

# Born to be Filed

## A Story of Civil Birth Registration in the United States

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Infant birth records, early 1900s: View from the newspapers

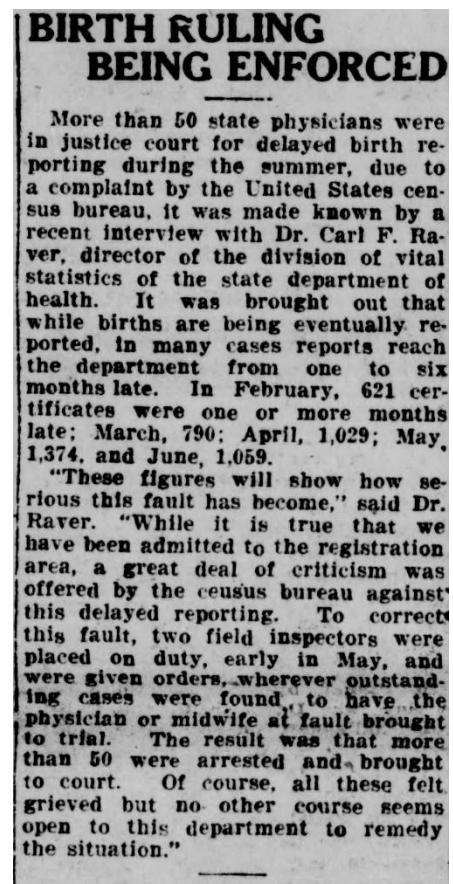
- 1900-1920s: compliance with on-time civil birth record registration continued to be a problem
- News stories show increasing impatience with late filing of birth records by physicians and midwives
- News story: arrest of physicians for failure to file on time (shown here: The Evening Review, East Liverpool, Ohio, 22 Sep 1925, p11, accessed at Newspapers.com)
- Mention of need to comply with U.S. Census Bureau demands
- **Good to know:** Newspapers ran lists of births and delayed births as they were reported to government offices (separate from family birth announcements)

Delayed birth records: View from the newspapers

- Originally the phrase applied to belated submissions of regular birth records (of infants and young children)
- During the 1930s and 1940s, new laws were created to support **adults** who required proof of birth
- Evidence on the growing use of delayed birth registration appears in newspapers

**Good to know:** When they applied may tell you WHY

- Late 1930s: required for Social Security applications
- Early 1940s: required for work in defense industry
- July 1941: Federal government pushes for state implementation of adult delayed birth registration: "60 million people can't prove they were born"



### APPLICATION

This Application must be Typewritten  
All Facts must be given as of Time of Delivery of this Child

No. 2486 Dec. 10 Page \_\_\_\_\_ Filed \_\_\_\_\_ 1956

Probate Court, Ashland County, Ohio

In the Matter of

(1) Registration of Birth

Case No. 2486

of Leona Blanche Johnson

#### APPLICATION

Your applicant respectfully represents that she was born in Ashland County, Ohio; that she now resides in Ashland, Ohio; and that the following are the available facts with relation to her birth as of the date of delivery:—

<b>1. PLACE OF BIRTH:</b> (a) County <u>Ashland</u> (b) <u>Ashland</u> (City) (Village) (Township) (c) Name of hospital or institution: <u>At home</u> (If not in hospital or institution give street number or location) (d) Mother's stay before delivery: _____ In hospital or institution _____ In this community <u>Years</u> _____ (Specify whether years, months, or days)		<b>2. USUAL RESIDENCE OF MOTHER: (At time of Deliv.)</b> (a) State <u>Ohio</u> (b) County <u>Ashland</u> (c) <u>Ashland</u> (City) (Village) (Township) (d) Street No. _____	
<b>3. Full name of child</b> <u>Johnson</u> <u>Leona</u> <u>Blanche</u> Surname First Middle		<b>4. Date of birth</b> <u>Sept. 20, 1895</u> (Month) (Day) (Year)	
<b>5. Sex:</b> <u>Female</u> <b>6. Twin or triplet or</b> <u>No</u> <b>If so—born 1st, 2d, or 3d</b>	<b>7. Number months of pregnancy</b> <u>Normal</u>		<b>8. Mother married?</b> <u>Yes</u>
<b>FATHER OF CHILD</b> 9. Full name <u>Johnson</u> <u>Truman</u> <u>E.</u> Surname First Middle 10. Color or race <u>white</u> 11. Age at time of this birth <u>24</u> yrs. 12. Birthplace <u>Ashland</u> <u>Ohio</u> (City, town, or county) (State or foreign country) 13. Usual occupation <u>Printer</u> 14. Industry or business _____		<b>MOTHER OF CHILD</b> 15. Full maiden name <u>Householder, Mary Margaret</u> Surname First Middle 16. Color or race <u>white</u> 17. Age at time of this birth <u>22</u> yrs. 18. Birthplace <u>Ashland County, Ohio</u> (City, town, or county) (State or foreign country) 19. Usual occupation <u>Housekeeping</u> 20. Industry or business _____ 22. Attending Physician or Midwife Name <u>Dr. Ash,</u> Address <u>Ashland, Ohio</u> M. D., midwife, or other _____	
21. Children born to this mother: (a) How many other children of this mother are now living? <u>1</u> (b) How many other children were born alive but are now dead? <u>0</u> (c) How many children were born dead? <u>0</u>		Answers must be given as of date of delivery of applicant	

Your applicant further represents that the registration of her birth is not recorded in the office of the Ashland County Probate Court.

Your applicant hereby makes application for an order of the Court, directing the registration of her birth, as provided by law.

Leona Blanche Johnson  
(Present full name of applicant)

The State of Ohio, Ashland County.  
The undersigned applicant, being duly sworn, says that the facts stated in the foregoing application are true, as she verily believes.

Leona Blanche Johnson  
(Present full name of applicant)  
P. O. Address 503 E. Main St., Ashland, Ohio  
Sworn to before me and signed in my presence  
this 8th day of June 1956

Mildred I. Myers, Probate Judge  
June D. Bartlett, Deputy Clerk

(1) "Correction of Birth Record" or "Registration of Birth."  
(2) "is not recorded," or "has been lost," or "has been destroyed," or "has not been properly and accurately recorded in Vol. \_\_\_\_\_ of the birth records of \_\_\_\_\_ Ohio."  
(3) Detailed particulars to be given here. State errors as they appear on original record.  
(4) The correction of \_\_\_\_\_ birth record, "the registration of \_\_\_\_\_ birth."

Delayed birth record for Leona Blanche Johnson (Ashland) in "Ohio, County Births, 1841-2003;" FamilySearch.org, image 67; accessed 3 Feb 2022.

### What's in delayed birth records?

Due to the additional burden of proof, delayed birth records may contain much more information than an infant birth register. Contents may include:

- Name, birth date/place, sex, and race; parents' names and birthplaces, filing date/place
- Proof of birth: reference/copy of a variety of documents or statements of varying reliability (family bibles, affidavits of family members, insurance policies, applicant's child's birth certificate, physician or midwife signature, employment records, and census records)

### How to find delayed birth records

- Genealogy websites
  - FamilySearch Catalog: Search at state, county, city levels
  - [Ancestry catalog results for delayed births](#) (VA, IA, VT, NH, WA, TN, SC, MA, GA, Berks, PA)
- Google: "delayed birth records Arizona"
- May or may not be with other birth records
- Ask at county/state level
- Look with court records
- May have been filed many years after birth
- Collection range (1871-1945) may represent years of births or years the records were collected

### Learn More

HL Brumberg, D Dozor and SG Golombek. "History of the Birth Certificate: From Inception to the Future of Electronic Data." *Journal of Perinatology* (2012) 32, 407–411.

Sunny Jane Morton and Jeanette Sheliga. "Delayed Birth Records in the United States." *NGS Magazine* 50:1 (Jan-Mar 2024): 44-50.

Susan J. Pearson. *The Birth Certificate: An American History*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021.