# **Finding Your Ancestors Across the Censuses**

#### **Example 1: The Zanes**

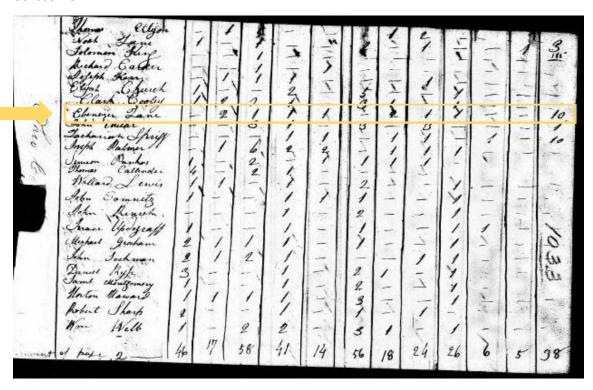
#### **Ebenezer Zane**

Below is a record for Ebenezer Zane from the 1810 census as it appears through *Heritage Quest* and in the original census. This is a perfect example of why the genealogist should take records with a grain of salt: despite the name being recorded in the database as "Ebenezer Lane", a helpful transcriber has added "Ebenezer Zane" in brackets so it is findable with either name. As already mentioned, the information is pretty sparse; this makes things extra tricky for the genealogist because we often have to rely on names of spouse, child(ren), and ages to determine if the record refers to the ancestor we are looking for. Looking at the original record makes me feel fairly certain that Zane was mis-transcribed and this is in fact Wheeling's founder, but without additional information I cannot guarantee it without additional digging.

# Heritage Quest view:

養川川川	Name:	Ebenezer Lane [Ebenezer Zane]
View	Home in 1810 (City, County, State):	Wheeling, Ohio, Virginia
Not all information on the record	Free White Persons - Males - 10 thru 15:	2
image has been transcribed. Please view the image to see all the	Free White Persons - Males - 16 thru 25:	1
information or ask others for assistance.	Free White Persons - Males - 26 thru 44:	1
assistance.	Free White Persons - Males - 45 and over:	1
	Free White Persons - Females - 10 thru 15:	2
	Free White Persons - Females - 16 thru 25:	1
	Free White Persons - Females - 26 thru 44:	1
	Numbers of Slaves:	10
	Number of Household Members Under 16 :	4
	Number of Household Members Over 25 :	3
	Number of Household Members:	19

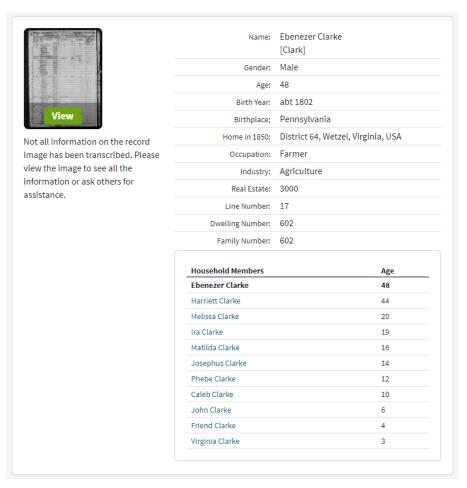
#### Census view:



### **Ebenezer Clark**

Keeping with Zane example, below is the 1850 census record for Ebenezer Clark, son of Betty Zane. Right away it should be evident that this record is much fuller than the previous example: it lists every occupant by name, not just the head of the household, and their ages. Later censuses will indicate relationships between those in a residence, but even without this data inferences can be made. It stands to reason that Harriett, 44, is Ebenezer's wife, and the remaining occupants their children. Also indicated is Ebenezer's birthplace, year of birth, occupancy and occupation at the time of the census, and even an estimated value of his real estate.

# Heritage Quest view:



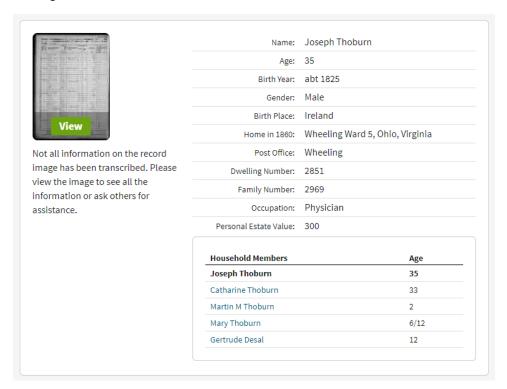
### Census view:

(4)	1850 Uni		l Census for Ebenezer Clark	e			
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27	Virginia	37		S			

### **Example 2:** The Tosburns

To give a clearer idea of what information was represented in the 1860, 1870, and 1880 censuses, let's look at some census records for the Tosburn family. Joseph Tosburn was an Irish immigrant who settled in Wheeling and fought for the Union in the Civil War. Before entering the war Joseph was a physician and, at the time of the 1860 census, was married with two young children. (Also listed is a Gertrude Desal, age 12, but that is a mystery for another day.)

### Heritage Quest view:



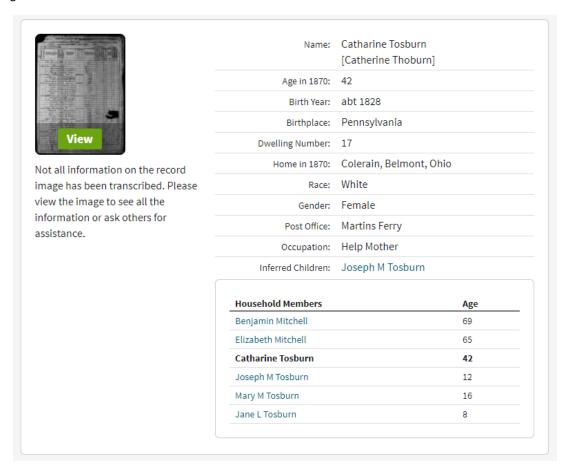
### Census view:

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numbered in the	Families number in the order visitation.	The name of every person whose usual place of abode on the first day of June, 1860, was in this family.	Age.	Sex	Color, Shack, of	Profession, Occupation, or Trade each person, male and female, of 15 years of age.		Value of Personal Estate.	Place of Birth, Naming the State, Territory, or Country.	Married within	Attended School	1 2 3	Whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane, idiotic, pauper, or convict.	
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From <u>Joseph's biography</u> I was able to procure some basic information to track Joseph and his family down, including the name of his in-laws, his wife's place of birth, and his children. I also know that Joseph unfortunately died in action so I would not find him in the next census. Instead, I searched for his wife, Catherine, and their children.

The 1870 census found Catherine back with her parents and her three children.

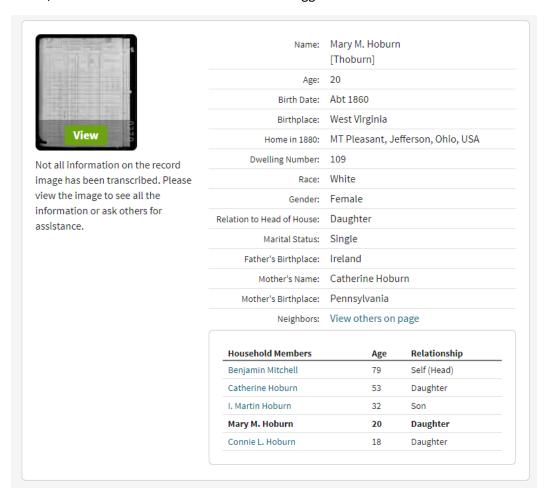
### Heritage Quest view:



# Census view:

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For 1880, I looked for daughter Mary. Mary, her siblings, and her mother are still living with Catherine's father, but the absence of Catherine's mother suggests that she died sometime between the censuses.



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The curious case of Mary Tosburn: Aside from the name Tosburn being repeatedly misspelled/mis-transcribed, one thing that made tracking down the Tosburns was daughter Mary's age. Mary was 6 months old in the 1860 census, 16 years old in the 1870, and 20 in the 1880 census—something wasn't adding up, literally. This highlights again why it is so important to view the original record and take information with a grain of salt. Once I looked at the 1870 census and not just it's summary page, it became quite clear that Mary was 10 and the broken zero had been read as a six. The addition of parents' birthplaces made this easier to infer.