



**Literary and Cultural Heritage Maps Project
Instructions and Information for Authors:
Revised and New Biographies**

Revised November 2022

Checklist of Key Guidelines:

- Consult with the Administrator, [Ellysa Cahoy](#), before writing any biography.
- Download and use our [Biography Submission Template](#).
- The Abstract should be 100 words.
- The Biography should be 500-1,000 words, not counting Selected Works and Sources.
- Use Times New Roman font, 12-point, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins.
- Emphasize the person's connections to Pennsylvania.
- Use MLA 9th edition for formatting the Sources section.
- To submit your biography, use [our online submission system](#). Do not e-mail work to the Administrator. If you have technical difficulties, contact [Ellysa Cahoy](#) for assistance.

Introduction

Thank you for volunteering to write a biography for the Pennsylvania Center for the Book's (PACFTB's) Literary and Cultural Heritage Maps project! These instructions supplement the brief directions included on the [Biography Submission Template](#). Below, we offer guidelines for [revising existing biographies](#) and [preparing to write a biography](#). We also provide instructions for specific parts of the submission template, including [Names](#), [Birth Date and Death Date](#), [Awards Won](#), [Primary and Secondary Vocations](#), [Primary and Secondary Genre](#), [Pennsylvania City, County, and Recommended Geographer Marker](#), the [Abstract](#), the [Biography](#), [Selected Works](#), [Sources](#), [Photographs](#), and [Image Credits/Sources](#). If you still have concerns or questions after reading this information, please contact the project's Administrator, [Ellysa Cahoy](#).

The [Literary and Cultural Heritage Maps of Pennsylvania](#) is a digital humanities project developed and maintained by the [Pennsylvania Center for the Book](#) (PACFTB). PACFTB's mission is to "study, honor, celebrate, and promote books, reading, libraries, and literacy" in Pennsylvania. The biographies published on the project's website promote awareness of contributions Pennsylvanians have made to literature and culture. The project also supports school coursework and pedagogy by providing substantiated information about Pennsylvania, and by offering meaningful authorship opportunities to writers. To learn more about the project, see our [About](#) page.

Before Revising or Writing a Biography

Contact the Administrator, [Ellysa Cahoy](#), to find out whether your topic meets the project's [Inclusion Guidelines](#) and to ensure that a biography about the same person isn't already in production. The Administrator will share your idea with at least 2 Editorial Board members before authorizing you to

proceed with writing. Final acceptance of your work is contingent upon successful peer review and revision. Submissions may be rejected after 2 unsuccessful rounds of revision.

Your biography will be evaluated according to 7 criteria of equal importance, which are explained in more detail within our [Instructions for Reviewers](#):

- Accuracy
- Authority/Quality of Research/Use of Sources
- Completeness/Development
- Currency
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Pennsylvania Connections/Purpose/Relevance
- Quality of Writing/Organization/Style

The biographies featured in the Literary and Cultural Heritage Maps of Pennsylvania project represent various phases of this evolving project. Not all of them represent our current writing standards. If you are looking for good models, see our biographies for [Bob Saget](#) and [Vaunda Micheaux Nelson](#).

Because we aim to offer biographies that are informative and unique, we expect you to use information sources beyond what are easily available through the open internet. Penn State University Libraries' [research guide for the Pennsylvania Center for the Book](#) recommends various websites and databases as starting places for primary and secondary source research. Other college and university libraries offer similar guides and databases. If possible, visits to [public libraries](#), [county and local historical societies](#), museums, and other Pennsylvania institutions relevant to the featured person's life are strongly recommended. Be mindful of the sources you are using and keep a good record of relevant citation information. This will be essential in building the "Sources" section of your biography.

Revising an Existing Biography

If you have been assigned to revise an [existing biography](#) on our site, all the instructions in this document will apply to your work. The project's Administrator, [Ellysa Cahoy](#), will send you a Microsoft Word version of the document and you will be expected to use Word's "Track Changes" feature within that document so that she can review your edits and rewrites. Even if you are writing the revised biography entirely from scratch, we expect you to list the original in your "Sources" section, with a notation that it has been superseded, and citing a relevant URL from the [Internet Archive/Wayback Machine](#) (for example, see the citation to Amanda Royer's work, cited in the Sources section of our [revised biography of Gary Fincke](#)). This enables previous authors to be acknowledged for their contributions to the project.

One concern is how much you should edit the existing biography, versus write an entirely new one. When you are initially assigned, the Administrator will suggest either light editing or a full re-write, but a better choice may become clearer after you read more recent material about the topic and determine whether the facts and interpretations in the original biography are still correct. Please keep in contact with the Administrator to discuss what you've learned from your sources and any change of plans you would recommend for the revision.

Based on your final product, the Administrator will propose either a "revised by" line, or primary authorial credit. Very generally speaking, a revision author who simply corrects, updates, or adds a few

simple items (such as adding a death date; replacing an older photograph with a newer one; adding some recent Selected Works and Sources; and/or correcting some minor spelling and grammatical errors) will receive a “revised by” credit at the bottom of the biography. In other words, the original author’s name will remain at the top of the biography as the primary author. However, if the revision involves substantial research and re-writing, the Administrator may decide that you deserve more credit.

Determining whether you or the previous author should be named as the primary author for the revised biography is a complex decision. Currently, there are no clear guidelines for humanities projects like ours. Guidelines in other disciplines are evolving. In making a determination, the Administrator will consider best practices articulated by publishing organizations such as the [Committee on Publication Ethics](#); scholarly organizations such as the [American Psychological Association](#) and [American Sociological Association](#); reputable publishers such as [Taylor & Francis](#); and independent efforts such as [CRediT](#). If you disagree with the Administrator’s proposal, however, please vocalize your concerns. Assignment of authorial credit is a negotiated process, and we want everyone concerned to be treated fairly.

Writing the Biography

Please download and use the project’s [Biography Submission Template](#), which begins with various short-answer questions, so that important metadata related to your subject can be captured and used to map your work on our sites. The template includes brief directions for each question, then provides space for an Abstract, Biography, and other components. Below are some additional tips.

Names

After you submit your work, PACFTB will determine a name that will be used as the title of your biography. We will also tag the biography with additional metadata that will help others find it. Please help us by telling us all the names by which your biographical subject may be known.

Start with the name that you would recommend for use as the title for your biography. In many cases, this would include a first (given) name, a middle name and/or a nickname, and a last name (surname). When settling on this name, there may be several factors to consider, especially the name the person most often used for themselves and/or the name that appears most often in secondary sources. Note: for a transgender person, please use the name they have taken for themselves, rather than a birth name.

Next, list any other names the person has used or has been known by, including:

- Birth name
- Legal name
- Names before/after marriages and divorces
- Pen names, stage names, or other artistic names
- Nicknames
- Alternative spellings and misspellings

It is your choice whether to mention these names in the text of your biography (for an example, see our biography for [James “Cool Papa” Bell](#)). Whether you use every name or not, however, please include them in the “Names” field on the Biography Submission Template so that we can enhance the searchability of our site.

Birth Date and Death Date

Birth dates and death dates are among the most important facts within a biography, so please consult several authoritative sources as part of your research. An “obituary” (a newspaper article which reports a person’s death soon after it occurred) is an especially helpful source for death dates. When reporting birth and death dates on the Biography Submission Form, please use MM/DD/YYYY format. If you are uncertain about a birth or death year, use the circa abbreviation (ca.) and the closest year you can determine from your sources.

- Examples:
 - 9/10/1952
 - ca. 1825

Awards Won

A person does not have to have won awards to be included in our project. However, if you are writing about someone who has won any awards, please include the grantors (including parent and subsidiary units), the full, official names of the awards, and the years the person won them. Separate each phrase and award with a comma. Include [awards from the Pennsylvania Center for the Book](#), if applicable. Some of this information will be stripped when your biography is ultimately published, but the details are very helpful to PACFTB in verifying the award.

- Example:
 - American Library Association, Young Adult Library Services Association, Michael L. Printz Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature, 2021, National Book Foundation, National Book Award for Young People’s Literature, 2021.

Primary and Secondary Vocations

These categories enable PACFTB to include your individual on various state maps. Choose the categories that best describe the person’s important achievements or contributions. We require you to identify a primary vocation; a secondary one is optional – use it only if the person distinguished themselves in more than one vocation.

Primary and Secondary Genres (for “Literary” Vocations Only)

If your biography is about an author, identify the author’s primary and secondary genres. Choose the categories that best describe the person’s most important works. Identifying a primary genre is required, a secondary genre is optional – use it only if the person distinguished themselves in more than one genre.

Pennsylvania City, County, and Recommended Geographic Marker

Type in the city (or borough or township) that is most strongly associated with the person’s life in Pennsylvania. Then select the county that contains that municipality. If possible, also recommend a street address, building, or other specific location we should use as a mapping point. In the absence of a specific location, we sometimes choose the center of town, the town hall, or the public library.

If the person was born in one Pennsylvania location, but lived or died in others, weigh several factors including:

- Any existing [historical markers of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission](#).
- Where the person lived for the greater part of their life.
- Where the person lived during the peak of their career, or during their most important achievements or contributions.
- Where the person is buried (we sometimes use final resting places as map markers).
- Where the person works or worked (for living persons, we sometimes use work addresses rather than home locations as map markers).
- Pennsylvania places that were significant in the person's history.

Accurate city and county names are essential to our project. Please double-check spellings and county locations. One helpful verification method is to Google the city name, adding the words "Pennsylvania county" to your search. For example, if you search "Middleburg Pennsylvania county," Google will tell you that Middleburg is in Snyder County. Some common mistakes:

- Berks County vs. Bucks County (both in Eastern Pennsylvania)
- Franklin County vs. Fulton County (both in Central Pennsylvania)
- Lewisberry vs. Lewisburg vs. Lewistown (municipalities in Central Pennsylvania)
- Middleburg vs. Middlesex vs. Middleton vs. Middletown (municipalities in Central Pennsylvania)
- Northampton County vs. Northumberland County (both in East-Central PA)

Particularly if you are writing about a person who lived before 1878, another potential complication is historical changes in county borders. We use current Pennsylvania maps for all our digital projects, so please determine which county a historic city would be located in today. The [Genealogical Map of the Counties](#) and [other maps](#) available from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission can help you figure this out.

Finally, note that several historic Pennsylvania cities lie in 2 counties, including Adamstown (Berks/Lancaster), Bethlehem (Lehigh/Northampton), Ellwood City (Beaver/Lawrence), and Shippensburg (Cumberland/Franklin). In such cases, [Google Maps'](#) street-level maps can be helpful for determining the correct county.

Abstract (approximately 100 words)

The abstract is a 100-word summary (about 5-7 sentences) which PACFTB will use to describe the person on digital maps. For helpful examples of abstracts, see entries for [James "Cool Papa" Bell](#), [Rachel Carson](#), [Bob Saget](#), and [Vaunda Micheaux Nelson](#). Your abstract should briefly mention the person's:

- Place and date of birth.
- Connections to Pennsylvania, such as schools/colleges attended, places of work, and/or Pennsylvania influences on their work.
- Primary vocation or field of endeavor.
- Major achievements, including books written, awards and recognitions received, etc.
- Explanation of the person's significance; reasons why they are important or noteworthy.
- Place and date of death (if deceased).

Please ensure that your abstract and biography contain matching name-spellings, birth/death dates, city names, and other essential facts.

Biography

Please download and use our [Biography Submission Template](#), which includes space for your biography, selected works, and sources. Save all your writing as a single file (.doc or .docx) and use the subject's surname and first name in the file name.

- Examples:
 - Bell_James.docx
 - Carson_Rachel.docx
 - Saget_Bob.docx
 - Nelson_Vaunda_Micheaux.docx

In terms of writing style, our biographies are intended for the general public and are used to support middle school and high school curricula. With that in mind, your biography should be 500-1,000 words (not counting the abstract, selected works, and sources). Use clear, simple prose in the active voice. Your biography should include similar content as your abstract, but in more detail. For spelling questions, use the [Merriam-Webster online dictionary](#). For capitalization, punctuation, and other grammatical questions, use the MLA Handbook, 9th edition. Some additional PACFTB rules include:

- The first time you mention a person, include their full name. After that, use only the last name (surname) unless you are discussing two or more people with the same last name.
- The first time you mention an organization, use the spelled-out version of the corporate name, followed by an acronym in parentheses. After that, use only the acronym.
- Focus on the person's most important achievements, including early, mid-career, and later ones. In other words, you do not need to mention everything that the person did—just the items of highest interest.
- Provide details about the person's connection(s) to Pennsylvania – especially how their life in Pennsylvania contributed to their personal outlook, career, achievements, etc.
- Use present tense for discussing the current activities of living people. Use past tense for deceased persons and for past activities.
- When writing about a person's publications, movies, television shows, or other major works, include the year of release in parentheses or somewhere else in the text.
- Do not use underlining, bolding, or other font changes to emphasize text.
- To ensure your biography remains accurate over time:
 - Use phrases such as, "at the time of this writing ..." or "as of 2023 ..." instead of words like "currently" or "today."
 - Especially for living persons, use phrases such as "several" or "multiple" rather than numerical counts. For example, instead of saying "... the author of three novels," say "the author of several novels ..."
 - Do not use terms like "latest" or "new" when describing recent achievements or works.
- When appropriate, insert links to other PACFTB [biographies](#), [feature articles](#), and [awards/programs](#).
- When quoting material verbatim or when using someone else's evaluative/subjective commentary, use straight quotes and include an in-text citation in MLA format at the end of the sentence. For our project, you do not need to include in-text citations for straightforward facts

that you have summarized and reworded. However, any book, article, website, or other item that you draw information from should be listed in the “Sources” section of your biography.

One of the guiding principles of our project is to center diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in all our operations. When describing someone’s race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or other elements of their personal background, a key consideration is how the person would describe themselves. When writing about a historical person, another important consideration is how the person’s group wishes to be known today. This comes into play particularly with American Indian/Indigenous/Native American persons (for example consider Lenape, who are referred to as “Delaware” in historical documents). Please note that published style guides may not be up to date in terminology pertaining to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. With this in mind, three general resources to consider are the American Psychological Association’s [Bias Free Language](#) site, EDUCAUSE’s [Inclusive Language Guide](#), and [The Conscious Style Guide](#), online resources which are updated more frequently than printed manuals. In addition, please seek advice from relevant, reputable journalism and advocacy organizations. Some examples are the HRC Foundation’s [Glossary of Terms](#) (for writing about LGBTQ+ people), the [National Association of Black Journalists’ NABJ Style Guide](#), and the [Native American Journalists Association’s Reporting Guides](#).

We expect you to use terminology that is respectful, inclusive, and current. It is acceptable to break traditional rules of grammar to do so. For example, to include LGBTQ+ and non-binary persons, it is acceptable to use “they” (a plural noun) rather than “he or she” or “him or her” in cases where singular nouns might traditionally be used (see many examples throughout this document).

A final note: plagiarism – copying others’ writing and not acknowledging them – is not allowed and plagiarized submissions will be rejected. If you reuse another author’s phrasing, sentences, or evaluative/subjective commentary, please indicate the speaker within your text and place the wording in quotation marks (“”). For guidance, see the [MLA Handbook](#). Also, biography submissions to our project must not be previously published elsewhere (either in print or on the internet), nor should they be submitted to other publishing projects without requesting permission from the Administrator, [Ellysa Cahoy](#).

Selected Works (for “Literary” Vocations Only)

For literary authors, for nonfiction/scholarly authors, and for other persons who have produced written material, please include a list of major works, including both classic and more recent items as appropriate. See the “Sources” section below for tips on MLA formatting.

Sources

All biographies for our project must conclude with a list of the information sources that you used. We prefer books, journal articles, and other scholarly sources whenever they are available, but authoritative magazine articles, news articles, websites, and other sources are acceptable. In some cases, especially for living persons, you may need to conduct interviews as well. Please list your sources in alphabetical order at the end of your text.

We use the *MLA Handbook*, 9th edition, for formatting such references. Importantly, MLA citations include the particular document or item that is being referenced, plus any “containers” (the larger encyclopedia, periodical, database, website, archival collection, etc.) within which the cited document is found. Also, MLA style requires you to describe the precise edition you used – print and online versions

are cited differently. For these reasons, proper MLA citation can be challenging. MLA offers a “[Quick Guide](#)” that serves as a helpful tutorial. Numerous college/university tutoring centers, including the [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#), offer straightforward advice and examples. Below are examples of some (but not all) of the types of materials that are cited within our project. If you are unsure how to render something in MLA format, please contact the Administrator [Ellysa Cahoy](#).

- Examples:
 - Entry within an online encyclopedia or database:
 - Last Name, First Name (if available). “Entry Title.” *Title of Encyclopedia or Database*. Publisher, Date, URL. Accessed NN Mon. YYYY.
 - Finger, Simon. “Yellow Fever.” *Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*. Rutgers U-Camden, 2011, <https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/yellow-fever/>. Accessed 31 Jan. 2022.
 - Book (in paper format):
 - Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book*. Place of Publication, Publisher, YYYY.
 - Whitaker, Mark. *Smoketown: The Untold Story of the Other Black Renaissance*. Simon & Schuster, 2019.
 - Book chapter (in paper format):
 - Last Name, First Name. “Title of Chapter.” *Title of Book*, edited by First Name Last Name, Publisher, YYYY, pp. NNN-NNN.
 - Klepp, Susan E. “Encounter and Experiment: The Colonial Period.” *Pennsylvania: A History of the Commonwealth*, edited by Randall M. Miller and William A. Pencak, Penn State U Press, 2002, pp. 47-100.
 - Online journal or magazine article:
 - Last Name, First Name. “Title of Article.” *Title of Journal*, vol. NNN, no. NNN, YYYY, pp. NNN-NNN.
 - Richwine, Lindsay. “Comity at the Crossroads: How Friendships between Moravian and Native Women Sustained the Moravian Mission at Shamokin, 1745–1755.” *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, vol. 89, no. 1, 2022, pp. 74-101.
 - Online newspaper article:
 - Last Name, First Name (if available). “Title of Article.” *Title of Newspaper*. NN, Mon. YYYY. URL. Accessed NN Mon. YYYY.
 - Elber, Lynn. “Bob Saget, Beloved TV Dad on ‘Full House,’ Dead at 65.” *Los Angeles Times*, 9 Jan. 2022. <https://www.latimes.com/obituaries/story/2022-01-09/bob-saget-beloved-tv-dad-of-full-house-dead-at-65>. Accessed 31 Jan. 2022.
 - Web page within a larger website:

- Last Name, First Name (if available). "Title of Web Page," *Title of Website*, URL. Accessed NN Mon. 2022.
- "Shoofly Pie." *Gastro Obscura*, <https://www.atlasobscura.com/foods/shoofly-pie-amish>. Accessed 31 Jan. 2022.
- Interview which you conducted yourself (either oral, e-mail, or other form of communication):
 - Interviewee Last Name, Interviewee First Name. Personal interview. DD Mon. YYYY.
 - Novotny, Eric C. Personal interview. 22 Jan. 2022.
- Published interview (either print or audio broadcast):
 - Interviewee's last name, Interviewee's first name. Interview with Name of Interviewer. MLA citation to book, journal, website, or radio program, as appropriate.
 - Beckman, Phil. Interview with Bernadette A. Lear. "Made Free and Thrown Open to the Public," 11 Oct. 2021, *PA Books*, <https://www.iheart.com/podcast/256-pa-books-on-pcn-31158196/episode/made-free-and-thrown-open-to-87879515/>. Accessed 29 Jan. 2022.

Note that users of our websites do not have the same access to online databases, scholarly journals, and e-books that you have at your own institution. So, when listing the URL for an online resource that is not freely available, do not copy and paste the URL from your web browser. Instead, link to the publisher's top-level URL, a doi number, or a "permalink" that is shareable across institutions. For example, Penn State authors should strip "ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu" from any URLs they would like to cite. If you have questions, please consult with your librarian and/or with [Ellysa Cahoy](#), the Administrator.

Photograph

Please include one portrait photograph of the individual who is the subject of your biography. If you are using our [online submission system](#), you will upload it within the system as a separate file. The file should be in .jpeg format at 300 dpi resolution. Be aware that many images automatically downloaded from other websites are typically low resolution. Choose high-resolution downloads whenever available.

Note that even if you find a photo or image that is freely accessible on the internet, we still need permission to re-publish it on our site. For this reason, we suggest you begin your search for images in [OpenVerse](#) (formerly called Creative Commons) because images in OpenVerse come with clear permissions statements indicating whether and how the images may be reused. Another helpful resource is the [Digital Public Library of America](#), which contains millions of images from public libraries across the United States. DPLA's records of these images often include information about permissions and allowed uses. The [Library of Congress's Digital Collections](#) are another good option.

If you scan and submit a photograph from a book, journal article, other publication, or archival collection, you are responsible for obtaining permission from the author, publisher, institution, or

photographer that owns the copyright to that image. Please consult with the Administrator, [Ellysa Cahoy](#), if you have questions about obtaining the required documentation.

Image Credit and Image Source

We must include proper acknowledgment for any and all images republished on our sites. On our Biography Submission Form, the “Image Credit” acknowledges the contribution of the photographer or organization who created the image. Please include the photographer’s full name or corporate name if you know it. This information will be digitally transposed onto the image by PACFTB.

The “Image Source” field assists PACFTB in verifying and answering follow-up questions about the photograph. It acknowledges a previous publisher – the book, article, or website where you found the photograph.

Submitting the Biography

We use an [online submission system](#) hosted by Penn State and Open Journal Systems to keep track of incoming biographies, peer review, and revision. Please use our system—do not e-mail any biographies to PACFTB or its employees. The system will require you to register to receive a username and password. Then you will proceed step by step through the submission process. When you have completed your submission, you will receive an e-mail which confirms that your biography has been received.

Editorial and Production Process

After you submit your biography, it will be peer-reviewed by at least 2 Editorial Board members who will offer suggestions for improvement. Watch for follow up e-mails from the Administrator, [Ellysa Cahoy](#). After you revise your work and it is accepted, it will be edited, proofread, and prepared for publication. This process may require additional work or feedback from you. In other words, submitting a biography to the Literary and Cultural Heritage Maps project may feel like the “end” of the writing process from your perspective, but it is actually the beginning of the production process from our perspective. Overview of the authorial, editorial, and production process:

1. Author consults with the Administrator about writing a revised or new biography. In turn, the Administrator consults with at least 2 Editorial Board members about the proposed biography.
2. If Editorial Board members and Administrator agree to proceed, the Administrator authorizes the Author to begin writing and conveys any initial suggestions from the Editorial Board.
3. Author writes and submits the biography.
4. Administrator conducts a “desk review” to determine whether the biography is ready for peer review.
 - a. If the biography contains obvious inaccuracies or omissions, the Administrator returns the biography to the Author with suggestions for improvement.
 - b. [If needed] Author revises and resubmits the biography.
5. Administrator shares the biography with at least 2 Editorial Board members.
6. Editorial Board members provide feedback, including suggestions for improvement and recommendations for acceptance or rejection.
7. Administrator reconciles and shares feedback with the Author and provides coaching for revision.
8. Author revises and resubmits the biography.

9. Administrator decides whether or not to accept the revised biography.
 - a. If the biography needs further revision, the Administrator returns the biography to the Author and provides further coaching.
 - b. [If needed] Author revises and resubmits the biography.
 - c. [If needed] Administrator shared the revised biography with at least 2 Editorial Board members. Editorial board members provide feedback, including recommendations for acceptance or rejection.
10. If peer review is successful, Administrator accepts the biography and places it in the project's production queue.
 - a. However, if there have been 2 rounds of unsuccessful peer review, the Administrator may reject the biography and it will not move forward.
11. Administrator and/or PACFTB proofread the biography and make grammar, stylistic, and other changes as needed. Author assists in resolving any production concerns.
12. Biography is published on the project website and is included in relevant maps.

Please watch your e-mail for further communications about the status of your work and reply promptly. If you haven't heard any news within 4 weeks, you are welcome to contact the Administrator, [Ellysa Cahoy](#).

Thank you again for submitting content to our project! We look forward to reading your material!