

DITTO HEADS

TIP: While searching computer databases, if you don't find who you are looking for under the surname of the person, leave the surname box blank and just enter first name, age range, birthplace, and/or place of residence, if known.

THE QUIRKS: When is a surname not a real surname? When it is a duplicate of the name above it, but shouldn't be; when it should be a ditto of the name above it, but isn't; or when first and last names are switched around. This usually isn't a problem with a database, but the way an original record was written and subsequently indexed.

Example 1 Here are images of the index entry on Ancestry.com for one head of household, and a portion of the actual census entry for him and his family. Can you spot the error?

Name:	John Gulig Stephani
Age in 1860:	59
Birth Year:	abt 1801
Birthplace:	Preußen
Home in 1860:	Marshfield, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin
Gender:	Male
Post Office:	Moria

18	282	284	Christine Stephani	32 m
19			Margaret	31 f
20			John	1 m
21	283	285	John Gulig	57 m
22			Margaret	53 f
23			Hubert	25 m
24			Matthias	22 m
25			John	21 m
26			Satharine	18 f
27			John P.	15 m
28	284	286	John P. Stephani	48 m

(The family's surname was really Gülig.)

Example 2 Just for fun, try searching the 1860 United States census (or another mid-to late-1800s census year, for that matter) on Ancestry or Heritage Quest using only the surname "Maria." Do you know anyone with that surname? I don't. But women named Anna Maria, Eva Maria, etc.—as well as anyone listed under them—were indexed with that surname because the name Maria stuck out and no ditto indicator (quotation marks or long dash or the abbreviation "do.") was after the name to represent the surname of the husband and/or father. More than 1,000 hits turn up. This also happened with other middle names, such as Ann(a)—more than 2,000 hits. Try Jane, too.

17	256	257	John P. Reichel	48 m
18			Anna Maria	42 f
19			John M.	8 m
20			Mary	6 f
21	257	258	John Henry	32 m

JOHN. AARANS	FOND 390 FOREST
JOHN. ABERLET	FCND 391 FOREST
JOHN. AUGLIS	FOND 379 CALUMET
JOHN. BULFAND	FOND 396 FOREST
JOHN. CASPER	FOND 396 FOREST
JOHN. CASPER	FOND 396 FOREST
JOHN. CHRISTIAN	FOND 378 CALUMET
JOHN. CORNIESE	WASH 210 MEQUON
JOHN. CRAINST	FOND 380 CALUMET
JOHN. CRANS	FCND 396 FOREST
JOHN. DELAS	FOND 380 CALUMET
JOHN. DEPER	FOND 380 CALUMET
JOHN. FORMAN	FOND 383 FOREST
JOHN. FRANCIS	SHEB 082 WILSON-H
JOHN. FRANK	FOND 395 FOREST
JOHN. GILBERT *	FOND 382 CALUMET
JOHN. GOARRIGHT	FCND 379 CALUMET
JOHN. HAROKEO	FCND 378 CALUMET
JOHN. HENRICKS	FOND 391 FOREST
JOHN. JACOB	WASH 209 MEQUON
JOHN. JAMES	DDDG 010 WAUSHARA
JOHN. JOHN	JEFF 143 JEFFERSO
JOHN. JOHN	SHEB 106 14TH DIS
JOHN. JOHN	WAUK 260 GENESEE
JOHN. JOHN	DDDG 024 BEAVER D
JOHN. JOHN E.	JEFF 144 JEFFERSO
JOHN. JOSEPH	PORT 007 GRAND RA
JOHN. LEORD	FOND 381 CALUMET
JOHN. LEPHIN	FOND 378 CALUMET
JOHN. LEWIS	MANT 011 2 RIVERS
JOHN. LINAN	FOND 395 FOREST
JOHN. LYNON	FOND 393 FOREST
JOHN. MARGARET	JEFF 145 JEFFERSO
JOHN. MARTIN	JEFF 156 HEBRON
JOHN. MATTHS *	FCND 396 FOREST
JOHN. MICHAEL	JEFF 151 JEFFERSO
JOHN. MICHEL	FOND 377 CALUMET
JOHN. NICHOLAS	RACI 085 RACINE C
JOHN. NICHOLAS *	FOND 396 FOREST
JOHN. PETER	FOND 382 CALUMET
JOHN. PETER	FCND 377 CALUMET
JOHN. PETER	FCND 406 EDEN
JOHN. PHILLARIA	FOND 379 CALUMET
JOHN. PLANYAN *	FOND 384 FOREST
JOHN. ROLEMARN *	FCND 391 FOREST
JOHN. SABEL	FOND 392 FOREST
JOHN. SMITH	FCND 395 FOREST
JOHN. SMITH	FCND 392 FOREST
JOHN. STEPLE *	FCND 383 FOREST
JOHN. WARYAN	FOND 392 FOREST

Example 3 I first discovered a multitude of misindexed surnames while reviewing 1850 census entries in Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin. The enumerator for the townships of Calumet and Forest sometimes wrote the first name followed by the last name; for other people he recorded the last name, then the first name. Consequently, the statewide index listed surnames as John, Nicholas, Peter, etc. In several cases the heads of household were indexed under their middle names.

< Excerpt from Roland Vern Jackson and Gary Ronald Teeple, editors, *Wisconsin 1850 Census Index* (Bountiful, Utah: Accelerated Indexing Systems, 1978), page 106.

Example 4 On a smaller scale, names on lists such as ship passenger manifests occasionally get dittoed inaccurately, leaving your ancestors stranded on the ocean of unfathomable unknown identities. It helps to know their traveling mates, such as in the following illustration:

63	Peter Hoffman	24	M
64	Elisabeth	30	F
65	Michel	24	M
66	Elisabeth	26	F
67	Elisa	12	F
68	Egidius Klein	24	M

Peter Hoffman and his wife, Elisabeth née Eiten, sailed with her brother, Michel Eiten, and his wife, Elisabeth née Ewen, and their baby, Elisa, on the ship *Jacob A Stamler*. They arrived on 14 September 1857 at the Port of New York. All of them were indexed with the surname of Hoffman.

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Next Month: Fields of dreams . . .

This fact sheet is a public service to help people find records about their ancestors, particularly when the records have major errors and quirks that can mislead and disappoint researchers in their pursuits. Please feel free to share this with friends, fellow kin-seekers, and family history and genealogical organizations.

Kin Hunters is a genealogy and family history research service owned by Evelyn Roehl, who has been hunting for ancestors as a livelihood since 1995. She loves finding out where immigrant ancestors came from and provides research, translation, transcription, and data entry for individuals; heir searches for agencies and law firms; as well as presentations for genealogical societies and family reunions. She has been a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists for twenty years. Contact her by e-mail, kinhunters@gmail.com, or phone 206-634-1709.