

KENTUCKY ANCESTORS

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Zachariah Riney: Lincoln's First Schoolmaster
Irish and Scots-Irish Pioneers to Kentucky
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The History of Kentucky's Office of Secretary of State Website & the Land Office Reference Library

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(The seventh in a series of articles regarding the Internet availability of Kentucky Land Office records)

It is an established fact that not all historians are genealogists but all genealogists are historians. With a basic understanding of the history timeline, researchers quickly realize grandparents born in the 1880s could not have entered Kentucky with Daniel Boone in the 1770s. The numbers just will not bend. By studying birth and death dates on the family tree, however, genealogists can transform data to individuals with personality and documented accomplishments. For example, if family members were born in the 1840s, were they involved in the Civil War in the 1860s? And by using available resources such as public records, genealogists can verify, or modify, the "They say" assertions of family tradition—"They say she served as Kentucky secretary of state" or "They say he was a delegate to a Kentucky constitutional convention." The family-tree printed form is a skeleton waiting to be fleshed out; history comes alive as we place our ancestors at Valley Forge, Gettysburg, or Pearl Harbor. Names on our various charts deserve to be remembered for more than their date of birth or date of death. They are not just our ancestors; they are our family.

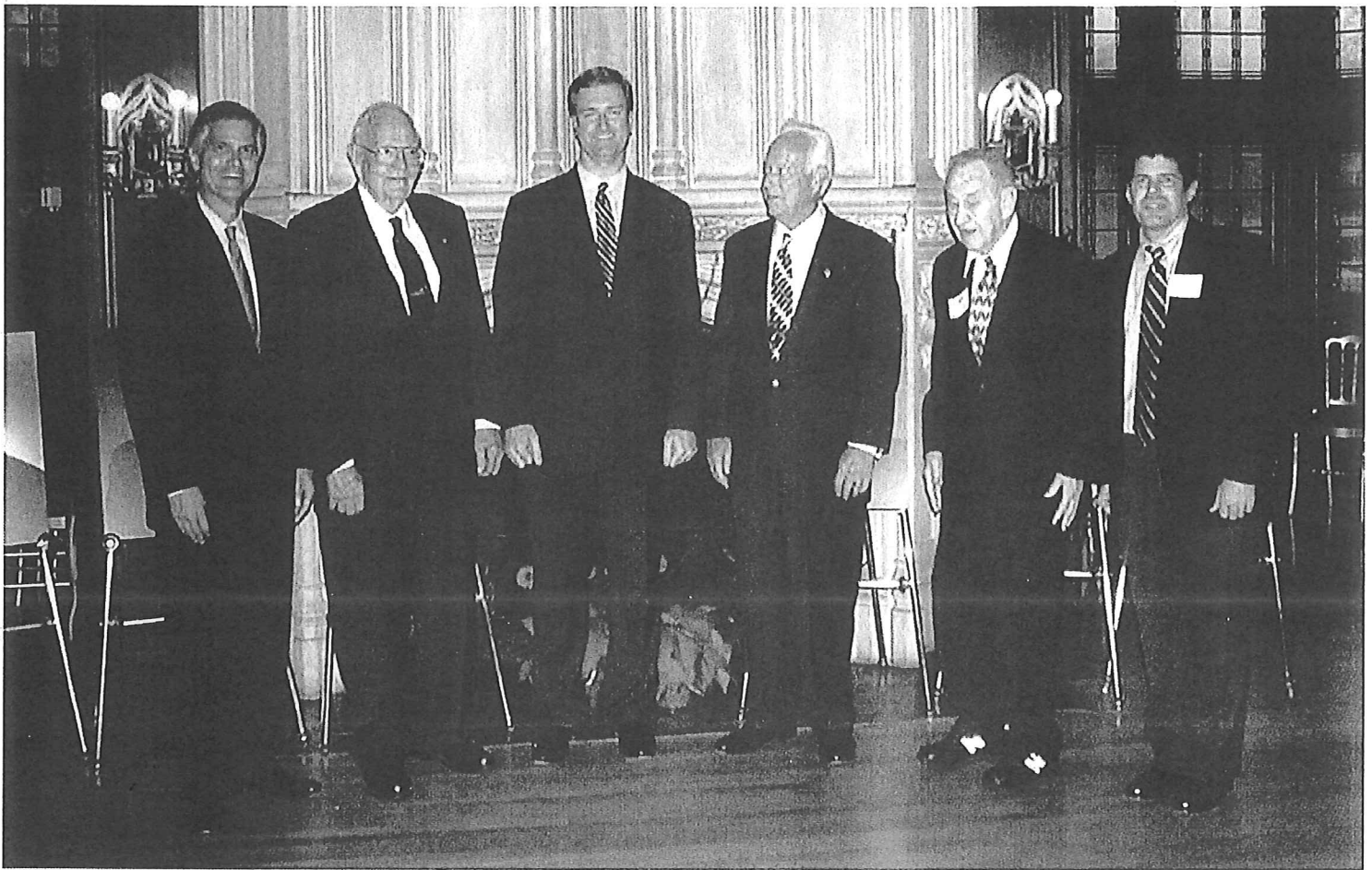
As we start our genealogical quest, the first records we usually access are family Bibles, census forms, deeds, wills, cemetery listings, obituaries, and vital statistics such as marriages, births, and deaths. On-line family histories may prove helpful

as a "starting point" or, at the very least, they may introduce us to new cousins. Information swaps can provide a wealth of family information and scanned images that enhance our personal research.

Unfortunately, there is a major resource that is often overlooked by genealogists. When patrons enter the book stacks in the Martin F. Schmidt Research Library at the Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History, they see thousands of books and multiple file cabinets. The first instinct is to open a file drawer of family histories or find the book stacks for counties of interest, then peruse the published local records. Occasionally they find the various reports of the Kentucky Adjutant General or they visit the microfilm room. Friends, there is so much more information in that library—and similar repositories throughout the commonwealth. Visit the book stacks dedicated to religion in Kentucky. You may find an ancestor listed with the Traveling Church. Visit the book stacks dedicated to medicine in Kentucky. You may find your ancestor was a professor in the School of Medicine at the University of Louisville. Explore the file cabinets of state and county history. You may find a newspaper article or photograph that mentions a family member.

BIOGRAPHIES OF KENTUCKY'S SECRETARIES OF STATE

Once limited to on-site research, many governmental agencies are scanning their public documents for Internet access. Agencies are also posting information regarding the function and



In December 2005, Secretary of State Trey Grayson announced the launching of the "Office of the Secretary of State History Page" website. All six of the living secretaries attended the special ceremony at Berry Hill. Pictured are Secretary of State Bob Babbage, Secretary of State Bremer Ehrler, Secretary of State Trey Grayson, Secretary of State Ken Harper, Secretary of State Drexell Davis, and Secretary of State John Y. Brown III.

history of their office. One such project, initiated in the 1980s and originally proposed as a publication, includes biographies of Kentucky's secretaries of state since statehood.

The "Office of the Secretary of State History Page" website was formally launched in December 2005 by Secretary of State Trey Grayson. All six of the living secretaries attended the special ceremony at Berry Hill. How does a database listing Kentucky public officials relate to genealogy? Check the site. You will find documented biographies, written by Drs. Melba Hay and Nelson Dawson of the Kentucky Historical Society, for most of Kentucky's secretaries of state; other biographies will be added in the future. Many of the pages also include official portraits and genealogical information. For example, chronologies of state officials indicate John Brown was appointed Kentucky's first Secretary of State on 5 June 1792. The online database enhances information regarding Secretary Brown by providing his parents' names, Rev. John and Margaret Preston Brown, and the name of his wife, the former Ann "Nancy" Hart, a daughter of Colonel Thomas Hart and a sister of

Mrs. Henry Clay.

The "Timeline" on the Kentucky Secretaries of State Database includes milestones in the function of the office. Did you know the office of secretary of state was appointive until the first elected secretary assumed office in 1896? There was one gubernatorial term (Governor James T. Morehead, 1832-1836) in which the office of secretary of state was held by four appointees.

The complete text for Kentucky's constitutions, as ratified in 1792, 1799, 1850, and 1891, is also included on the "Timeline." Researchers of Kentucky law will enjoy reading the various changes in governmental procedure throughout our 207-plus years; genealogists should not overlook the names of delegates to each constitutional convention and the counties they represented.

The Secretaries of State Database, labeled as "History" in the channel listing on the Land Office Homepage at <http://www.sos.ky.gov/land/>, includes "Secretaries' Biographies" (click the Secretary's name to link to the biography), "Frequently Asked Questions," "Lists & Queries," the "Oath of



A listing of Kentucky's Secretaries of State website is included on the Land Office website, <http://www.sos.ky.gov/land>, in the "History" channel. The website includes biographies and portraits for many of the secretaries that may be of interest to genealogists and historians. Emma Guy Cromwell was the first woman elected to statewide office in Kentucky. As State Librarian and Director of Archives, she located and returned the original Kentucky Constitution to Frankfort from the University of Chicago archives. Mrs. Cromwell served as Kentucky's Secretary of State from 1 January 1924 to 1 January 1928.

Office,” and information regarding the Seal of the Commonwealth and the Seal of the Secretary of State, also known as the “Lesser Seal.”

REFERENCE LIBRARY

In 2001, Jeshua Caudle, then a temporary computer programmer for the Secretary of State’s office, suggested an online glossary would enhance the Land Office website. (Since that time, Jesh has graduated, with honors, from the College of Engineering at the University of Kentucky; he continues to serve as the programmer for our various Land Office databases.) The online glossary was immediately developed and is now part of the online “Reference Library.” The site, located at <http://www.sos.ky.gov/land/reference/> includes:

- Online Seminar: Since the late 1980s, Land Office staff have conducted more than one hundred land patent seminars and continuing education classes for historians, elderhostels, Kentucky surveyors, and engineers. The “Online Seminar” allows researchers to access the entire content of the original Land Office program. (Note: A newer Power Point presentation with notes and a special announcement by Secretary of State Trey Grayson is available on the Land Office homepage at <http://www.sos.ky.gov/land/>.)
- Saddlebag Notes: The technical leaflet, “The Kentucky Land Grant System,” first published in the “Saddlebag Notes” section of the May-June 1990 issue of Circuit Rider, published by the Historical Confederation of Kentucky, is one of the most requested handouts generated by the Kentucky Land Office.
- Researching Kentucky Tax Lists: 1792-1840, published by the Kentucky Genealogical Society in the Fall 2002 issue of Bluegrass Roots, provides a summary of legislation approved by the Kentucky General Assembly regarding the collection of state taxes and their value to historians and genealogists.
- The Gazetteer lists the county location for more than 1,000 place names identified in early Kentucky patents, the 1818 Munsell Map, and selected articles. Additional information will be added to the Gazetteer as patents are indexed. For

county location of Kentucky watercourses (1835 to present date), visit the County Court Orders Database, and search by “Watercourse.”

- Glossary: What is the difference between a warrant and a survey? The glossary defines more than one hundred terms associated with land patenting.
- Maps: Includes maps donated by Neal Hammon, a Kentucky author, historian, and surveyor. Also included are maps of Kentucky counties and waterways, as well as the Loughridge Map, the Filson Map, and other maps of historical interest.
- Quick Reference Guides provide brief summaries entitled “Kentucky Land Patent Series” and “Key Points to Remember.”
- County Formation Table: Kentucky wills, marriages, and deeds are filed at the local level with the county clerk. When new counties are formed, most records stay in the county in which they originated. The “County Formation Table” identifies county creation dates and the names of “mother counties.”
- Legislation: The land patenting process in Kentucky is the direct result of legislation passed by the Virginia General Assembly (before 1 June 1792) and the Kentucky General Assembly (after 1 June 1792). Researchers are encouraged to access the complete text of the various acts establishing and amending the patenting process. Additional acts pertaining to “the Permanent Revenue” (taxes), academies and seminaries, and miscellaneous topics of historical significance are also included on this website. Text of additional legislation will be added as the acts are identified.
- Resources: Over the years the Kentucky Land Office has researched and acquired a number of publications, articles, and rolls of microfilm regarding the history of Kentucky land. This bibliography represents a listing of many of those resources.
- Links: The links page includes hyperlinks to selected government agencies and professional associations; research libraries and online

databases; genealogy websites; and websites relating to maps and Kentucky locations.

- Kentucky County Officials Information: This website identifies contact information for Kentucky's County Clerks, Property Valuation Administrators, and Circuit Court Clerks.
 - o The Kentucky Land Office is the repository for all records pertaining to Kentucky Land Patents. Subsequent land conveyances, after the grant is issued, are filed on the local level with the county clerk. Land transactions may be recorded with deeds or wills. Mineral leases are also recorded with the county clerk's office. Researchers are encouraged to access the "Quick Guide: County Formation Table" to determine when the county was formed and the names of mother counties. (Records are not usually copied for new counties being established.)
 - o For escheated land sales, identification of current landowners, and maps of land parcels, contact the property valuation administrator for the county you are researching.
 - o For court cases regarding land title and/or mineral rights, contact the Kentucky Circuit Court Clerk for the area you are researching. Older cases may be available from the Research Library, Department for Libraries and Archives, Coffee Tree Road, Frankfort, KY 40601, or the Kentucky Supreme Court Law Library, Capitol Building, Frankfort, KY 40601.
- Surveying Measurements: This table provides information regarding metes and bounds measurement and the surveying system for public lands, i.e. range-township-section.

In addition to "Secretary of State Biographies," "Reference Library," and the various databases described in earlier issues of "Kentucky Ancestors," the Kentucky Secretary of State's Land Office website also includes the following channels:

- Land Office Order Form: Includes links to online as well as printable order forms for the Kentucky Land Office.

- Database Searches: This page, ideal for bookmarking, provides instant access to all Kentucky Land Office databases. To learn more about the structure and history of the databases included on the site, we encourage researchers to visit the individual pages for each database.
- Land Office Journal: Includes articles of historical and genealogical interest, a calendar of forthcoming seminars & Land Office presentations, online publications—as submitted for inclusion on the website, and press releases.

Governor William S. Taylor's Executive Journal, pg. 56.

"He (Gov. W. S. Taylor) pardoned today Caleb Powers, John W. Davis, John L. Powers, Charles Finley & William H. Culton charged in a warrant with the crime of aiding & assisting in the murder of William Goebel in Franklin County, Ky, on ---- day of March 1900 and as an accomplice in and accessory to said crime, and conspiring to commit same, and says knowing that said charge and warrant is the result of a political conspiracy to terrorize and oppress for political purposes, and also believing implicitly in the absolute innocence of said Caleb Powers, John L. Powers, Charles Finley, and William H. Culton, but realizing that as the courts are now organized, said Caleb Powers, John L. Powers, Charles Finley, and William H. Culton will be denied a fair trial. Pardon is granted."

Signed: W. S. Taylor, Governor of Kentucky

Public records, such as the Governors' Executive Journals (maintained by the Kentucky Secretary of State), can provide significant historical information. This entry from Governor Taylor's 10 March 1900 Executive Journal pardons individuals accused of "aiding and assisting in the murder of William Goebel," Kentucky's thirty-second governor. To see online images and text of Governor Steve Beshear's Executive Journal, access the "Executive" channel at <http://www.sos.ky.gov/executive>. Researchers should also access early "Acts of the General Assembly" for legislative action such as divorces, business incorporations, and specific land transactions. (There is no master index for the "Acts," each volume includes a general index and, often a separate index for "Local Acts & Private Laws and Resolutions.") Scanned images of "Enacted Legislation" recently approved by the Kentucky General Assembly, are also available under the "Executive" channel.

Next article in this series: "Tax Lists: An Overlooked Resource for Kentucky History and Land Title"