

FUNDAMENTAL MYSTERIES I

Instructor Mike Garrambone

FamilySearch Center

FUNDAMENTAL MYSTERIES I



Hints, Intuition, Synchronicity & Persistence

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Family History Jamboree
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Fundamental Mysteries I 1


ã1

What is this all about?

Purpose: To make beginning researchers aware of some very simple and very helpful genealogical concepts

The Big Idea

- There are some fundamental ideas that all genealogists should know
- These ideas are easy to learn, but are rarely taught to folks in a simple fashion



Fundamental Mysteries I 2

ã2

Agenda



- The Secret of Index
- Keep a Log to Cut the Fog
- The Secret Helper
- Persistence in the Graveyard

Fundamental Mysteries I 3


ã3

The Secret of Index

Index: Something that serves to guide, point out, or otherwise facilitate finding something*

A system for finding things faster and easier

- People devise them
- They have a sense of order
- They have certain rules
- They have special **quirks & secrets**



Fundamental Mysteries I *American Heritage Dictionary 4

ã4

How Do Indexes Work?

Very well-when you know all the parts

You need **input** information to start

- Index 1
- Index 2
- Index 3
- and so on ...

In →

Special Storage Structure

Book
Table
Computer

Out →

You get **output** information you want

- Info 1
- Info 2
- Info 3
- and so on ...

Good for Finding People & Services

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ã5

The Phone Book

Family Name, Business, Service, Agency, Phone, History

They have an **input** requirement

- A year
- A locality
- A name, item or service

In →


Special Structures

White Pages
Yellow Pages
Blue Book
Red Books

Out →

They have **output** information

- Better name
- Address
- Phone number
- Service info



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ã6


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Some Quirks

Quirk: A peculiarity of behavior

- Hard to find this big book
- Not everybody is in the book
- No listing of who is **not** listed
- Good for only one year (at best)
- Does not always use common terms
- Can't find soil under soil, try landscape materials
- Has **index** in the front of yellow pages





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ã7

Some Secrets

- There are books of **“reverse”** indexes
 - Index on phone number, get name
 - Index on location, get phone number
 - Index on service, get phone number
- There are **“Online”** phone books
 - White pages, yellow pages, service pages
 - There are reverse pages
 - There are international pages
- Before the phonebook there was the **city directory**
- There are things called **“index of indexes”**

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ã8

Soundex

A phonetic index that groups names that sound alike but are spelled differently

The names Caitlin and Catelynn both have the same Soundex code, and the names Smith and Smythe have the identical encoding

- Developed in 1918 by Robert Russell and Margaret Odell
- Used on parts of 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930 Censuses
- American Soundex has computer versions called Miracode
- Used by Fed for passenger arrival lists, border crossings, naturalizations
- Used by counties for courthouse records, driver's licenses
- Used by Ancestry, Internet companies in search engines & spell checkers

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ã9

Soundex: Coding Names

A system designed to help you find information

The **input** side is the last name

- Last Name

Rules for changing the name to a phonetic character code

The **output** side is a 4-character representation of the name

- Soundex code

In → Out

Rootsweb: <https://sites.rootsweb.com/~nedodge/transfer/soundexlist.htm>
 Stephen Morse: <https://stevemorse.org/census/soundex.html>
 Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex: <https://www.avotaynu.com/soundex.htm>

Fundamental Mysteries I 10

ã10

Soundex Uses

Soundex Tables for:

Soundex Code

Plus other indices

- Census records
- Passenger ship records
- Military records
- Tax & legal records
- Citizenship records
- Many other records

Find Information in Sources

Helps in finding alternate name spellings (e.g., Story, Storie, & Storee)

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ã11

Soundex Name Code: Basic Rules

Name In

Porcello

- First letter of the last name is the first character of the four in the code
- Cancel out the vowels, (A, E, I, O, U) and the letters H, W, & Y
- Cancel out the double consonants
- From the left, assign numbers to the consonants (total of four characters)
 - 1 = b, f, p, v
 - 2 = c, g, j, k, q, s, x, z
 - 3 = d, t
 - 4 = l
 - 5 = m, n
 - 6 = r

Code Out

P624

P	6	2	4
---	---	---	---

Porcello = P ~~o~~ r c ~~l~~ / ~~l~~ / ~~o~~ = P r c l = P624

Fundamental Mysteries I 12

ã12

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Porcello Example

Step 1. Convert Porcello to Soundex code P624
Step 2. Go to FamilySearch, look for Catalog—Input United States “Connecticut”
Step 3. Select Census-1920-Indexes (1), find the Soundex index

United States, Connecticut - Census - 1910 (1)
 United States, Connecticut - Census - 1910 - Indexes (1)
 United States, Connecticut - Census - 1920 (1)

Connecticut, 1920 federal census : soundex and population schedules

Author: United States. Bureau of the Census. 14th census, 1920

United States, Connecticut - Census - 1930 (1)

Step 4. Find P624 in range and double click on the camera to open the listing

Soundex: P531 thru P625 Dwight E. (NARA Series M1553, Roll Granite Mountain United States & 1823803 9016325
 81) Record Vault Canada Film

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ã13

Porcello Soundex Card

Image 4802 of 5447 Great Grandmother In file 9016324

CONNECTICUT

VOL. 15 E. D. 40
 SHEET 2 LINE 72

7624
Porcello, Angela
FAMILY NAME

W 54 Italy
LOCALITY STATE CITIZENSHIP

Thompsonville Witwood
(CITY) (TOWNSHIP)

ENUMERATED WITH Rossi, James
 RELATIONSHIP TO ABOVE Mother-in-law

REMARKS _____

1920 1920 CENSUS-INDEX DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE BUREAU OF THE CENSUS U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1919-1921

FundamentalMysteries I Also Angellena Porcello, Angela Curto, Angel 14

ã14

Found in Census

Use the Soundex card to find the individual in the census

STATE Connecticut COUNTY Hartford DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE-BUREAU OF THE CENSUS FOURTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES: 1920-POPULATION

NAME	SEX	AGE	RELATIONSHIP	EDUCATION	INDUSTRY OR OCCUPATION	PROPERTY OWNED	REMARKS
Porcello, Angela	F	40	Wife	High School	None		
Porcello, James	M	45	Husband	High School	None		
Porcello, Joseph	M	15	Son	None	None		
Porcello, Mary	F	12	Daughter	None	None		
Porcello, Thomas	M	10	Son	None	None		

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ã15

Example: Michele (Michael) Amato Naturalization Soundex Card

Great Grandfather A530 Citizen 1889

Family Name AMATO Given Name or Names MICHAEL

Title and Location of Court U. S. DISTRICT COURT, NEW YORK, N. Y.

Date of Naturalization OCT. 26-1889 Volume or Bundle No. 27 Page No. _____ Copy of Record No. 64265

Address 37 THOMPSON ST. N.Y. CITY

Occupation _____ Birth Date or Age _____ Former Nationality ITALIAN

Port of Arrival in the United States _____ Date of Arrival _____

Names, Addresses and Occupations of Witnesses to Naturalization

1 MATTHEW DE STEPHANO 530 1/2 BROME N.Y. CITY


2 _____

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ã16

Soundex Quirks

- Not all documents have been soundexed
- Some documents are soundexed for certain years, or certain states
- Soundexing does not mean completely covered or exhaustively covered
- After finding the Soundex (name) code, the order of the names is listed alphabetically by first name
- This means Alfred, Alice, Arnold, Betty, Benjamin, and so on..
- Soundex is really an **index to an index** (sneaky thought here)



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ã17

Keep a Research Log to Cut the Fog

Keep running notes about your research: It will be of great help and save you enormous time and energy

A system for keeping things you found and did not find

- Date of Event (yyyy-mm-dd)
- Activity performed or objective
- Results or lack of results
- Reference or research source
- Special comments, notes, or follow-up



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ã18

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Example Research Log

A simple "fill in the blank" form that tracks your activities

DATE	PLACE OF RESEARCH	PURPOSE	CALL NUMBER	SOURCE	DOCUMENT NUMBER	RESULTS
8 May 2021	Robert G. FRAZIER Mailing Address Telephone 901-391-1301	Seeking what? Robert P.		Robert G. Frazier, Wichita, Kans. 8 May 2021, telephone conversation with G. David Dilts, Salt Lake City, Utah		nil
11 May 2021	Family History Library 35 N West Temple St. SLC UT 84150-3400	OO Wm. FRAZIER Marg. DENTON		Ancestral File Loving database (Salt Lake City: General Soc. of Utah, 1948). William FRAZIER 1826 (Salt Lake City: son of (Martha) North 1845-1981)	William FRAZIER family of 1845-1981	* OO T & FRAZIER family of 1845-1981
11 May 2021	"	OO Wm. FRAZIER Nancy MacCLURE		International Genealogical Index database (Salt Lake City: son of (Martha) North 1845-1981)	William FRAZIER & Nancy MacCLURE 1845-1981	
11 May 2021	"	Wm. FRAZIER family of exp	1274 012	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Genealogical Society, FamilySearch, FamilySearch Catalog, Ancestry.com 192-084 (2015), 1977)		
1 Jun 2021	"	Byron S. FRAZIER 1874-1933 1874-1933		Byron S. Frazier, Tenn- Ancestry.com, FamilySearch, FamilySearch Catalog, Ancestry.com 192-084 (2015), 1977)	William FRAZIER 1826-1981	GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS


This can be for a continuous search or just one effort

Diana Elder's research logs: https://static.coreapps.net/roottech2019/handouts/b5d95ba9-a0a1-4b32-ac6f-a0a08ec1979_1.pdf
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ã19

What Are You After?

Grandfather
Matteo Porcello
B. 1898



Grandmother
Antonina (Alfano) Porcello
B. 1903

Where were these people in 1920?

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ã20

Thinking About it

- Where are the locations?
- What do you make out of the information?
- What information is missing?

Ended up here

Thompsonville, CT

↙

Yonkers, NY


↙

New York City

Nothing here

Nothing here

Nothing here



WWI

Grandpa Matteo Porcello

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ã21

How Does the Log Work?

Very well, when you know all the parts

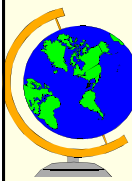

Objective: Find Marriage Certificate	Results
1. Searching for Matteo Porcello in Yonkers, NY 1920 Census	Did not find him in Yonkers
2. Searching for Matteo Porcello in Thompsonville, CT 1920 Census	Found Porcello's, but not him
3. Talked to Uncle Tony	Grandma born in NYC
4. Talked to Cousin Angie	Grandpa returned from WWI
5. Searched for marriage certificate in Yonkers, NY	No marriage certificate

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ã22

The Log Catches the Holes


- Not found in Yonkers, NY 1920 Census
- Does not mean not there
- Not found in Thompsonville, CT 1920 Census
- Does not mean not there
- First child born in Yonkers, NY 1921
- War story most believable (what story?)
- Next Step: Search for marriage certificate in Thompsonville, CT

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ã23

Nice Find, Huh!



CERTIFIED COPY

State of Connecticut Bureau of Vital Statistics 99

Mariano Porcello

with age 35

1. Groom's name Mariano Porcello 1. Bride's name Anna Alfano
2. Age 35 2. Age 35
3. Color White 3. Color White
4. Occupation Mech. ex 4. Occupation Mech. ex
5. Birthplace Italy 5. Birthplace Italy
6. His residence Thompsonville Conn 6. Her residence Thompsonville Conn
7. Date of Marriage 30 Jul 1920 7. Date of Marriage 30 Jul 1920
8. Name of Father Angelo Porcello 8. Name of Father Antonio Alfano
9. Name of Mother Angela Denton 9. Name of Mother Anna Santoro
10. Name of Minister Mariano Porcello 10. Name of Minister Anna Santoro

I, Mariano Porcello, one of the persons named in this Marriage License, do solemnly swear that the statements therein made are true.
Sworn before me this 24 day of August 1920 Signed Mariano Porcello
Town of Thompsonville 1920 Registrar

This certifies that the above-named parties have complied with the laws of Connecticut relating to a marriage license.
Dated August 24 1920 Attest Johnnie B. Carter Registrar
Town of Thompsonville

Mariano Porcello
Anna Alfano

I hereby certify that the within named parties were lawfully joined in marriage by me at Thompsonville on the 30 day of August 1920
Address 411 Pearl St Signed Re J. F. Carter
Official capacity Clerk of Court

I CERTIFY that this is a true transcript of the information on the MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE as recorded in this office on August 25 1920
OFFICER: Re J. F. Carter TOWN OF THOMPSONVILLE
COUNTY: FAIRFIELD STATE OF CONNECTICUT

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ã24

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Log Secrets

- Logs expose holes in your knowledge
- Re-reading the logs is like talking with the **family ghost**
- Logs keeps track of your progress
- Logs break mental log jams
- Logs are a place holder in your life
- Shows you things remaining to do
- Keeping a log makes you look smart
- Keeping a log makes you smart
- **Note: Marriage 31 August 1920, got missed in both censuses**

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ã25

The Secret Helper

Great Grandfather Great Grandmother

Antonino Porcello
1853-1916

Angellena Curto
1867-1942

No Records Here

Matteo Porcello
1898-1974

Need Some Help

Grandfather

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ã26

Italian Birth Certificate Naro, Sicily

Found Great Grandma

From family discussions:

- Born in Naro, Sicily
- Province of Girgento
- Date of Birth: 1 March 1875

From the document:

- Born at 7:00 AM
- Father: Cologero Curto (24)
- Mother: Cologera Bennici (27)
- Lived near Saint Caterina
- Child's name was **Angela Curto** as spelled in the document

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ã27

Italian Birth Certificate Naro, Sicily

What About Great Grandpa?

From family discussions:

- Born in Naro, Girgento, Sicily
- Date of Birth: 22 Sep 1853

From the document:

- Born at 11:00 AM
- Father: Elia Porcello
- Mother: Angela Toscanova
- Child's name: Antonino
- **Is this the right Antonino?**
- What about the note?

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ã28

What Note?

What Note?

- The note at the top of the page!
- 1884 - 1853 = 31
- Who did this and why? (118)

A secret helper

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ã29

Persistence in the Graveyard

Persistence: The thing that makes you continue on when you thought you already gave up*

“If You Want to Find Porcello’s Go to the Cemetery”

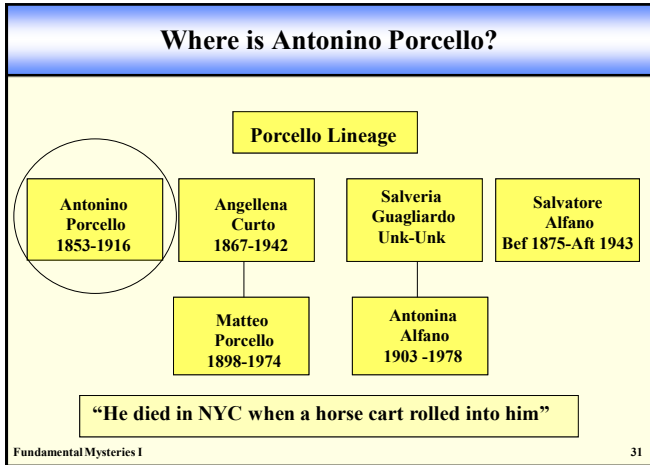
- People have selective memory
- People repeat what they hear
- Repetition is not always truth
- “Strange things” happen in graveyards!

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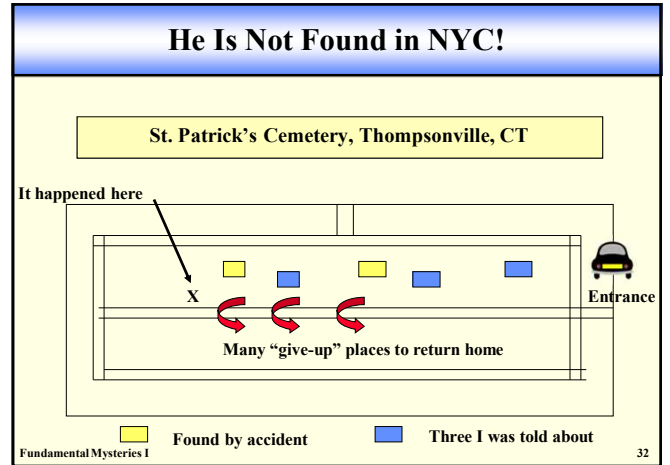
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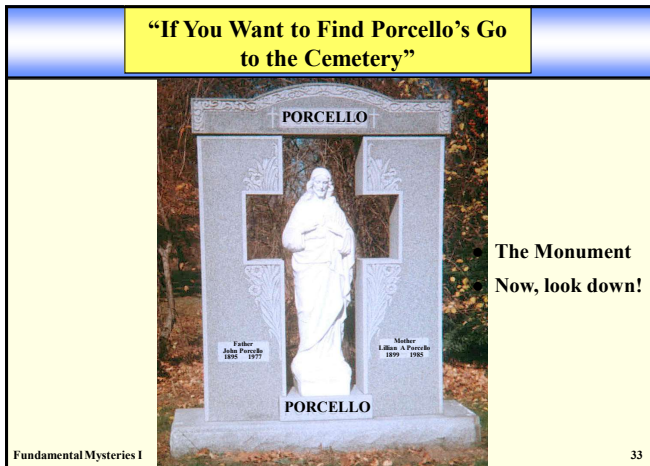
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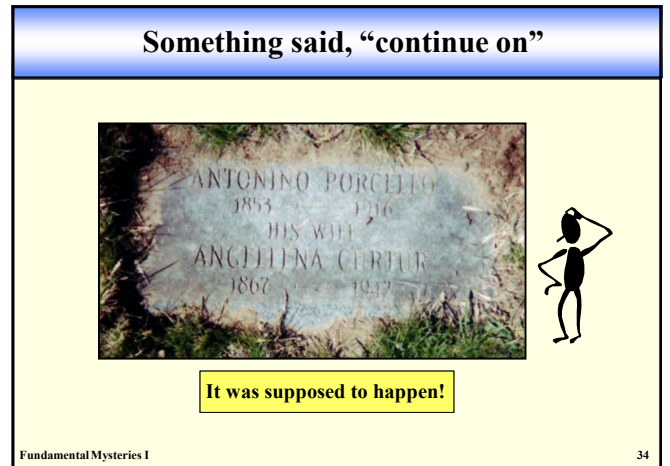
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ã34

Summary

- Many fundamental things to know
- So simple -- we forget to see them
- There are quirks to every system
- People are people
- Beware of human factors
- Pass on the secrets

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ã35

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FundamentalMysteries I 36

ã36