Scan either of the above Quick Response (QR) codes with your QR code smartphone reader and you will be taken to the genealogy blog I author for the library titled "Tony’s Genealogy Blog at the Schaumburg Township District Library”.

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September 11, 2018

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Hi Everyone,

This document should be considered as the program “handouts” document for our September 11, 2018 Schaumburg Township District Library Genealogy Program.

What does this really mean?

Prior to this “new” process, our program handouts would actually be paper handouts that were based on me often printing up the first page related to a website that I wanted to mention. Then on the paper for the website I would handwrite what things of importance are associated with the website that the researcher should know. Maybe it was a new website or maybe an important date related to a significant event or maybe a new database was released. Whatever it was I noted it on the paper of the first page of the website.

The source for the vast majority of what is in the Handouts is the monthly Schaumburg Township District Library Genealogy Newsletter. From within this larger document I extract information on upcoming genealogy programs local to our area, important items from Dick Eastman’s Online Genealogy Blog, as well as I summarize some key periodical articles of interest that I think are important to be aware of.

The Handouts simply provide me with the opportunity to focus in on what I consider are important genealogical bits of information important to the researcher as well as to share my own personal thoughts on why it is of note.

You will also see a small redesign of the PDF Handout package. You will now see a Table of Contents on Page 1 listing what the following “handouts” are by topic. Within the Table of contents you can quickly access the handouts by using the hyperlinks and bookmarks that will get you quickly to your handout of interest. You will no longer have to scroll through the entire package of handouts to get to the one you want.

I also plan on use the “yellow highlight” tool within Word and highlight certain areas of these notes that I think are important to note. The visual highlighting will take your eyes to areas of importance to note. Please let me know if you think this OK or if it may be a distraction? I thought I would give it a try.

Going forward I plan on creating this document on a monthly basis that will include my notes regarding a website of interest and a link to the website itself.

The reader of this “handout” list can themselves then read my overview summary of the site and then link to the site directly themselves to get more details or print out what they want from site.

I will clearly identify my own comments when the handout is a combination of material that came from some other source such as Dick Eastman’s blog as well as my own comments. I will indicate my comments in Italics, clearly marked so the reader can distinguish between the original verbiage and my own comments. If a
This program “Handout” information will then be uploaded to the Schaumburg Township District Library Genealogy Blog that is titled “Genealogy with Tony”. This blog will be accessible from the library’s main web site page at www.schaumburglibrary.org. Select “Local History and Genealogy” at the top of the page, then look for the icon on the Local History and Genealogy page that says “Tony’s Genealogy Blog”. Open the blog link and then look at the right hand sidebar of the blog and you will see the “Handouts” information. The direct web address for the blog I author is http://genealogywithtony.wordpress.com

Here we go with the list of “handouts”!

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Handout #1 – VISIT THE SCHAUMBURG TOWNSHIP DISTRICT LIBRARY GENEALOGY BLOG

I will continue to remind participants of our library’s genealogy blog. You can access it through our library home page at [www.SchaumburgLibrary.org](http://www.SchaumburgLibrary.org) by looking for the tab called “Services”, pull down for “genealogy”. This will take you to my genealogy page at the library. Scroll down a little and look for the bi-colored blue and black box. In the black part of the box is a hot link titled “Tony’s Genealogy Blog”. Click on the link for the blog title and you will get to my blog.

Or you can just go directly to the blog at:

[http://genealogywithtony.wordpress.com](http://genealogywithtony.wordpress.com)

You will find postings on upcoming programs, both at our library, and elsewhere in the area. You will also find a myriad of other kinds of postings, especially those that I offer on “Genealogy Tips” to help make your research efforts more productive.

You will also find our Schaumburg Township District Library Genealogy Newsletter and our “Program Handouts” at the blog as PDF files for you to view online, or download and save to your own computer for future referral.

Please remember that the blog will be the place to retrieve the newsletter and the “handouts”. I do not plan on making paper handouts of these available for distribution at the program or for mailing to individuals.

Try to visit the blog frequently to see what is going on. Subscribe to the blog via the icon in the lower right part of your screen that simply states “Follow”. By clicking on the “Follow” link you will subscribe to the blog and will receive follow-up e-mail notices when I publish a new post.

Our blog is the way of the future and the future is here now!

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**Handout #2 – NEXT MEETING OF THE NORTHWEST SUBURBAN GENEALOGY SOCIETY WILL BE ON OCTOBER 6, 2018**

The next meeting of the Northwest Suburban Genealogy Society will take place on Saturday morning October 6, 2018. The program for the morning is titled “Newspaper Research: Beyond the Birdcage”. The speaker for the morning will be Debra Mieszala, CG.

This meeting will take place at the Arlington Heights Senior Center, 1801 W. Central Road, Arlington Heights, IL 60005 at 10:00 AM. There is a round table discussion that takes place at 9:00 AM prior to the main meeting/program that starts at 10:00 AM. Participants are invited to attend this round table and bring their research questions for discussion.

You may visit the society web page at:


Please note that it has happened once in a while that the society may change a program schedule without actively sharing that fact. Checking their web site may also not give you notice of such a change if they do not change the web site. That is still the first place to check. You may also want to contact someone at the society if a phone number is available to verify that a program is still scheduled as they had advertised. That is always not available either.

We do our best here to try to be sure that information we convey about programs is accurate. However, sometimes we are unable to convey changes unless we are made aware of those changes.

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Handout #3 – DUPAGE COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY NEXT
REGULAR SOCIETY PROGRAM ON SEPTEMBER 19, 2018

Please note that meetings that will take place for the society will occur between September 2018 and May 2019. The September 2018 program will occur at the DuPage County Historical Museum located at 102 E. Wesley Street in Wheaton, IL. The October 2018 through May 2019 programs are once again taking place at the Wheaton Public Library in the Lower Level. The address of the library is 225 N. Cross St. in Wheaton, IL. Please note the times for refreshments and the program. Refreshments are offered at 6:30 PM. The meeting will start at 7 PM and last till no longer than 8:45 PM.

THERE ARE NO PROGRAMS SCHEDULED DURING THE MONTHS OF JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST 2018

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the DuPage County Genealogical Society will take place on Wednesday evening, September 19, 2018 between 7:00pm to 8:30pm. Refreshments are offered at 6:30pm. The program scheduled for that evening is “Newspaper Research Imperatives: The Ancestor Hunt and Chronicling America". The speaker for the program will be Timothy Pinnick.

Newspapers, newspapers, everywhere! Newspaper research has moved from the periphery to mainstream. They now are a critical component of a comprehensive and efficient genealogical research strategy, and anyone seriously involved in research are utilizing them in a meaningful way. A major reason for the shift in emphasis is technology, but also enhanced methodologies. For example by now, most genealogists are familiar with some version of the FAN technique, which makes newspaper research more relevant, worthwhile, and potentially successful as your research target expands. Two websites, The Ancestor Hunt and Chronicling America, are invaluable tools for fully utilizing this rich resource.

You may visit the society's web page at:

www.dcgss.org

The society also has a blog that you can visit to find out about “this and that” related to the society as well as find genealogical tips. You can visit the DuPage County Genealogical Society blog at:

http://dupagecountygenealogicalsociety.wordpress.com/

Please note that it has happened once in a while that the society may change a program schedule without actively sharing that fact. Checking their web site may also not give you notice of such a change if they do not change the web site. That is still the first place to check. You may also want to contact someone at the society if a phone number is available to verify that a program is still scheduled as they had advertised. That is always not available either.

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Handout #4 – COMPUTER ASSISTED GENEALOGY GROUP OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS (CAGGNI) NEXT PROGRAM ON SEPTEMBER 15, 2018 AT THE SCHAUMBURG TOWNSHIP DISTRICT LIBRARY

The next regular meeting of CAGGNI will take place on Saturday morning, September 15, 2018 at the Schaumburg Township District Library between 10:30am to 12:30pm. The program scheduled for this day is "Beyond the Records: Putting Flesh on the Bones of Your Civil War Ancestor". The speaker will be Karen Heinrich.

Over 3 million Americans were in uniform during the Civil War. It's becoming easier to find the facts of our ancestor's service, but how do we reconstruct their experiences? This presentation will show you how to fill in the blanks between the facts, allowing you to tell your ancestor's stories.

Karen Heinrich has a B.A. in Liberal Arts from the University of Illinois, a Master of Arts in History from Southern New Hampshire University and an Masters of Library Science and Information from Drexel University. She is a member of the Association for Professional Genealogists and numerous genealogical and historical societies across the U.S. She has served several terms as Board of Director, Cemetery Chair and as an Archivist for State and Local Genealogical Societies. She has more than 17 years of research experience and has given numerous seminars, lectures and workshops at conventions, organizations, societies and libraries throughout Illinois.

You may visit the organization web page at:

www.CAGGNI.org

Please note that it has happened once in a while that the society may change a program schedule without actively sharing that fact. Checking their web site may also not give you notice of such a change if they do not change the web site. That is still the first place to check. You may also want to contact someone at the society if a phone number is available to verify that a program is still scheduled as they had advertised. That is always not available either.

We do our best here to try to be sure that information we convey about programs is accurate. However, sometimes we are unable to convey changes unless we are made aware of those changes.

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9/4/2018
Our next genealogy program will take place on Tuesday evening, October 9, 2018.

Our guest speaker for the evening is Steve Szabados. Steve will present a program titled “How DNA Can Help Your Genealogy.”

DNA testing has become a popular topic at genealogy meetings. Why should we take a DNA test? How can DNA testing help us with our genealogical research? If you have brick walls, DNA testing may give you clues to unlock these secrets. This program should answer some of your questions and make you think about a few more.

Steve Szabados is a genealogy speaker, author, and columnist. He received a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois and an MBA from Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois.

He has been researching his ancestors for about fourteen years and has traced ancestors back to 1600s New England and 1730’s in Poland, Germany, Bohemia, and Slovenia. He has given numerous presentations to genealogical groups and libraries in Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin. His goal is to share his passion for Family History.

He is a member of the Polish Genealogical Society of America, the Illinois State Genealogical Society and Northwest Suburban Genealogical Society. He is also a genealogy volunteer at the Arlington Heights Illinois Library. He is the author of six print books - Basic Genealogy, Write Your Family History, Finding Grandma’s European Ancestors, Polish Genealogy, Memories of Dziadka, Quick Reference to U.S. Census Records and Deciphering the 1790-1840 U.S. Census Records. He has also published five eBooks on genealogy. All are must have books for the beginning genealogist looking for their European heritage.

Steve is also the genealogy columnist for the Polish American Journal.

Doors will open at approximately 7 p.m. so you can pick-up handouts, review books and journals, and network with other participants. Tony Kierna will start the program at 7:30 p.m. with introductions of new participants and a brief review of handouts and genealogical matters.

For further information, contact Tony Kierna at 847-923-3390.

You may visit the library’s web page at:

www.SchaumburgLibrary.org

to view a Calendar of Events section of the library web page for this program and for many more non-genealogical programs offered by our library.

You can also visit the Genealogy Blog of the library that is authored by Tony Kierna. Visit the blog at http://genealogywithtony.wordpress.com for all things related
to genealogy and the genealogy programs at the Schaumburg Township District Library.

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Handout #6 – 23ANDME GENETIC GENEALOGY DNA INFORMATION TO BE USED FOR DRUG DEVELOPMENT

The following was found at Dick Eastman’s Blog at www.eogn.com dated July 26, 2018.

Dick Eastman · July 26, 2018 · DNA · 2 Comments

If you had your DNA tested by 23andMe (as I did), your information will be used to help develop new drugs for various medical conditions. However, not everyone is happy with the idea of using personal information for use in developing products by a for-profit company in a for-profit research project.

23andMe has partnered with pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), in a bid to develop new drug treatments. 23andMe, which gives customers insight into their genetic makeup via postal saliva tests, has some five million customers — a potential DNA database considerably larger than those generally available to the scientific community. "By working with GSK, we believe we will accelerate the development of breakthroughs,” 23andMe CEO Anne Wojcicki wrote in a blog post.

In contrast, no data is more personal than your DNA. Peter Pitts, president of the Center for Medicine in the Public Interest, believes the companies should pay the 23andMe customers whose DNA is used in research. Speaking to NBC News, Pitt asked, "Are they going to offer rebates to people who opt in so their customers aren’t paying for the privilege of 23andMe working with a for-profit company in a for-profit research project?"

You can read a lot more in an article by Rachel England in the Engadget web site at: https://engt.co/2LotesV.

My thanks to newsletter reader Craig Olson for telling me about this article.

Comments by Tony Kierna

Once again, whether you are a genealogist or just an average Joe, you are faced with having to hear that information you provided, and paid for at that, is going to be used for intentions you just did not expect. It can be construed that the purpose of the relationship between 23andMe and GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) is for the greater good of all of society. Who would not like to see further advances in solving medical conditions through DNA solutions?
Unfortunately, you have to know in advance and as best as possible, what are your privacy rights when you submit information to another company. Information is one thing, but your DNA, the essence of who you are seems to be another entire question as to what it is going to be used for.

And you do have to wonder what is on the drawing board for AncestryDNA and Family Tree DNA as to what they plan on doing with all of the data they have collected from you and me who submitted our DNA to find other undiscovered cousins and descendants of our ancestors.

You the submitter of DNA to 23andMe is out there being taken advantage of as to use of your DNA between 2 for-profit companies. More often when someone participates in a medical trial they are often compensated for their efforts and for any risks that are involved in the testing. Granted, you as a living person are not being subjected to any medical risks with such testing in this case, but after all, it is YOUR DNA. As the comment in the Dick Eastman article notes, perhaps you should be compensated for the use of your DNA or at least be able to take advantage of any "opt out" capabilities that may be in place when GSK starts accessing DNA submitted to 23andMe. The article itself does seem to imply that “customers” can opt out at any time from allowing their DNA to be used.

If you are one of those 5 million individuals that have submitted your DNA to 23andMe, perhaps you will receive a notice from 23andMe telling you about this plan and giving you the option to “opt out”. Maybe you believe in the greater good and will allow them to use your DNA for medical breakthroughs. Maybe you are cynical and are already are wondering what in the world is your DNA being used for that no one even knows about. Your choice on what to believe!
The National Archives and Records Administration recently marked the 45th anniversary of a devastating fire at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis, Missouri, that destroyed approximately 16–18 million Official Military Personnel Files (OMPF) documenting the service history of former military personnel discharged from 1912 to 1964.

Shortly after midnight on July 12, 1973, a fire was reported at the NPRC’s military personnel records building in St. Louis, Missouri. The fire burned out of control for 22 hours and it took two days before firefighters were able to re-enter the building. Due to the extensive damage, investigators were never able to determine the source of the fire.

The fire destroyed paper records in 1973 which sadly is before the capability of making digital copies for backup purposes existed.

You can read more in an article by Kerri Lawrence in the National Archives News at https://www.archives.gov/news/articles/archives-recalls-fire.

Comments by Tony Kierna

**Definitely read the full article using the link above.** Many of us as genealogy researchers were affected by this catastrophic fire in 1973. Military records can often be an incredibly valuable source of ancestral information.

**The article provides some amazing pieces of information on the fire** such as:
• 16-18 million Official Military Personnel Files (OMPF) were destroyed covering the time frame of 1912 to 1964.

• The fire burned out of control for 22 hours.

• It took 2 days before fire personnel could enter the building after the fire started.

• The damage was so complete that a determination of what caused the fire was never made.

• Existing records were being removed from the building even before the fire was completely out.

• 6.5 million records that were fire, smoke and water damaged were recovered.

• Although information could be cobbled together to give veterans the benefits they were entitled to, the loss of all of the individual contents of folders was permanent.

• McDonnel Douglas Aircraft Corporation stepped in to offer assistance to help NARS by offering access to its vacuum drying facilities to process over 2,000 milk crates of water-damaged records.

• The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) still today has 40 full-time employees who exclusively work with veterans who fall into the category of having had their records lost in this disaster.

In 1973 we were not lucky to have had digital data capability where scanned documents could be placed in the “cloud” for safe keeping. Paper was still king at the time. The article does not mention if any of the material was transferred to microfilm and stored outside of the facility in a similar manner as the Mormons do with genealogical records. If so, perhaps that would have improved the situation.

We can only hope that in today’s world of record retention and digital records that all of our country’s records are stored in multiple locations and can be accessed through multiple systems. Our country has learned a lot since 1973 on safe and recoverable records retention to avoid such a disaster again.

Ask yourself “Are your own personal genealogical records safe from floods, fires, mold?” . You may not like to hear the answer! Think about how you can give yourself more assurance that in the event of a disaster at your own level that you would be able to retrieve copies of your own records. If you do not believe anything could be retrieved then now is the time to develop a backup plan for your own documents.
**Handout #8 – ELLIS ISLAND RECORDS NOW ONLINE FOR FREE**

The following was found in Dick Eastman’s Online Blog at [www.eogn.com](https://www.eogn.com) dated August 14, 2018.

Dick Eastman · August 14, 2018 · Online Sites · 5 Comments

FamilySearch and The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, Inc. announced today the entire collection of Ellis Island New York Passenger Arrival Lists from 1820 to 1957 are now available online on both websites giving the opportunity to the descendants of over 100 million arrivals to discover their ancestors quicker and free of charge.

Originally preserved on microfilm, 9.3 million images of historical New York passenger records spanning 130 years were digitized and indexed in a massive effort by 165,590 online FamilySearch volunteers. The result is a free searchable online database containing 63.7 million names, including immigrants, crew, and other passengers traveling to and from the United States through the nation’s largest port of entry.

Details may be found in the FamilySearch Blog at:


**Comments by Tony Kierna**

This is great news! You can now access a complete set of all of these important records online and for free. Initially, you had to work with the origins of the Ellis Island Foundation to do your searching. Ancestry.com then became another source to search for your records but through a subscription service, either personal or using a library purchased search product.

Many of us prefer to research using “free” material, especially that which is part of FamilySearch. Now the two organizations have worked out an agreement that now permits the researcher using FamilySearch to access these records also. It becomes like one stop shopping. You log into FamilySearch to do your research and now have access to 3 additional databases in FamilySearch that contain these records. You no longer have to access the data from within the Ellis Island site.

I did a blog post on this topic recently. It contains a lot more information on the specifics of where you can find the databases at FamilySearch that contain the 63.7 million names.

You can find my blog post here:

Now you have the convenience of being able to access this material under the umbrella of FamilySearch where you can access so much more material other than just passenger records. Become familiar with the actual databases of this material and do your searching specifically within those databases when focusing on Passenger Records. Also remember that while the port of New York was where most of us think our ancestors passed through that is not the case. The port of New York represents about 50% of where our ancestors arrived. If you cannot find your ancestors in this set of databases keep in mind that there were many other ports in which they could have arrived. Other ports are Boston, Philadelphia, New Orleans, Galveston, Baltimore etc. Many of my own ancestors arrived through Baltimore and not New York. My grandfather did arrive as the last of a series of his brothers into New York just about the time Ellis Island opened up for business. Check other ports data if you do not find your ancestors arriving into New York.
Handout #9 – “WORKING AROUND THE 1890 CENSUS DISASTER”

The following review and comments were created by me, Tony Kierna, based on my having read an article that was seen in the July/August 2018, Volume 4, Number 3 issue of Your Genealogy Today.

******************************************************************

I thought that a very good article in this issue is one titled “Working Around the 1890 Census Disaster”. The author of the article is David A. Norris.

For anyone engaged in genealogical research for any amount of time, the destruction of the 1890 Census information from a fire in Washington, D.C. in 1921 stands out as one of those events that has affected the research of so many. Since a U.S. Census is taken every 10 years, having one missing between 1880 and 1900 is a big loss. So much could have happened to our ancestors during that period that would have been valuable for us to discover, some of which might have been reflected on that 1890 census. Had the 1890 census been in existence, we could have made those discoveries.

Even in my own personal research I have been affected by the lack of the 1890 census. One branch of my Polish ancestors came to the United States in 1887. I did discover them in the 1900 U.S. Census in Chicago. Because of that, I did make an incorrect and foolish assumption that they came to Chicago immediately after arriving and stayed in Chicago and were reflected in the 1900 Census. Wrong! Through some other research, I actually discovered the first wave of KIERNA immigrants went to Lemont, Illinois in 1887 and not directly to Chicago. Big difference! Baptisms of children were discovered from a Catholic Church in Lemont, IL by me. I still do not know exactly when they left Lemont, IL to come to Chicago, but evidence suggests the last child discovered in the Catholic Church records was born around 1891. So they must have left Lemont, IL sometime soon after that for Chicago, where they stayed. Had the 1890 Census still existed, I very well may have discovered at the time living in Lemont, IL and not in Chicago.

You can only cry over spilled milk for so long. The author suggests that there are existing resources that can help fill in the missing data to a certain extent. Obviously, what the author suggests as alternative pieces of information that could substitute for the 1890 may or may not apply to your own ancestral history. But it is good to become aware of the existence of these alternatives. Alternatives mentioned are:

- **The 1890 “Veterans Census”**
  - This is often considered the best available work-around resource, assuming your ancestor was a Union Civil War veteran.
    - You can also find veterans from the War of 1812 and the Mexican War
  - Information gathered was:
    - Name
• Wartime rank
• Regiment and Company (or vessel if in the Navy)
• Dates of enlistment and discharge
• Length of service in years and months
• Nearest Post Office
• Any disabilities incurred
  o Some enumerators even noted Confederate veterans whose names were scratched off but are still readable.
  o This special census listed 1,099,668 living Union veterans and 163,176 widows.
  o Clerks made copies of each individual listed onto file cards. About 300,000 were completed before money ran out. It is uncertain what happened to the cards that were completed.
  o Unfortunately, even much of the special Veterans Census is missing. Nearly all of the rolls for Alabama through Kansas, and half of the rolls for Kentucky were lost before they could be microfilmed.
  o You can search what exists of this census in Ancestry.com under the title “1890 Veterans Schedules” or at FamilySearch under the name “United States Census of Union Veterans and Widows of the Civil War, 1890”.

• State Census Records
  o Many US states have conducted their own censuses. These often occur midway between that of the US Federal Census. Consider looking for these. Again, there was no regularity to when these were done and your own research may be for a state in which no recent state census was done. Again, my personal research for my Illinois ancestors would show that a state census for Illinois would not help me at all. The last state census for Illinois was completed in 1865, 20 plus years before my ancestors arrived here from Poland.
    • Colorado, 1885
    • Florida, 1885
    • Iowa, 1885 and 1895
    • Kansas, 1885 and 1895
    • Michigan, 1894
    • Minnesota, 1885 and 1895
    • New Jersey, 1885
    • New York, 1892 (40 Counties in the collection of FamilySearch)
    • Oklahoma, 1890
    • Rhode Island, 1885
- South Dakota, 1885 (before statehood) and 1895
- Wisconsin, 1885 and 1895
  - Search within Ancestry.com and FamilySearch for these state censuses
  - Author notes that the 1890 state census for Oklahoma is extremely full of information

- **New York City Police Census**
  - New York City believed the 1890 Federal Census under-reported the number of New Yorkers. They authorized another census just for the city. City policemen did the count between September 19, 1890 and October 14, 1890.
    - The police tallied 13% more than the US Federal Census for the city of New York.
    - 894 of the 1,008 books of data still survive today.
      - FamilySearch has the data online. It also notes the data can be accessed at a Family History Center.
      - Ancestry.com has 26 of the books.

- **City Directories**
  - Very common in the 1890 tie period.
  - Ancestry.com has many, Fold3 has many.

- **Tax Lists**

- **Voter Rolls**
  - In my own personal research I have used the 1888, 1890 and 1892 Voter rolls for Chicago. Look for these in Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.

Don't let the lack of 1890 U.S. Census data cause you to give up. Look at the alternatives mentioned by the author. Be creative in hunting down alternatives in the geographic area of your ancestors that would have existed in the 1890 time period. I think the first best alternative would be the City Directories that existed in large amounts in the 1890 time period. Fold3 has many of these. Our library has Fold3 as one of our genealogy databases. It is available both in our library as well as from home for those that had their library card issued to them by us.
Handout #10 – “IN OTHER WORDS: A QUESTION OF TRANSLATION”

The following review and comments were created by me, Tony Kierna, based on my having read an article that was seen in the July/August 2018, Volume 4, Number 3 issue of Your Genealogy Today.

I thought that another good article in this issue is one titled “In Other Words: A Question of Translation”. The author of the article is Sue Lisk.

Maybe all of your ancestral connections are associated with those who spoke and wrote in English. Congratulations, that makes your research at least a little bit easier. For many of us, actually maybe most of us, it will not take too long before we cross over to discovering our ancestors that were from Poland (as mine are), Germany, Sweden, Norway, the Czech Republic (today, previously Czechoslovakia) and many other non-English speaking countries.

Google Translate can certainly help you with a word here and a phrase there. But to get the best translation of a lengthier document you are probably better working with a knowledgeable translator for the language.

Here is what the author suggests when you go down the path of looking for a translator for your language of your ancestors:

- **Watch Words**
  - Browse through a variety of genealogy magazines looking for advertisements for someone that offers their services to help with your translation needs for documents you have.
    - Yes, the ad will be in English for you to read. Look for clarity and proper grammar that could signify the person has English as their first language.
    - If the ad does not read well then perhaps that translator should not be on your list of possible ones to hire.

- **Check Qualifications**
  - Simply being bilingual does not qualify someone to be a translator.
  - Ask what institution your potential translator graduated from.
  - Make sure they have specifically studied “translation”.
  - Ask any potential translator for any certificates they may have obtained.

- **Evaluate Experience**
  - Just as professional genealogists tend to specialize in certain research skills, so too do translators. There may be translators
for scientific or technical texts. Some translators may specialize in translating legal documents.

- Ask for sample translations.
- Ask for client references.
- Honest translators will let you know if a job you ask of them is beyond their capabilities. They may very well recommend someone else that can do the work.

- **Discuss Details**
  - If you select someone for the translations at hand, explain your expectations.
    - Does the work need to be done by a certain time.
    - If there is no set deadline, let the translator know a date certain you would like to see the work completed by.
    - Ask the translator to provide some in-depth explanations on topics in the material to be translated if the translator felt you might not be aware of such a topic.
    - Review how you will communicate with each other e.g. phone, email, text, all three methods, especially if something unusual occurs.
    - Ask the translator if there might be overseas work involved on his part that could alter any fees arranged in advance.

- **Consider Cost**
  - Research the rates that are typical for the kinds of documents you will provide.
  - Take into account the language involved in the translation e.g. it is more difficult to translate from Russian to English than from Spanish to English.
  - Documents written in special handwriting styles such as old German script may cost more to translate.
  - Get quotes from several translators. You should generally pay a fixed rate for each word to be translated. Avoid setting a rate per hour.
  - Perhaps other collaborative researchers/cousins would be willing to help defray the cost with some contributions.
  - Dependable translators charge reasonable fees for their services.

Yes, Google Translate can help. It can only get you so far. If you are using it you may not get the full meaning of what the words intended. Better to get the best translation possible on what could be a very important family history document.