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## EDITOR'S NOTES

### DERIVATIVES

**D**erivative sources and data abound in genealogy. In some instances they can mislead or stymie good research. In other instances they can be used to locate original sources for more accurate and more complete information. In yet other instances they may be among the only resources available for a particular family and must be accounted for and considered, whether accurate or not. And, of course, we produce our own derivative data when other sources fail to clearly articulate the identities and relationships we seek.

In this issue a Palatine immigrant's Württemberg origins, along with several additional generations of ancestors, are discovered in part by carefully considering the mistaken and limited data provided by descendants in Internet postings and other publications. The name of a Revolutionary War veteran of western Pennsylvania appears in records in six different counties. The delineation of two veterans by that name, and the identification of many descendants of one, was derived from examining the signatures on those records. And a Scotch-Irish immigrant family first written about in 1835 was written about again, thirteen more times over one hundred thirty years. Chronologizing and analyzing those derivative sources illuminates the most reliable data contained therein, as well as the introduction, repetition, and evolution of fictitious data.

Library staff in Charleston, South Carolina, created a database of city deaths, from which they derived a discrete list of 19th-century Pennsylvanians who died there. A family Bible from Montgomery and Philadelphia counties makes no specific reference to European origins, but German origins are derived from noting small clues found there. Marriages conducted by Rev. Nathaniel R. Snowden are found in a number of derivative sources, including contemporary newspapers and modern abstracts online, but Snowden's personal register includes marriages not found elsewhere. A typescript derived from the earliest York County Orphans Court records is in a manuscript collection, but contains errors and omissions. Corrections and more details are given by going back to microfilms of the original records found on open shelves. The existence of an 18th-century African-American family could not be derived from commonly used sources of the period. The only known record of the family is found in a slim folder in the Pennsylvania Abolition Society's massive record collection.

*Aaron Goodwin*

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