appointed by local officials or the nobility and granted authority to redact contracts and other acts in the territory over which they were allowed jurisdiction. Certain cities also acquired the privilege of investing notaries, as, for example, Pavia in 1191 and Genoa in 1221.

Although it is difficult to pinpoint the transition, possibly by the eleventh century the notarius gradually assumed many of the functions and some of the status of the tabellio, albeit, unlike the Lombard notarius, he acted primarily in a municipal capacity. The notarius of the higher middle ages in Italy and elsewhere transcribed all acts which had required a contract according to Roman law, and his clients came from all groups and classes in or near the town or village in which

he worked: nobility, artisans, tradesmen, peasants, etc.

The earliest extant records left by this type of notary are located in Venice for the eleventh century and Genoa for the twelfth. (By the beginning of the thirteenth century, there were notarial record collections in Lucca, Pavia, Pisa, and Siena, among others.) In the case of Genoa, the records of one Johannes Scriba date from approximately 1154.⁸

The medieval notarius, as opposed to the Carolingian scribe, seems first to have made an appearance in and around Provence, possibly arriving from Italy through Marseilles and other ports. In Catalonia (Spain) notaries are found by the end of the thirteenth century, whereas in other parts of Europe and England they are evident by the early fourteenth century.⁹

The revival of the study of Roman law in the twelfth century had the effect of improving the legal status of the notary and, consequently, reinforcing the validity of his documents. Thus, for example, the signatures of the witnesses no longer constituted the sine qua non in guaranteeing the efficacy of a notarial transaction, as they had under Lombard law. Instead, the signature of the notary himself now became the ultimate factor in endowing a contract or act with an aura of final authority.¹⁰

For France, at least two important distinctions among notaries should be recognized. The notaires du roi were created by Phillip le Bel in the early fourteenth century as a sort of royal secretary specially attached to the person of the king and redacting acts originating more or less exclusively from the royal office.¹¹ By contrast, the notaires royaux were legal scribes, similar to public notaries in Italy, established in provosts, bailiwicks, and other areas of local or royal jurisdiction, with power to record and validate acts of both public and private individuals. In the north of France, the notaires royaux

retained a more direct connection with royal affairs than in the south, where they became, in general, civic notaries.

Inasmuch as France is of more immediate concern to this study, because of the materials located in the Genealogical Society of Utah (about which more will be said subsequently), than Italy, it is useful to include a brief synopsis of the development of the notary up to the French Revolution by which time the foundations for the modern notary public had been laid. During the early modern era to 1789, the notaires royaux gradually assumed the primary functions of the public notary in Italy (i.e., the combined tabellio and notarius), albeit some not always clearly or carefully defined distinctions did persist between the notaire and the tabellion and, in some instances, the two terms were used interchangeably.¹²

The organization of notaries differed somewhat in Paris from other areas of France. There was, for instance, no tabellionage but instead only a corporation or guild of notaires royaux, the so-called notaires du châtelet who served principally as proxys for various royal officials and who, increasingly, took over the judicial and legal functions previously reserved to these royal representatives. Charles VII (1422-61) placed these notaries under royal protection and permitted them to fix the royal coat of arms to their dwelling places.¹³

After the sixteenth century, the notaires royaux acquired even more authority than they had previously enjoyed, particularly with regard to the attachment of royal seals to the documents they redacted, a duty carried out earlier by other royal officials. This practice was upheld by the edicts of 1706 and 1710, which also obviated the discrepancy between the notary of the south and that of the north by permitting each to affix royal seals on their respective acts and contracts. The French Revolution brought to an end a number of privileges notaries had acquired since the middle ages. For exam-

ple, the sale of notarial offices was abolished and they were made nonhereditary. In addition, all distinction between the various types of notaries was removed, thereby paving the way for the modern French notaire.¹⁴

As is suggested above, by the later middle ages (certainly no later than the fourteenth century), most notaries in southern Europe had become public, ecclesiastical, or royal officials who enjoyed certain legal and other privileges. In consequence, they came to play a rather prominent role in the socio-economic and, to a degree, political life of the towns. In Aubenas (France), for example, two of the nine town regents or councillors in 1405 were notaries. Several notaries also acted as proxies for the most influential town citizens.¹⁵

Notaries constituted the most fundamental part of the bureaucracy in fourteenth-century Florence. They carried out various court edicts, supervised the maintenance of walls, roads and bridges, and conducted investigations of the utilization of commercial funds and state property.¹⁶ In Genoa, beginning in at least the thirteenth century, notaries were organized into a college or guild with established rules and regulations for the conduct of their professional activities. As in the case of other notaries, they were familiar with the rudiments of Roman law as well as the preservation of records. In addition, they developed their own forms of shorthand for transcribing the transactions (in Latin) with which they were involved.¹⁷

In France, as in Italy, the office tended to become hereditary, although the royal offices especially were available at a price. Consequently, the notaires royaux were of necessity more affluent than other classes and often enjoyed middle or even upper middle-class status, depending upon their total wealth and their position in the community. My own research in early modern French social history has disclosed that in southern France, for

example, the daughters of notaries tended to marry sons of wealthy merchants, landlords, and royal officials, as well as master artisans and craftsmen. (Sons of notaries who were, quite often, active in that profession themselves tended also to marry daughters from these social groups.) Dowry sizes were large for such marriages, ranging from approximately eight hundred to fifteen hundred livres; the average dowry size among the agricultural and artisan classes was, in contrast, about 250 livres.¹⁸

By the eighteenth century, the notary enjoyed a well established socio-economic position in his local community. Not only was his office likely to become hereditary, but it also represented (as it had since the middle ages) one viable alternative to a manual labor career aside from that of a merchant.¹⁹ In addition, the notary frequently enjoyed a position of family confidant. Families often retained the same notary and his descendants for several generations, which assured him of a more or less consistent source of income.²⁰

With regard to the general structure and content of notarial records, it should be noted, first of all, that by the later middle ages the contracts drawn up by notaries, with or without the aid of a clerk, conformed to legal patterns (not detailed in this general introduction) established, in many cases, in the Roman Empire.²¹ Notaries recorded virtually every type of socio-economic or legal activity which necessitated a contract under Roman law. These included, among others, sales, leases, exchanges, business ventures, rents, wills, marriage contracts and various types of obligations.²² (See Appendix A for a list of the more salient transactions drawn from early modern French notarial records.)

These contracts were written in a notebook or chartulary, usually in some form of short hand. The medieval chartulary generally consisted of the notae, or abbreviated first draft, from which the finished and official charter or instru-

mentum was redacted. Often the notae consisted of little more than a bare outline, suitable for calling to mind the complete contract at a later date. The amount of detail included in the initial copy frequently depended upon such factors as client prominence, complexity of the transaction, and the use of a clerk not necessarily present during the original transcription to prepare the final draft. Many of these chartularies are still in existence, although the charters were written on parchment and have by the large disappeared.²³

In France, the shortened version was (and is) known as a minute and was somewhat less fully abridged than its Italian counterpart. With the transition to the vernacular in the sixteenth century, these minutes were condensed only slightly, if at all, which makes their perusal, on the whole, less difficult than the Latin chartulary.

These minutes comprise the largest part of the notarial record collection for southern France held by the Genealogical Society of Utah, principally from the départements of Gard and Lot-et-Garonne (the former provinces of Languedoc and Guyenne), which extend from approximately 1300 to the end of the eighteenth century and, in some instances, well into the nineteenth century. (There is also a sizeable Belgian collection as well.) These documents were originally filmed in order to provide a supplement to Protestant parish registers, which are often difficult to obtain due to the destruction of the wars of religion in France and the loss of legal and ecclesiastical status by Protestants after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. On the basis of available archival guides, it is estimated that these notarial records are 85-90 percent complete for Gard and 90-95 percent complete for Lot-et-Garonne. (Additional information regarding this collection may be obtained from the recently completed survey of the French holdings in the Genealogical Society published by the University of Utah Press.)

Before turning to the perusal of a few examples from this collection (selected principally from Anduze, Gard and Clairac, Lot-et-Garonne), it should be pointed out that the study of notarial chartularies requires some special training. In addition to the appropriate language background, familiarity with the paleography of the period under consideration is strongly recommended. For those with a knowledge of Latin, the medieval records can usually be read with the aid of such standard references as Adriano Capelli, Dizionario di Abbreviature Latine ed Italiane (Milan, 1973). Although there are few French paleographic guides, handbooks, or other references in the Genealogical Society Library, the European reference desk (third floor) does have some information regarding sixteenth- and seventeenth-century French handwriting which may be obtained upon request. (A short list of helpful supplementary aids, many of which are available in the Genealogical Society Library, is found in Appendix B.)

In addition to paleography, a working knowledge of the socio-economic, political, and legal background of the document under examination, as well as of the historical period in which it falls, is very useful. An understanding of chronology and the problems relating to date discrepancy will also benefit the student of notarial records.

With these qualifications in mind, let us consider the five following examples:

A Power of Attorney (Procuration), 1364, Anduze (Gard, Languedoc)

A Rental Agreement or Lease (Arrente-ment), 1362, Anduze

A Sale (Achat), late sixteenth century, Clairac (Lot-et-Garonne, Guyenne)

A Sale (Achat), 1634, Clairac

A Sale (Achat), 1754, Clairac

The last four were selected for purposes of comparison because of similarity of style and content, while the first was chosen largely because the clarity of the handwriting and the completeness of the particular formulary exposition make it a suitable introduction to certain types of medieval notarial records. As may be seen, the latter is a notae, an abbreviated draft. Here is how the first few lines of this transaction appear when typewritten with the abbreviation marks added:

In noie din ame. Anno eiqde incarnat m ccc sexag qrtto et die septia mess app lis, indic secu da, pont stissmi pat s et din nri din Urbani dia pviden pape qnti anno secundo et dno Jo rege franc regn, nov nit univ si qstituta in p sen mei not et test infrasc pt ad hec spali vocat . . .

When these words are not abbreviated, this is the result (medieval usage and spelling is retained in both the Power of Attorney and the Lease):

In nomine domini amen. Anno eiusdem incarnatione millesimo trecentesimo sexagesimo quarto et die septima mensis apprilis, inditione secunda, pontificatus sactissimi patris et domini nostri domini Urbani divina providentia pape quinti anno secundo, et domino Johanne rege francorum regnante. Noverint universi quod constituta in presentia mei notarii et testium infrascriptorum ad hoc specialiter vocatorum . . .

A rather literal English translation of the above might be: (transparency follows)

In the name of the Lord, amen. In the year (after) the incarnation of the same 1364 and on the seventh day of the month of April, second indiction, and in the second year

of the pontificate of our most holy father and lord of lord(s) Urban V (1362-70), by divine providence Pope, and in the reign of lord Jean (II, 1350-1364), King of the Franks, let all men know that it is established in the presence of me, the notary, and of the undersigned witnesses to this (duty) specially called . . .

This document is an example of the kind of record written by a public notary who was also an ecclesiastical notary (notario auctoritate apostolica publica). Hence the above section represents a formal introduction of a definite type, found largely in such records. It encompasses the following five major parts:²⁴

1. Formal introduction (Invocatio, Annus Imperii), which includes date, indication (a fifteen-year chronological cycle utilized in a variety of ancient and medieval documents), identification of pope and, if not a strictly ecclesiastical charter, of the king or emperor. (The practice of citing the ruler persisted into the sixteenth century, somewhat after the pope was discarded.)
2. Participants and general statement of the transaction (Manifestatio, Arenga). This portion usually contained the names of all those involved in the act, together with their places of residence and parishes.
3. Details of the transaction (Dispositio, Rogatio et Tradito ad scribendum).
4. Names of witnesses, occasionally their occupations, towns or villages and parishes, and place (Locus) of the transaction.
5. Name and sometimes status of the notary. The signatures of both witnesses and notary completed the

record (Subscriptiones testium, Completio).

This basic outline can be observed in the power of the attorney and the arrentement. However, the content and form of other notarial records varied according to the nature of the activity and the type of notary involved (for example, business contracts from thirteenth-century Genoa and those from fourteenth-century Anduze). Hence it will be of interest to compare the arrentement of 1362 with the achat of 1754 in order to determine to what extent the form of the medieval record was subsequently retained. (Unfortunately, the exigencies of time and space militate against an analysis of all of the documents previously examined, albeit the general pattern of the achat of 1754 is evident in the earlier acts.)

The lineaments of the arrentement (abridged in the interest of space) are:

1. Anno domini millesimo trecentesimo sexagesimo secundo et die secunda mensis aprilis, indictione quindecim, pontificatus sanctissimi patris et domini nostri domini Innocentii divina providentia pape sexti anno decimo, et domino Johanne rege francorum regnante,
2. Noverint universi quod ego Finas . . . di Berengarii pro me et meis heredibus et successoris futuris . . . vendo, cedo, trado seu . . . remito titulo . . . ad hodie et . . . per quinque annos continuous et completos . . . tibi Petro Planceni habitatori ville Sancti Johannis di Gardonica . . .
3. . . . pro te et tuis heredibus et successoris futuris . . . universos et singulos ususfructus perventus . . . in tenemento mansi di banhenis in loco vocato de fenili . . . et confirmo et sic tenebis in summa per

septem annos . . . omnis ususfructum
 . . . pro prato et dicto ususfructo
 . . . quindecim florum auri . . .
 deinceps retineas corporalem posses-
 sionem . . . dictorum ususfructorum
 superius . . .

4. Actum in Sancto Johanne di Gardonica
 . . . testes sunt Duratus Uricii,
 Bernardo Michaelis, Guirardus de
 Cessabernis . . . Bartholomeus de
 Area . . .
5. et ego Bartholomeus de Fabrica
 notario auctoritate apostolica
 publica qui . . . notam scripsi et
 recepi.

Translation:

1. In the year of our Lord 1362 and on
 the second day of the month of April,
 fifteenth indiction, and in the tenth
 year of the pontificate of our most
 holy father and lord of lords Inno-
 cent VI (1352-1362), by divine provi-
 dent Pope, and in the reign of Jean,
 King of the Franks,
2. Let all men know that I, Finas . . .
 de Berengarii, in behalf of myself,
 my heirs and my future successors
 . . . sell, yield, grant or . . .
 transfer the title today . . . and
 for five full and continuous years
 . . . to you Petro Placeni resident
 of the town of Sanoti Johannis de
 Gardonica (languedoc) in behalf of
 you, your heirs, and your future
 successors . . .
3. Usufruct is fully attained . . . in
 the manse of banhenis in the place
 called fenili, and [so] I confirm and
 thus you shall hold [usufruct] for a
 maximum of seven years . . . [at a
 cost of] fifteen gold florins for the
 pasture and usufruct . . . finally,
 you shall retain full possession of
 the above mentioned usufruct . . .

4. Done in Sancto Johanne de Gardonica
 . . . witnesses are Duratus Uricii,
 Bernardo Michaelis . . . etc. . . .

5. and I, Bartholomeus de Fabrica,
 notary public by apostolic authority,
 who ²⁵ wrote and preserved this
nota.

The achat of 1754 reads (modern French
 spelling has been used throughout):

1. Aujourd'hui du trente du mois de mars
 mille sept cent cinquante quarte
 avant midi dans la ville de Clairac
 in Agennais
2. and 3. par devant moi notaire royal
 soussigné (et en présence de) les
 témoins bas nommés fut présenté
 Ramond Guillon, brassier, habitant de
 ville lui . . . de quel de son bon
 gré a vendu, quitté et transporté
 . . . avec promesse de garantir à
 peine de payer dommages et intérêt,
 en faveur de Pierre Baljeau,
 brassier, et habitant de la paroisse
 de St. Etienne de Jajouf, juridiction
 de Tonneins, . . . une petite pièce
 de vigne contenance de vingt neuf
 escats . . . située à lieu appelé
 . . . Clot
4. en présence de Andre Laville, Jean
 Galie, Etienne Gallerder, Pierre
 Lafargue, Jean Dejira . . . Jean
 Lulbaud et Mathieu Boudu habitant de
 présent lieu et témoins qui ont
 déclaré . . . avoir signé . . .
5. signé de quoi également acquis par
 moi, Chaumel, notaire.

Translation:

1. Today, the thirtieth day of the month
 of March, 1754, before noon, in the
 city of Clairac in Agennais (Lot-et-
 Garonne)
2. and 3. in the presence of me, the
 undersigned notaire royal, and the
 witnesses listed below, was presented
 Ramond Guillon, brassier (see page

nineteen) resident of the same town, who has of his own free will sold, discharged, and transferred . . . with a promise to guarantee (the transaction) on pain of having to pay damages and interest, to Pierre Baljeau, brassier, and resident of the parish of St. Etienne de Jajouf, under the jurisdiction of Tonneins (a short distance from Clairac), a small vineyard in area twenty-nine escats [a local unit of land measurement, 72 escats = 1 cartonat = 1/8 hectare] located at a place called . . . Clot

4. [this transaction has taken place] in the presence of Andre Laville, Jean Galie, Etienne Gallerder, etc. . . . residents of the same general area and witnesses who have declared [that] . . . they have signed [below] . . .
5. also signed with equal authority by me, Chaumel, notaire.

When these two documents are compared, some of the more interesting similarities and differences include:

- a. Size, obviously the achat was less lengthy in this particular case, although other such acts included such items as the buyer's agreement to pay all seignorial dues and other fees, the seller's promise not to ask for any additional money beyond the agreed upon settlement, the price of the land purchased, and the specific location of the land vis-à-vis the parish and neighboring vineyards. While this example was chosen largely because of its brevity, nevertheless the more modern transactions were, on the whole, considerably shorter than their medieval counterparts. An important reason for this change may be found in:
- b. The absence of extensive introductory and other formulations. In the achat, for example, both pope and king are omitted and the act now

begins with the chronological information. (The pope, as suggested previously, was removed in the sixteenth century, the king in the seventeenth, in part because of the religious and political controversies of the age.)²⁶ Thereafter, a statement by the notary is found and then the list of participants. The corpus of the entry is also remarkably free from lengthy expositions, which characterized medieval chartularies, a circumstance attributable to some extent to the gradual (and partial) substitution of local custom and royal decree for Roman legal formulations.²⁷

- c. Retention of certain basic phrases in both documents. Despite, and perhaps because of, the alternations in style and form summarized above, a number of formulaic phrases persisted in these records. Compare, for example, the following: ego Finas di Berengarii . . . vendo, cedo, trado . . . and . . . Ramond Guillon a vendu, quitté et transporté . . .
- d. Continuation of residency, e.g., . . . tibi Petro Plancenii habitatori ville Sancti Johannis de Gardonica . . . and . . . Pierre Baljeau . . . habitant de la paroisse de St. Etienne de Jajouf . . .
- e. Identification of occupation in the achat but not in the arrentement. Status or profession was also generally included in the sixteenth and seventeenth century records.
- f. Validation of the act by the witnesses and the notary is evident in both documents, as is the similarity of opening and closing sentences in so far as the notaries are concerned.

From these few points of comparison, it should be recognized that vestiges of the medieval notarial record, especially of the five-part outline described previously, did remain in the early modern act (in southern France at any rate). Conse-

quently, the student of notarial records may be well advised to become familiar with the medieval resources before turning to the modern. It is, of course, quite possible to begin in a somewhat later era and work back, but the more profound insights will, in all likelihood, be gained by investigating the medieval documents first.

With this background in mind, let us now consider some of the ways in which notarial records can be utilized. The value of these sources for economic, legal, and, to a lesser extent, social history has long been recognized. Robert S. Lopez, who has made extensive use of these resources in his studies of medieval Genoese economic history, listed in 1951 four basic factors which underscore the usefulness of notarial records:²⁸

1. The evolution of private law can be traced via these sources, often more effectively than in "official codes."
2. Notarial records reflect almost all aspects of economic and social life.
3. The notary in southern Europe was an "interpreter and confidant" of a "'whole world which put on paper all engagements of any kind.'" This datum is particularly significant, since the notaries transcribed a wide variety of acts, sales, leases, wills, etc., and as a result, recapitulated the most significant aspects of the socio-economic life of the area in which they resided.
4. Occasionally in an individual charter, or group of chartularies, some insight into otherwise inexplicable political phenomena can be acquired. This is also true of military matters. Personal research in the chartularies of thirteenth-century Genoa has, for example, yielded an important and heretofore unrecognized reason for Genoa's rapid expansion in the thirteenth century. This was, namely, the successful use of crossbows in naval warfare by a small but

apparently quite well-trained contingent of crossbowmen.

In the records for commercial voyages abroad, it is noted that this group often possessed powerful composite bows of wood and horn and were supervised by an individual titled magister pro balistris aptandis in a number of instances, who seems to have been some type of special instructor.²⁹ Toward the end of the century, the crossbowmen were separated from the ordinary seamen and became even more effective as a fighting force, which helped to assure Genoese predominance in western Italy and her steadily increasing influence overseas.³⁰

In addition to the problems of paleography and background, there are, however, several others pertinent to these documents which have not encouraged their extensive use by scholars. Some of the more important include: diffuseness or "over-abundance" of information, the lack of a fundamental and clear-cut pattern of organization of the type found in sources such as census records, tax lists, specialized royal and ecclesiastical transactions, and even parish registers, the lack of indexes and cross references in the medieval period, which is corrected to a degree in the early modern era. Furthermore, medieval notaries often kept separate records for the nobility and higher clergy, many of which have subsequently been lost. Such a hiatus can be a considerable disadvantage to those interested in employing notarial records³¹ to investigate these social groups.

In view of these difficulties, especially that of diffuseness, some scholars have preferred to study specific acts, e.g., dowries, wills, leases, in order to determine certain types of socio-economic behavior. The sociologist Jean Paul Poisson has, for example, investigated the social and economic role of the Parisian notaries in 1749 by concentrating more or less exclusively on leases, sales, and powers of attorney.³²

Yet the rich and variegated materials in notarial records can, if properly used, yield much new information and a greater degree of understanding than may be gleaned from more specialized or formal sources. This is particularly true in the case of family history, as the medievalist Diane Owen Hughes has pointed out. As she has suggested, notarial records have a distinct advantage in that they can be fixed in time and space, thereby providing a horizontal and vertical continuity which is most helpful when investigating closely knit groups like the family over a specific time period.

Using a model developed by the anthropologist P. H. Gulliver in his ethnographic study of the Ndendeali of Tanzania, Professor Hughes has traced "action sets," or the scope of individual socio-economic and political relationships, and "kin sets," the relationship of an individual to family or kin groups, i.e., "men or women upon whom he could exert claims and with whom he cooperated because he felt they were linked to him in a special, familial way."³³

In other words, the number of transactions in which one person was involved in his or her lifetime, and the fact that, as suggested previously, many families engaged the same notary or his posterity through several generations, enables the researcher to trace the social, economic, and to a degree, political development of an individual during a particular time span. His family and kin can be related to him through the same references, since in many instances notarial records list all participants in a given transaction, including almost everyone who at some period in his or her life made use of a notary, their professions (quite often their social status as well, if different from their professions) and, particularly through marriage contracts, wills and inventories, the members of the nuclear and occasionally even the extended family.³⁴

The work of M. Robine should be of special interest to genealogists and demographers. He has detailed some of the ways in which notarial records can be employed as supplements to parish registers. Marriage contracts, for example, purvey both nominal and ordinal data, i.e., names of bride and groom, names of prospective in-laws, professions or status of the groom, the father and father in-law, quite often the ages of everyone concerned, and dowry sizes or, in some instances, the total estimated wealth of both marriage partners.

Robine also proffers one way in which marriage contracts can be of help in tracing geographic mobility, namely, by providing information regarding Type E families whose marriages were celebrated outside their indigenous parishes (as distinguished from Type M families who remained within the confines of the local parish.) When data pertinent to Type E families can be extracted from the marriage contracts, it may also prove useful in increasing the percentage of reconstituted families, which is normally about 10 percent for the single parish.³⁵

Furthermore, by comparing the date of the marriage contract with that of the birth of the first child (legitimate), the time of conception can be approximated. If the age of the bride is also known, it is then possible to calculate important fertility cycles.³⁶

Other types of entries may also be utilized to supplement parish registers. Sales, leases, receipts, business ventures, etc., often provide information regarding age, place of birth, occupation, relatives, and kin of the participants. This is especially true of wills which generally contain a wealth of detail concerning the family of the testator.

With regard to local history, notarial records sometimes furnish information on regional and local customs and traditions which can be brought to light in no other way. An interesting case in point is the

so-called brassier. According to Marcel Marion, this individual was a native of Guyenne, visible primarily in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, who was employed as a subsistence farmer or agricultural laborer, so called because he worked mostly with his arm (bras) and owned no land or only as much as he could cultivate without the aid of farm animals.³⁷

Yet research from a pilot study on social mobility in Clairac, a small town in southern France (in the former province of Guyenne) has shown that the brassiers were, in general, as well off economically, if not always socially, as the majority of laboureurs (the latter being a kind of peasant elite with land, tools, and animals).³⁸ Dowry sizes, wills, land sales, rents, among others, confirm this fact. Both groups appear relatively prosperous when measured against the artisans or small shopkeepers through notarial record entries.³⁹

Finally, research for this pilot has indicated that notarial records are most fruitful sources for the study of social mobility, particularly in pre-industrial societies where the kind of concise categories involving skilled and unskilled workers, as well as the various groupings between these poles, which have been developed for the analysis of modern society, are simply not applicable.

At present, professor Davis Bitton of the University of Utah and I are engaged in a lengthy investigation of social mobility in eight specially selected towns in southern France (to be published by Stanford University Press), which utilizes the notarial record collections in the Genealogical Society as a major primary source. One important result of our endeavors to date has been to establish land sales, particularly those related to

viticulture, as a very important determinant of what might be termed horizontal mobility, the increase or decrease of wealth without an ensuing change of status.⁴⁰

After approximately 1760, there was a fairly sharp rise in land sales on the part of the upper middle class, primarily to the more prosperous peasants. In almost every case in which a member of the bourgeoisie is selling, it is the peasant who is buying. While the social position of the latter was not altered to any real extent because of this activity and individual purchases were quite small, the total increase in sales and purchases is, on the whole, rather dramatic. We believe this to be indicative of a decline in fortune among certain members of the bourgeoisie, which may have important implications for the middle- and upper middle-classes in southern France on the eve of the Revolution.

In conclusion, it should be recognized from the above examples that notarial records can be most valuable resources for the historian, demographer, genealogist, and others, particularly when subject to a rigorous methodology, like that of Professor Hughes, employed to supplement parish or other records, or utilized in novel ways such as in the study of social mobility. Of course a certain degree of paleographic expertise is necessary to work with these documents, together with some background in the socio-economic and legal history of the area under consideration and a knowledge of local customs and traditions. With these caveats in mind, however, notarial records, particularly the fine collection housed in the Genealogical Society, can and should be used in a variety of new and instructive ways to enrich our understanding of the multifarious life of the past, thereby bringing us closer to an appreciation of our own.

Other Resources France

French Genealogical Word List

http://www.familysearch.org/Eng/Search/RG/frameset_rg.asp?Dest=G1&Aid=&Gid=&Lid=&Sid=&Did=&Juris1=&Event=&Year=&Gloss=&Sub=&Tab=&Entry=&Guide=WLFrench.ASP

Latin Genealogical Word List

http://www.familysearch.org/Eng/Search/RG/frameset_rg.asp?Dest=G1&Aid=&Gid=&Lid=&Sid=&Did=&Juris1=&Event=&Year=&Gloss=&Sub=&Tab=&Entry=&Guide=WLLatin.ASP

Libraries and Archives of France

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/european/france/resources/fr-libraries.html>

Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) (<http://www.bnf.fr>)

French National Library. Links to the online catalogs, online exhibits, a digital library of French and francophone culture, an image bank, and other resources and information. In French, English, and Spanish.

The Huguenot Society of America

<http://www.huguenotsocietyofamerica.org/>

Archives Departementales (County Records)

Contact Information for County Records offices in France

<http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=fr&u=http://www.genealogy.tm.fr/archives/archives.htm&sa=X&oi=translate&resnum=1&ct=result&prev=/search%3Fq%3DArchives%2BDepartementales%26hl%3Den>

Cyndi's List France Links

<http://www.cyndislist.com/france.htm>

France; official standard names approved by the United States Board on Geographic Names: United States Office of Geography

G105 .U53x no.83 vol.1 Non-circulating Map Bookshelves

French Records Extraction: An Instructional Guide

<http://www.familysearch.org/Eng/Library/fhlcatalog/supermainframeset.asp?display=title&filmnotes&columns=%2C0%2C0&titleno=417661&disp=French+records+extraction++>

The BYU Family History Center does NOT have this Film Number (6068523)

FamilySearch Wiki

www.familysearchwiki.org