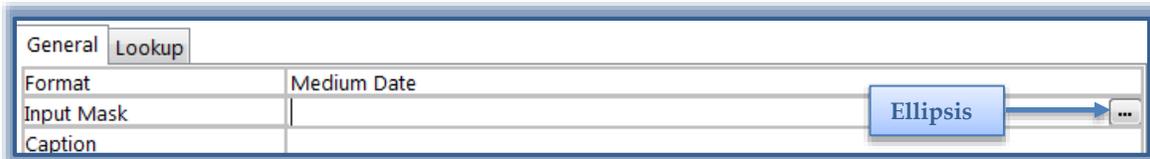For this exercise, you will be using the **Final Sales Merchandise** table in the **Gaither Addresses** database. This table was created using the **Create a Table in Design View** and the **Change the Table Design** lessons.
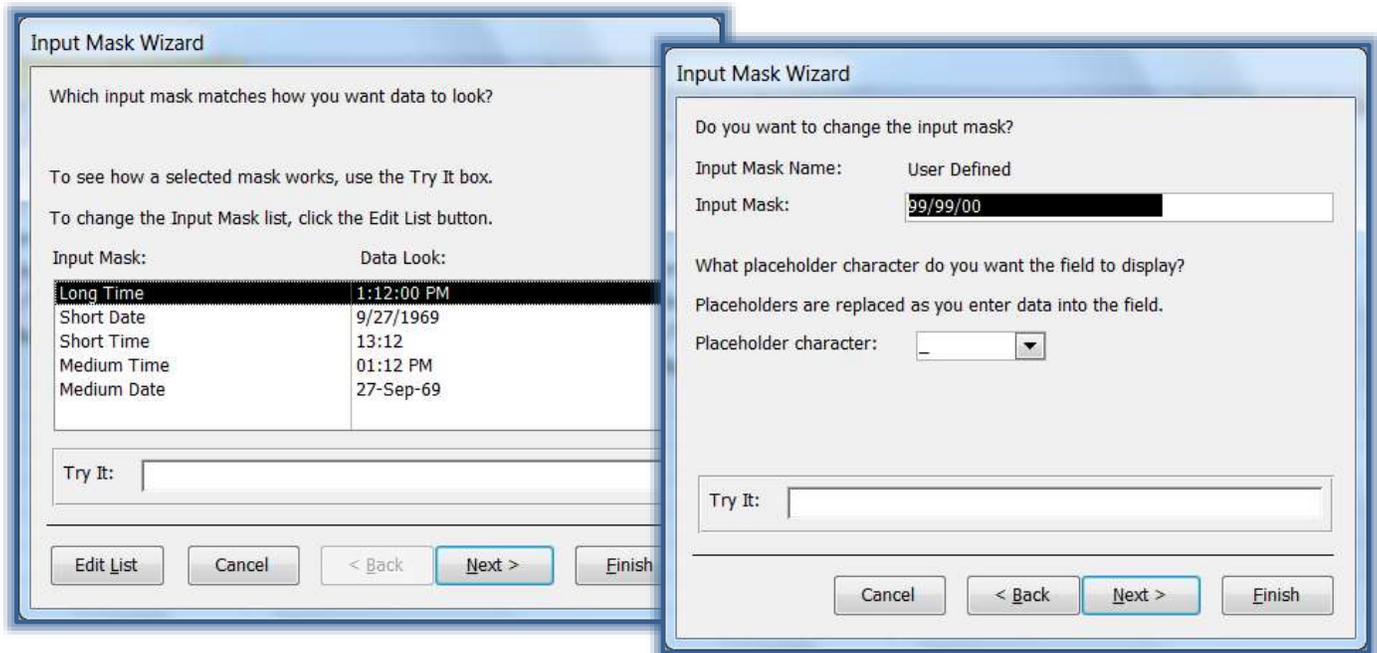
An Input Mask is used to control how data looks when it is entered into a table. It also can be used to define the format in which the data is stored.

Define an Input Mask

✠ Click somewhere in the **Date of Last Order** field.
✠ Click **Input Mask** under **Field Properties** for the **Date of Last Order** field.

General	Lookup	
Format	Medium Date	
Input Mask		**Ellipsis** → ...
Caption		

✠ Click the **ellipsis (**three dots) at the end of the **Input Mask** box.
✠ The **Input Mask Wizard** dialog box will appear (see illustration below).

Input Mask Wizard

Which input mask matches how you want data to look?

To see how a selected mask works, use the Try It box.

To change the Input Mask list, click the Edit List button.

Input Mask:	Data Look:
Long Time	1:12:00 PM
Short Date	9/27/1969
Short Time	13:12
Medium Time	01:12 PM
Medium Date	27-Sep-69

Try It: [   ]

Edit List   Cancel   < Back   Next >   Finish

Input Mask Wizard

Do you want to change the input mask?

Input Mask Name: User Defined
Input Mask: 99/99/00

What placeholder character do you want the field to display?

Placeholders are replaced as you enter data into the field.

Placeholder character: _   ▼
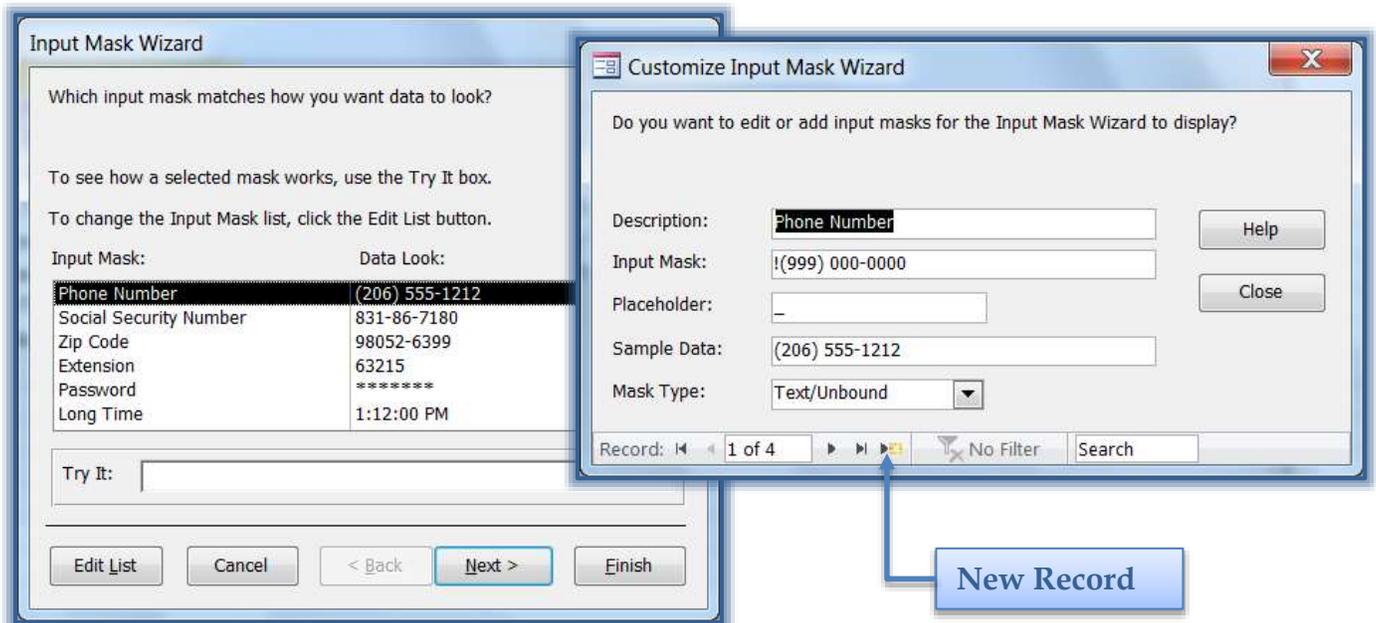
Try It: [   ]

Cancel   < Back   Next >   Finish

✠ Choose the **Short Date** option for this lesson.
✠ Click the **Try It** box to see how this works. Input a date, using a zero before a single digit number.
✠ Click the **Next** button to move to the next step. This box allows you to change the Input Mask layout.
✠ In the area where it says **99/99/0000** (see illustration above)**,** remove the last two zeros.
   ✦ There will be several spaces after the zeros.
   ✦ Press the end key to move to the end of the field.
   ✦ Press the backspace key to remove the spaces and the last two zeros.

- ✦ If you highlight the spaces and numbers and then click delete, all the zeros may be removed instead of just the last two.
- ✧ Click in the **Try It** box again to input the date.
- ✧ Click **Finish.**
- ✧ The Input Mask criteria will appear in the Input Mask area of the Field Properties.
- ✧ The number will display as **99/99/00;;_**.
- ✧ With this **Input Mask** you will not have to enter the slashes when inputting the date into a field.

Create a New Input Mask

It is not always possible to use one of the pre-defined Input Masks for a particular field. It then becomes necessary to create an Input Mask. For this lesson, we want to create a new Input Mask for the Stock Number field. To do this:

- ✧ Click the **Stock Number** field in the **Design View** window.
- ✧ Click the **ellipsis (…)** at the end of the Input Mask box.
- ✧ The **Input Mask Wizard** window will appear (see illustration below).

- ✧ Click the **Edit List** button at the bottom left side of this window.
- ✧ The **Customize Input Mask Wizard** window will appear (see illustration above).
- ✧ Click the **New Record** button at the bottom of the window. It is the last button after the word record, the one with an arrow and an asterisk.
- ✧ The entries in the boxes will clear.
- ✧ In the **Description** box, input **StockNumber**.
- ✧ In the **Input Mask** box, input the **number 9 five** times (99999), a **hyphen** (-), and **two** more **number 9s** (99).
  - ✦ When a series of 9s are inserted, it means that any number between 0 and 9 can be inserted into the field.
  - ✦ The entry of these numbers is not required.
  - ✦ Plus and/or minus signs are not allowed when information is entered.
- ✧ In the **Placeholder** box, insert a **hyphen** (-).

- In the **Sample Data** box, input **13036-55**.
- Leave the **Mask/Type** as **Text/Unbound**.
- Click **Close** to exit the **Edit Input Mask Wizard** window.
- Click the **Stock Number Input Mask** from the list, if necessary.
- No further changes are necessary for this action, so click the **Finish** button to apply this **Input Mask** to the **Stock Number** field.
- When data is input into this field, the hyphen will appear automatically. This means that only the numbers have to be input.