

ILLINOIS STATE ARCHIVES

www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/archives/databases.html

IF YOU ARE RESEARCHING in Illinois, check out the ever-expanding list of Illinois databases online — Vital Records (a pre-1900 marriage index and two databases that cover deaths up through 1950), Illinois Veterans Records and more.

There are four great features shared by all the databases:

1. You can choose to search the whole state or just one county. For my husband's family from Chicago, I can search on "Cook County". Sometimes family members did move around and so if I don't find someone in Cook County, I extend my search to the whole state. Using this, I discovered a few family members who migrated just over the Cook County line to Lake County (Waukegan).

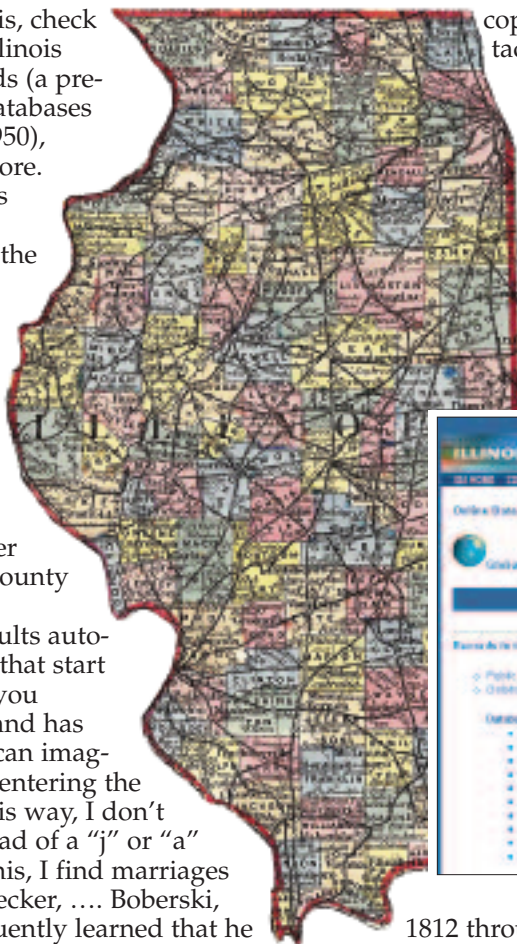
2. When you search, the results automatically include all the names that start with whatever group of letters you entered. For example, my husband has Bobejko as a family name. You can imagine the misspellings! Instead of entering the whole name, I enter "Bobe". This way, I don't have to worry about a "y" instead of a "j" or "a" instead of "o", etc. When I do this, I find marriages for Bobe, Bobek, Bobel, Bobendecker, Boberski, Bobert. No Bobejko — I subsequently learned that he married after 1900! On a related note, there is no wildcard search function. This is somewhat handled by the feature we just discussed and the next feature.

3. There are no limits to how much of a name you enter. You can just put the first letter of the name or the whole name and everything in between. Though, if you just put the first initial, you will receive a very long list. The records are then displayed 500 records at a time.

4. The fourth great feature is that for each database, detailed information is given on how to request a photo-

copy. In case you have a question, contact information is provided.

Did your ancestor purchase public domain land? The database contains information about nearly 550,000 land sales from the 54,740 square miles of the public domain sold within Illinois. Besides these large statewide vital records databases, there are also several more specialized databases. There are databases that relate to Illinois Veterans and cover from the War of



Map: www.rootswest.com/~usgenweb/maps/illinois/

1812 through the Spanish-American War and include the 1929 Illinois Roll of Honor.

Maybe your ancestor is one of the approximately 3,400 names found in records involving the servitude and emancipation of Africans and, occasionally, Indians in the French and English eras of colonial Illinois (1722-1790) and African-Americans in the American period of Illinois (1790-1863).

If you are still looking for more information, there are links to Records held in the Illinois Regional Archives Depositories (IRAD). Some of these records are: Wayne County Coroner's Record Index (1888-1960), Livingston County Probate Case Files Index (1837-1958), Woodford County Almshouse Registers Index (1858-1957), Chicago Police Department Homicide Record (1870-1930) and more than 35 other resources!

Searching is easy. If you don't know which record(s) might apply to your ancestor, use the Global Search function. I found two limitations with this function. However, you have to put in precisely the name you are searching for and the results tell you which databases the name is found in and not what records are found. This means that you will still need to "search" the individual databases.

— Diane Richard

