

Finding the Hard Ones, Part 2:

Elementary, My Dear Watson!

James M. Baker, PhD, CG **jimb@starstream.net**

Some Easy Inferences

Common Problem	Source for Making Inference	Type of Inference
No Birth Record	Death or Marriage Record giving one's age	Calculate the year of birth using the age given in record
No Death Record	Another record, maybe Marriage Record, defines survivor as widow/widower	Person with missing record died before time of the "widow" record
Lack of Birth Data for Children	Probate record or will, or court record	Any of these records may identify children

More "Heavy Duty" Inferences

Basis for Inference	How Inference Is Used
1. Naming Patterns	Examine the use of given names in a family over multiple generations, especially rarer names typical of a family
2. Property/Inheritance	Examine the transfer of property via wills, probates, and transfers, noting the names and relationships of the persons involved – especially when relationships are defined
3. Information on Witnesses to Baptisms or Marriages	Examine the names, locations, and occupations of witnesses to various rites; consider how these people might be related to the person having the rite
4. Larger Family Migrations	Families often move together, from the old country to the new, and from state to state, so examine one's near neighbors or fellow travelers
5. Sibling or Other Relative Data	Examine obits, marriage and death records, and other records of relatives – they might have bonus information
6. Birthplace Data	Look for a person's birthplace because that area may be the source of useful data
7. DNA Analysis	Consider using one of the three major types of DNA analysis for confirming or denying relationships
8. Lifetime Timelines	Examine a person's lifetime timeline to get insights into where one might look for certain types of data
9. Religious Involvement	Consider a person's early religion and check to see if there is continuity in this religion throughout one's life

Case Studies Used to Illustrate Different Types of Inferences

1. Elisabeth Huck of Goddelsheim. (1732-1789)

Problem	Goal	Assets/Resources
Elisabeth Regina Wolradina Catharina Huck is fully identified in parish records as a bride, mother, and decedent, but no birth/baptismal records exist for her.	We want to define her birth data correctly and also identify her parents. If we can identify her parents, her origins could be traced much further back in time.	Goddelsheim records go back in time to 1652, but original records can be found only in Germany. A Sippenbuch exists for Goddelsheim.

In the seeming absence of a birth record, can we perform any kind of analyses or inferences that could give us indirect evidence to identify the woman's parents?

2. Anna Elisabetha Martin of Mörzheim (1730-1774)

Problem	Goal	Assets/Resources
Anna Elisabetha Martin was found several times in Mörzheim records as a mother and a decedent, but was not listed as either a bride or in baptismal records.	We want to find, if possible, a marriage and birth record. We would like to identify her parentage and place of birth.	Mörzheim records are available for both its Catholic and Protestant churches via the SLC FHL. Nearby town and parish records are also available.

In the absence of a Mörzheim baptismal or marriage record, we need an inspiration regarding where to best look for these records. We will probably need to look in nearby town records, but where?

3. John Burt of London (1802-1853)

Problem	Goal	Assets/Resources
John Burt was identified neatly in UK Census records for 1841 and 1851, in marriage records and death records, but his birth records were elusive. John Burt is an extremely common name.	We want to find John's birth data and establish his parentage. Somehow, we need to distinguish our John Burt from many others with the same name.	London area parish records are generally available for that time period, as are various other UK records.

We need to find some solid clues that can provide direction as to where we might find John Burt's birth record data.

4. Nicholas Becker/Baker of Heuchelheim (1818-1896)

Problem	Goal	Assets/Resources
Family legends place Nicholas Baker as being born in Heuchelheim and emigrating to Illinois. But, no passenger or naturalization record can be found for him. Is the family legend correct?	We want to define enough evidence to verify that we have identified the same person in both Germany and Illinois. We will need to accumulate some indirect evidence to achieve this goal.	Good German parish, town, and military records exist for Nicholas and his family. Also, there is an abundance of Illinois records for Nicholas and his close relatives.

With passenger and naturalization records missing, we will need to rely on a variety of other records to make our case.

5. Saturninus Martin of Hecht (1684-1748) – no birth or marriage data, but church records should be available

Problem	Goal	Assets/Resources
Saturninus had a detailed obit in the Mörzheim records that placed his birth in a specific location on a specific date, but no birth record can be found in the designated place.	We would like to find a birth record for Saturninus along with data on his parentage. We also would like to find data on his marriage.	Early Hecht/Bodnegg records go back well before Saturninus' birth year. There are also birth records for nearby towns. Local German records for that time period are sparse.

We will need to carefully analyze the limited available data and determine if we have enough evidence to make a judgment call.

Matching Inference Types with Their Use in Each Case Study

(Note: Class members will fill in the table during the class.)

Inference Types	Case Study #1	Case Study #2	Case Study #3	Case Study #4	Case Study #5
1. Naming Patterns					
2. Property/Inheritance					
3. Information on Witnesses to Baptisms or Marriages					
4. Larger Family Migrations					
5. Sibling or Other Relative Data					
6. Birthplace Data					
7. DNA Analysis					
8. Lifetime Timelines					
9. Religious Involvement					
10. Other					

**CAUTION: BE CAREFUL IN MAKING JUDGMENTS!
DO NOT JUMP TO UNWARRANTED CONCLUSIONS!**

GOOD LUCK IN YOUR GOOD INFERENCES!!!