



Grand Duchy of
luxembourg.

Légende · Zeichenerklärung · Verklaring der tekens · Key

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 km

- Autoroute, sortie · Autobahn, Ausfahrt
- Route principale · Hauptstrasse
- Route secondaire · Nebenstrasse
- Piste cyclable · Radwanderwege (PC)
- Chemin de fer · Eisenbahn
- Frontière · Grenze
- Cours d'eau, Lac · Wasserlauf, See
- Arrêt de train · Bahnhof
- Cote d'altitude · Höhenangabe
- Cave viticole · Weinkellerei
- Equitation · Reitsport
- Golf · Golf
- Patinoire · Kunstseebahn
- Ski de fond · Langlaufpiste
- Canotage · Paddeln
- Ski nautique · Wasserski
- Planche à voile · Windsurfen
- Piscine de plein air · Freibad
- Piscine couverte · Hallenbad
- Bureau Informations · Auskunftsbüro
- Tennis · Tennis
- Edifice remarquable · Sehenswertes Gebäude
- Eglise remarquable · Sehenswerte Kirche
- Site archéologie · Archäologische Stätte
- Autosnelweg, uitrit · Motorway, exit
- Hoofdverkeersweg · Main road
- Tweederangs weg · Secondary road
- Fietspad · Cycling track (PC)
- Spoorweg · Railway
- Grens · Boundary
- Waterloop, meer · Watercourse, lake
- Spoorweghalte · Train stop
- Hoogtepunt · Spot elevation
- Wijnkelder · Wine cellar
- Paardrijden · Horse back riding
- Golf · Golf
- Kunstseebahn · Ice skating rink
- Langlaufski · Cross country skiing
- Kanovaren · Boating
- Waterskiën · Water-skiing
- Surfen / seilen · Surfing / sailing
- Zwembad in de open lucht · Outdoor swimming pool
- Zwembad overdekt · Indoor swimming pool
- Inlichtingbureau · Information office
- Tennis · Tennis
- Merkswaardig · Remarkable building
- Museum · Museum
- Merkswaardige kerk · Remarkable church
- Kasteel · Castle
- Archeologisch overblijfsel · Archeological site

Editeur: Office National du Tourisme info@ont.lu
BP 1001 · L-1010 Luxembourg · Tél. 42 82 82 20 · Fax 42 82 82 30



LE MULLERTHAL
LA PETITE SUISSE LUXEMBOURGEOISE

LA MOSELLE

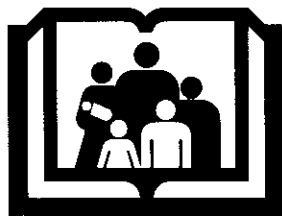
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The Role of the
Notary in European
Family Life

C. Russell Jensen

Series 528

THE ROLE OF THE NOTARY IN EUROPEAN FAMILY LIFE

C. Russell Jensen

Born in Utah. Resides in Salt Lake City, Utah. Adjunct Professor of History, Brigham Young University. Ph.D., University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois. Author, lecturer, demographer.

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. 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-

~~medieval era of the~~
~~merged with the~~
 lic 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 contract¹⁰ or act with an aura of final authority.

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 less¹¹ exclusively from the royal office. 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 (Arrentement), 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, indiction (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 Innocent VI (1352-1362), by divine provident 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, juridition 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 Luibaud 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 Planceni 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 exclusively³² on leases, sales, and powers of attorney.

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 Ndendeuli 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

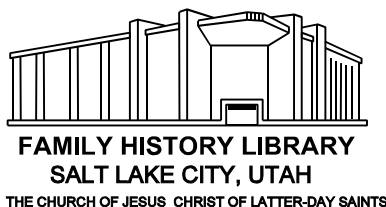
Finally, research for this pilot has indicated that notarial records are most fruitful sources for the study of social mobility, particularly in pre-industrial societies where the kind of concise categories involving skilled and unskilled workers, as well as the various groupings between these poles, 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.



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—

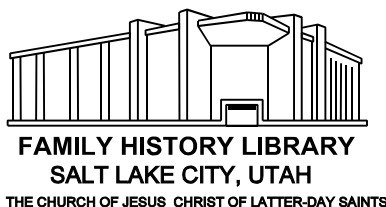
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34059



German

INTRODUCTION

This guide is for researchers who do not speak German but must write to Germany, Austria, or parts of Switzerland to request genealogical records. It includes a list of sentences you would use in a letter about genealogical records and a German translation of these sentences.

The best sources of genealogical information in German-speaking countries are records of births, marriages, and deaths kept by churches and civil registration offices. The Family History Library has microfilmed copies of these records for many, but not all, localities. 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, it is usually faster and more productive to search these records first. The library's *Germany Research Outline* (34061) explains how to research records at the library or at Family History Centers.

If the records you want are not available through the Family History Library, you can use this guide to help you write to a church or a civil registration office to obtain information. The *Germany Research Outline* can help you decide whether church or civil registration records will be most helpful to you.

BEFORE YOU WRITE

Before you write a letter in German to obtain family history information, you should do three 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 library's *Tracing Immigrant Origins* for help in finding hometowns.

☐ **Determine your ancestor's religion.** Because most early records were kept by churches or synagogues rather than civil registration offices, you may need to write to the church your ancestor attended in his or her hometown. If you are not sure what your ancestor's religion was in Europe, determine what religion he or she practiced after immigrating. Usually people did not change religions when they moved from Europe to their new home.

☐ **Determine where records from your ancestor's hometown are stored today.** Records for smaller localities may be at repositories in nearby larger villages. You can use a gazetteer to determine which parish or civil jurisdiction serves your ancestor's locality. You may also use the *Germany Research Outline* for help locating records.

RESEARCH BY MAIL

Church records are obtained from parishes, and civil records are obtained from civil registration offices. Both kinds of records may be stored in archives. Genealogical Societies may also be able to help you find some of the information you need.

Parishes. Most church records begin in the 1600s, and some begin even earlier. The records may be stored in a local parish or a regional archive. Request information from the local parish first. In your letter, ask where you can write to obtain records that are no longer stored locally.

Civil Registration Offices. Civil registration records begin in 1876 in most of Germany and as early as 1792 in some areas. They begin in 1876 in Switzerland and 1939 in Austria. They are generally deposited at local offices, but older records (especially those over one hundred years old) are sometimes in state or district archives. Write local offices first. Registrars may be able to tell you where to write to obtain records they no longer have.

Archives. If the records you need are deposited in an archive, you may ask the archivist to recommend a private researcher you can hire. Archivists usually do not have time to search records.

Societies. Genealogical societies usually collect genealogies, periodicals, and some original records from their area and recommend researchers you can hire to research local records.

How to Address the Envelope

For a *Catholic Parish*:

An das katholische Pfarramt
(Insert street address, if known.)
(Postal Code) (Name of Locality)
GERMANY
AUSTRIA, or SWITZERLAND

For a **Protestant Parish:**

An das evangelische Pfarramt
(Insert street address, if known.)
(Postal Code) (Name of Locality)
GERMANY
AUSTRIA, or SWITZERLAND

For a **Civil Registration Office:**

An das Standesamt
(Insert street address, if known.)
(Postal Code) (Name of Locality)
GERMANY
or AUSTRIA

An das Zivilstandsamt
(Insert street address, if known.)
(Postal Code) (Name of Locality)
SWITZERLAND

Some archive and society addresses are listed in the *Germany Research Outline*, or you can call the Family History Library at 801-240-3433.

Postal Codes

When addressing your letter, you will need to write the postal (zip) code **in front** of the name of the town to which you are writing. For help finding postal codes, use the postal directory for the country or call the Family History Library at 801-240-3433.

On 1 July 1993 Germany revised its postal codes. Any address published prior to July 1993 must be updated to be correct.

Some towns do not have a post office. When writing to a town without one, put the name of the town at the end of the first line. Write the postal code and the nearest post office on the second line. For example, the German postal directory indicates that the post office for *Blersum* is at nearby *Wittmund*. A letter requesting information from a civil registration office in Blersum should be addressed:

An das Standesamt **Blersum**
26409 **Wittmund**
GERMANY

How to Send Return Postage and Money

When you write someone in Europe, send an international reply coupon (available at most large post offices) to pay for return postage. When writing to Germany, some people have had more success sending an international bank draft.

Ruesch International Bank Drafts. An easy and inexpensive way to send money to Europe from North America is to telephone Ruesch International Financial Services at 800-424-2923. Ask for an international bank draft for the equivalent of \$15.00 (or another amount) in either German marks, Austrian schillings, or Swiss

francs. There is a \$3.00 service charge. Have the check made payable to the organization or to the *Pfarramt* (parish). Ruesch will give you a transaction number to write on your payment check. Send the payment to—

Ruesch International Financial Services
700 11th St NW
Washington, DC 20001-4507

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

Writing to a Parish. When writing to a parish, it is also a good idea to send a donation of \$15.00 as a courtesy. Do not send a personal check, which is difficult and expensive to exchange in Europe. Cash is most easily converted to European currency, but there are always risks in sending cash.

Writing to Other Offices or Organizations. Some researchers do not send money when writing to a civil registration office, archive, 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 (*Konto*) 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 a Letter to Europe

- ☐ Keep a photocopy of your letter.
- ☐ Enclose payment for the return postage.
- ☐ Convert funds to foreign currency.
- ☐ Mark the envelope "Air Mail."

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 parishes or civil registration offices can vary greatly. You may get a great deal of information, or you may get no answer at all. Some pastors and civil registrars are willing to do considerable research. Others will not answer until money is sent or offered. Some may be unable to provide information.

Because some information is not easily obtained by writing directly to a pastor or registrar, 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 letters and their return letters by date. If they have assigned you a reference number, include that number as well.

Use German-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 GERMAN

Your letter should include:

- the date (at the top)
- the name and address of the addressee
- a greeting
- a brief introduction
- biographical information about your relative
- a short, specific, genealogical request
- referral request(s)
- a comment about payment
- closing remarks
- your signature
- your return address (including your country).

Be brief and simple. Do not ask for too much at one time.

The following English-to-German translations will help you compose your letter. Read the sentences in English and choose those that best express what you want to say. 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 German 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 ä, ö, ü, ß) with a pen.

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 Dezember 1889*, not *12-10-89* or even *10-12-1889*.

January	- Januar	July	- Juli
February	- Februar	August	- August
March	- März	September	- September
April	- April	October	- Oktober
May	- Mai	November	- November
June	- Juni	December	- Dezember

English

German

Greetings

1. Dear Sir or Madam:	1. Sehr geehrter Herr oder geehrte Dame,
2. Dear Pastor:	2. Sehr geehrter Herr Pfarrer,

Introductions

3. I am researching my ancestors and need information from your records.	3. Ich erforsche meine Vorfahren und benötige Angaben aus Ihren Registern.
4. My ancestors come from (<i>fill in locality</i>). I would like to know more about them.	4. Meine Vorfahren stammen aus (<i>fill in locality</i>). Ich möchte gerne mehr über dieselben erfahren.
5. The following individual is my ancestor. Below is all the information I have about this person:	5. Die nachstehend aufgeführte Person ist mein Vorfahr. Ich habe alle mir bekannten genealogischen Angaben über diese Person aufgeführt:

Biographical Information

(Give information about your ancestor using the terms from the following list.)

6. a. Given name and surname:	6. a. Vor- und Familienname:
b. Date of birth:	b. Geburtsdatum:
c. Place of birth:	c. Geburtsort:
d. Father's given name and surname:	d. Vor- und Familienname des Vaters:

e. Mother's given name and surname:	e. Vor- und Mädchenname der Mutter:
f. Husband's given name and surname:	f. Vor- und Familienname des Ehemannes:
g. Wife's given name and maiden surname:	g. Vor- und Mädchenname der Ehefrau:
h. Date of marriage:	h. Heiratsdatum:
i. Place of marriage:	i. Heiratsort:
j. Date of death:	j. Todestag:
k. Place of death:	k. Sterbeort:
l. Date of emigration:	l. Auswanderungsdatum:
m. Religion: Roman Catholic Protestant (Lutheran) Reformed Jewish	m. Religion: römisch-katholisch evangelisch-lutherisch evangelisch-reformiert jüdisch
Genealogical Requests	
7. Could you please check your birth registers from <u>(fill in year)</u> to <u>(fill in year)</u> for the birth or christening record of this person?	7. Bitte suchen Sie in Ihren Geburtsregistern von <u>(fill in year)</u> bis <u>(fill in year)</u> nach dem Geburtseintrag dieser Person?
8. Please send me a complete extract of the birth or christening record (1) of this person. (2) of these persons.	8. Bitte schicken Sie mir einen vollständigen Auszug aus dem Geburts- oder Taufregister (1) für diese Person. (2) für diese Personen.
9. Please send me a complete extract of the marriage record (1) of this person. (2) of this person's parents.	9. Bitte schicken Sie mir einen vollständigen Auszug des Heiratsregisters (1) für diese Person. (2) für die Eltern dieser Person.
10. I believe that <u>(fill in name)</u> died in your locality about <u>(fill in year)</u> . I would like a complete extract of the death record.	10. Ich glaube, daß <u>(fill in name)</u> ungefähr <u>(fill in year)</u> in Ihrem Ort starb. Ich möchte gerne einen vollständigen Auszug aus dem Todesregister für diese Person haben.
11. I would like to know more about the family of this person. I would be grateful if you would provide the names and birth dates of the brothers and sisters and an extract of the marriage record of the parents.	11. Ich möchte gerne mehr über die Familie dieser Person erfahren und wäre Ihnen sehr dankbar, wenn Sie mir die Namen und Geburtsdaten der Geschwister und einen Auszug aus dem Heiratsregister für die Eltern beschaffen könnten.
12. I would like to locate any relatives who may live in <u>(fill in town)</u> . My ancestor was <u>(fill in name)</u> . If you know any relatives of the family, I would be grateful if you would give this letter to them so that they can contact me.	12. Ich möchte meine Verwandten finden, die in <u>(fill in town)</u> wohnen. Der Name meines Vorfahren ist <u>(fill in name)</u> . Wenn Sie Verwandte dieser Familie kennen, wäre ich Ihnen dankbar, wenn Sie ihnen diesen Brief geben könnten, damit sie mit mir Kontakt aufnehmen können.
13. Please send me a copy of the family information on <u>(fill in husband's name)</u> and <u>(fill in wife's name)</u> . They were married (1) <u>(fill in date)</u> . (2) approximately <u>(fill in date)</u> .	13. Senden Sie mir bitte eine Abschrift über die Familie von <u>(fill in husband's name)</u> und <u>(fill in wife's name)</u> . Sie heirateten (1) <u>(fill in date)</u> . (2) ungefähr <u>(fill in date)</u> .

14. For my family research I need information from the Jewish records of births, marriages, and deaths from your community. Do you know where such records were kept and where they are presently located?	14. Für meine Ahnenforschung brauche ich Angaben aus den jüdischen Geburts-, Heirats-, und Todesregistern Ihres Ortes. Wissen Sie, wo diese Unterlagen aufbewahrt wurden und wo sie sich gegenwärtig befinden?
15. Would you please inform me if it is possible to obtain photocopies from your records and tell me the cost of such copies?	15. Würden Sie mir bitte mitteilen, ob es möglich wäre, Fotokopien von Ihren Urkunden zu erhalten und was sie kosten?
Referral Requests	
16. If you do not have the necessary records, could you provide the address of the place where the records can be found?	16. Wenn Sie die notwendigen Unterlagen nicht besitzen, könnten Sie mir die Anschrift der Dienststelle mitteilen, wo sich die betreffenden Unterlagen befinden?
17. If you are unable to do this research for me, could you please recommend a local researcher that I could hire for this purpose—someone who speaks some English if possible?	17. Sollten Sie nicht in der Lage sein, mir bei dieser Forschung zu helfen, so bitte ich um den Namen eines Ahnenforschers, den ich beauftragen könnte—wenn möglich jemanden, der Englisch kann?
Payment	
18. To cover your expenses, I am enclosing a donation to your parish as well as payment for the return postage.	18. Zur Deckung Ihrer Gebühren lege ich eine Spende zu Ihrem Pfarramt bei.
19. Please let me know the cost of your help and how I can pay.	19. Bitte teilen Sie mir mit, was ich für Ihre Dienstleistung zu bezahlen habe und wie ich den Betrag überweisen kann.
Closing Remarks and Return Address	
20. I thank you in advance for your help.	20. Ich danke Ihnen im Voraus für Ihre Hilfe.
21. Sincerely,	21. Mit freundlichen Grüßen
22. My address:	22. Meine Anschrift:
Follow-up (Use these sentences in follow-up letters as needed.)	
23. Thank you for the information you sent on (<i>fill in date</i>). It has helped me very much.	23. Vielen Dank für die Angaben, die Sie mir am (<i>fill in date</i>) geschickt haben. Die sind für mir eine große Hilfe!
24. I need further information about one of the individuals you mentioned in your letter: (<i>fill in name</i>).	24. Ich brauche zusätzliche Angaben über eine Person, die Sie in Ihrem Brief erwähnt haben. Es handelt sich um (<i>fill in name</i>).
25. I have already received from you the following information about this person:	25. Ich habe von Ihnen über diese Person schon die folgenden Angaben erhalten:
26. 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.	26. Ich lege eine Kopie von einem Brief bei, den ich Ihnen am (<i>fill in date</i>) geschickt habe. Bitte, schreiben Sie mir, ob Sie diesen Auftrag annehmen können!

EXAMPLE LETTER

Date 20 Juli 1993

Addressee An das evangelische Pfarramt Seele
99799 Nirgendwo
GERMANY

Greeting Sehr geehrter Herr Pfarrer,

Introduction Die nachstehend aufgeführte Person ist mein Vorfahr. Ich habe alle mir bekannten genealogischen Angaben über diese Person aufgeführt:

Biographical Information Vor- und Familienname: Andreas NIEMAND
Geburtsdatum: 28 Mai 1820
Geburtsort: Seele, Sachsen, Preußen
Vor- und Mädchenname der Ehefrau: Beatta CRILE
Heiratsdatum: 13 April 1857
Heiratsort: Jefferson County, Iowa, USA
Religion: evangelisch-lutherisch

Genealogical Request Bitte schicken Sie mir einen vollständigen Auszug aus dem Geburts- oder Taufregister für diese Person?

Referral Requests Wenn Sie die notwendigen Unterlagen nicht besitzen, könnten Sie mir die Anschrift der Dienststelle mitteilen, wo sich die betreffenden Unterlagen befinden?

Sollten Sie nicht in der Lage sein, mir bei dieser Forschung zu helfen, so bitte ich um den Namen eines Ahnenforschers, den ich beauftragen könnte—wenn möglich jemanden, der Englisch kann?

Payment Zur Deckung Ihrer Gebühren lege ich eine Spende zu Ihrem Pfarramt bei.

Closing Ich danke Ihnen im Voraus für Ihre Hilfe.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Signature

Return Address Meine Anschrift:
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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34066

ENGLISH



Other Resources Luxembourg

The Genealogical and Heraldical Society of Luxembourg
http://www.genealogie.lu/algh/main/uk/mainpage_uk.shtml

National Library of Luxembourg
http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=fr&u=http://www.bnl.lu/&sa=X&oi=translate&resnum=1&ct=result&prev=/search%3Fq%3DNational%2BLibrary%2Bof%2BLuxembourg%26hl%3Den%26rlz%3D1T4GZHZ_enUS231US231

Public Records of the Duchy of Luxembourg
http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=fr&u=http://www.an.etat.lu/&sa=X&oi=translate&resnum=2&ct=result&prev=/search%3Fq%3DLuxembourg%2BArchives%26hl%3Den%26rlz%3D1T4GZHZ_enUS231US231

Luxembourg Article on Wikipedia
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luxembourg>

Luxembourg Parishes Microfilms
<http://www.familysearch.org/Eng/Library/fhlcatalog/supermainframeset.asp?display=titlehitlist&columns=%2C0%2C0&keyword=Luxembourg+Parishes&prekeyword=Luxembourg+Parishes>

Cyndi's List Luxembourg Links
<http://www.cyndislist.com/luxembourg.htm>

FamilySearch Wiki
<https://wiki.familysearch.org/en/Luxembourg>