

BOUSE GENIES

FINDING YOUR IMMIGRANT ANCESTORS

by Carolyn H. Brown & Barbara A. H. Nuehring
[from the SKP Genies Newsletter Jul/Aug/Sep 2008]



All of us, unless of complete Native American descent, have immigrant ancestors—perhaps dozens of them. And it is always exciting when in the course of our research we find that individual or family who braved the perilous crossing of the ocean in search of a better life for themselves and future generations.

You may be lucky enough to identify your immigrants easily, or you may have to do a lot of digging.

You may know who your immigrant ancestors were because your family kept records, or the individuals immigrated within the lifetime of your living relatives. If this is your case, then now is the time to find out all you can about your immigrants from those sources.

The information you are looking for is the same as you have for other ancestors—birth, marriage, and death dates and locations. You will also need answers to these questions:

When did they arrive in the USA or colonies?

How was their name spelled in the old country?

Where exactly were they living before they left the old country?

To add interesting biographical data to your family history it is nice to have answers to:

How did they get here (i.e., the ship's name)?

What was their port of entry or border crossing point?

Why did they leave the old country?

Did they become naturalized citizens? If so, when and where?

Most researchers do not know who their immigrant ancestors were until they have worked their genealogy back several generations. The earlier your ancestors immigrated the more challenges you will have in finding information about them. As you research those ancestors who came here many years ago you will need to use a multitude of records—all that were created in the USA.

Since 1850, the US Federal Census has given great clues in identifying immigrants. Remember often inaccuracies are recorded on population schedules and add to that the fact, exact dates may not have been recalled precisely and, for any number of reasons, people may have deliberately misrepresented their origins.

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The Bouse Genies meet every other Friday from October thru May at the Bouse Community Building next to the Library. The schedule of meeting is posted in this newsletter.

The Bouse Genies Website is
<http://bousegenies.weebly.com>

FINDING YOUR IMMIGRANT ANCESTORS

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If the individual came before 1850, and was still living at the time of the 1850 census or later, you can find where he or she was born from the census records. Unfortunately, the place of birth may be only Sweden, England, etc. which does not help a whole lot. But at least you know the individual was not born in America and that he or she is one of your immigrant ancestors.

The 1870 census will tell you if the individuals' parents were foreign born. It does not tell you where they were born, but again you may have identified the immigrant ancestor.

In the 1880 census it does identify the place of birth of the individuals' parents. However, it will usually be England, Germany, etc.

For persons enumerated in the 1900-1930 censuses you may find the place of birth of their parents, and if that individual was an immigrant. The 1900 census also shows the year of immigration, how many years they have been in America and if they were naturalized. The 1910 thru 1930 censuses show year of immigration and if they were naturalized.

And don't forget State Censuses. Some provide foreign-born residents' immigration date and citizenship status long before they are recorded on federal censuses.

You will need to check other records to validate the data on the census forms or to find information if your immigrant died before the 1850 census. The earlier your immigrant ancestors arrived, the harder it will be to identify them and to get information about their previous home. Following is a short list of documents that may help you in identifying your immigrant ancestor:

- Probates and Wills
- Deeds and Homestead Files
- Court Records
- Church Records
- Marriage Documents
- Military Records
- Obituaries
- Photographs
- Family Documents
- County History Books

As you hunt for your immigrant ancestor employ the good research habits you have acquired—work back

in time generation-by-generation; gather and evaluate source documents; don't rely on just one record since errors appear in all types of documents; and thoroughly cite your sources. Eventually you will run into that immigrant.

ABCs

THE A-B-Cs OF GENEALOGY

M - N - O - P

by Maryalice Gordon

[from the SKP Genies Newsletter Jul/Aug 2006]

M is for **MEMORABILIA**. Family memorabilia may hold research clues. A school yearbook or notice of a reunion will tell you where school records are. Old pictures may add "flesh" to your facts. Unfortunately, most people do not realize the significance of things in old boxes stored in the attic or basement. Preserving the past for the future is every genealogist's goal.

N is for **NUMBER ONE**—that's you! Start with yourself—your full name, date of birth, and other important dates, the full names and dates for your parents. Always use the females' maiden names. Then note the parents of your parents—your grandparents. Work backwards as far as you can remember then document your memories. Without documentation your genealogy may be merely mythology. Only a genealogist considers a step back as progress!

O is for **ORAL** history. Most family histories consist of stories. While documents are important, family tales and traditions form an important bridge between dry facts and lively accounts. Make your family come alive; record events involving people.

P is for **PICTURES**. Scanning a photo can give first-rate results. Often tears, folds, and other damage can be "repaired" and you can have a better picture than the tattered original. A color copy of a black and white photo done on a laser copier can produce an exceptional effect, especially when enlarged. Obscure people and objects in a 3"x 5" group picture become recognizable in an 8 ½"x 11" copy.



FROM THE COMPUTER DESK

CARE AND FEEDING OF FLASH DRIVES by Carolyn H. Brown
[from the SKP Genies Newsletter Jul/Aug/Sep 2008]



Have you heard? "Floppy Drives" are dead! Thanks to the smaller, lighter, and faster USB flash drive that can carry over 1,000 times more data than the standard 3.5" floppy.

These little devices are known as flash drives, jump drives, thumb drives, and USB drives. In fact, they are not drives at all. They contain a tiny circuit board, some amount of flash memory, and some supporting electronics. Flash memory is noted for its storage capabilities; when you turn the power off or remove it from a computer, the stored data is not lost. It is saved in the flash memory. You can later plug it into any computer's USB port and all the data will still be available, identical to what it was when it was removed from another computer.

When the device is plugged into any computer it appears as another disk drive in *Windows Explorer*. It is usually identified as the "F" drive. You can copy data to and from the device as desired.

Since the size of flash drives can be quite large - up to 120 GB's on one I saw recently - you can place all of the files you have created on your computer on one flash drive.

Depending on the flash drive you are using, you can actually run programs from your flash drive. One of my genealogy friends has installed Legacy on her flash drive and is able to take it with her to any computer and access all of her genealogy data.

In a recent online article Dick Eastman <http://www.eogn.com> said "Unlike normal disk drives, jump drives contain no moving parts. The only thing

inside the case is flash memory plus whatever other electronic parts are required to make it work. The entire unit is sealed and is more or less impervious to heat, cold, shock, dirt, or most other physical abuse. They will not withstand extreme abuse, however. I did have one jump drive stop working after I accidentally sent it through the washer and dryer. You'd think that would teach me to empty my pockets before doing laundry! However, a few months later I did the same thing again with the replacement jump drive that I purchased. The second one survived and is still in use today. It also looks very shiny, apparently thanks to the detergent used. However, I do not recommend using Tide on all your electronics gear!"

When you plug your flash drive into your computer a small icon of a USB plug with a green check mark appears in the systems tray. This indicates that your flash drive is ready to use. Depending on the programs you have loaded on your computer, a box may appear asking what you want to do with the drive. Usually you can close this box and do all you need from Windows Explorer.

It is important to remember to remove your flash drive correctly from your computer each time you take it out of the USB port. To do this, right click on the USB plug icon as described above. Left click on the "Safely Remove Hardware" bar that appears. The line "USB Mass Storage Device" will be highlighted. Left click on the STOP button. In the *Stop Hardware Device* box click "OK" twice and then remove your flash drive. Close any open windows it was using.



Internet Sites that Work for You

Web sites come, move, and go on a regular basis. These URLs were current at the time of publication and are subject to unannounced changes.

Immigration & Migration Sources, Indexes and Finding Aids

National Archives & Records Administration

www.archives.gov/genealogy

Home page especially designed for genealogy research with internal links to Immigration Records, Naturalization Records and Passport Applications.

The Ships List

www.theshipslist.com

Passenger lists transcribed by volunteers, plus immigration reports, newspaper records, ship pictures, ship descriptions, shipping-line fleet lists and passenger fares with more being added all the time.

USA/Canada Naturalization Documents

<http://naturalizationrecords.com/>

Step-by-step instructions for finding ancestors in naturalization records and examples of various documents.

Passenger Lists & Immigration Records

This is a listing of immigration records and ship manifests for ships that sailed to the US between 1820 and the 1940s, including microfilm, CD-ROMs, books and online indexes.

Ellis Island Immigration Center Searchable Database
 Castle Garden Immigration Center Searchable Database
 One Step Tools for searching databases by Steve Morris
 Links to sites about Migration Routes, Roads & Trails

<http://home.att.net/~wee-monster/passengers.html>

www.ellisland.org/

www.castlegarden.org/

<http://stevemorse.org/>

www.cyndislist.com/migration.htm



FINDING YOUR IMMIGRANTS' ORIGINS

by Carolyn H. Brown

[from the SKP Genies Newsletter Jul/Aug/Sep 2008]

Until you know precisely where your immigrant ancestors were from, you won't be able to find the documents recording the events in their lives and family relationships. Typically, records were created and maintained at the local level, so even if you know their nationality, you will need more information to "find them" in the old country. Your homework begins here in America.

The same documents that identified your immigrant ancestor may also record the town/village/parish they emigrated from. If you have not found the precise location then go back and do more research. Without this information it will be impossible to tell if you have the right individual in the old country. With the name of the community in the old country you are ready to cross the ocean or border to the old country.

It is important to remember that countries changed names as well as their borders. The counties or divisions within the countries changed also. You will need to know the geography of the area for the time in question.

Check for civil records in the country of origin first. If you have found the religion of the immigrant in this country, then try the same church records in the old country. Depending on the time frame that they left the old county and the area they were from, the city may have kept some sort of list of who lived in the area similar to our city directories. Locating the individual in those records may help you in finding other documents.

When you know where they were from, use the

Internet to locate others who have researched in the same area. These people have already done a lot of digging and may be able to help you in your search to identify what records exist for which areas of the country and where to find them.

Just like in America, some countries have county or town histories. You may wish to read some of these to help you know more about the area you are researching. Also, countries changed borders across most of Europe, so you will need to know in which country you should be researching and when borders changed. Many cities changed their name as well, so be aware of the geography as your research progresses.

Record all data you have found and keep a chronology of that information in relationship to your ancestor's life. Knowing exactly when the individual was in a certain place, and what events took place there, will keep your research moving forward.

Use the Internet to get photos of the old town or buildings where you ancestors lived. Understanding the history of the area at the time your ancestors left the old country may indicate why they left. Did they moved from one country to another before arriving in America? If so, you will need to research each one individually as you are working back in time.

As with all other family traditions, beware of undocumented "facts." Don't trust surnames—some originate in several different countries and some have been Anglicized. Don't trust the perceived nationality of your ancestors—borders and allegiances changed frequently.

You know you are a genealogist when:

Your fear of snakes and bugs is overshadowed by the need to get through those brambles to that old gravestone.

FINDING YOUR IMMIGRANT ANCESTOR'S NATURALIZATION PAPERS

by Carolyn H. Brown

[from the SKP Genies Newsletter Jul/Aug/Sep 2008]

Once you identify your immigrant ancestor, you are probably interested in finding when and where they came from. Depending on their time of arrival, this can be difficult.

In 1790 Congress passed the first naturalization law whereby an alien could become an American Citizen. Prior to this the people were citizens of England or their country of origin. The act of becoming an American citizen is voluntary and is not a requirement. Many resident aliens never became citizens.

From 1790 through much of the 20th century, an alien could become naturalized in any court of record. The county court was the most convenient so was used by most residents. The types of courts and what they were called varies from state to state. They may include the county supreme, circuit, district, equity, chancery, probate, or common pleas court. A few states such as Indiana, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, New Jersey, and South Dakota had supreme courts which also naturalized aliens. Aliens living in large cities could become naturalized in a Federal court, such as a U.S. district court or U.S. circuit court.

Naturalization was a two step process which took approximately five years. The first step or "first papers" or "declaration of intent" were generally filed after an alien resided in the United States for two years. After three additional years, the alien could "petition for naturalization". After the petition was granted, a certificate of citizenship was issued to the alien. These two steps did not have to take place in the same court. In general the "declaration" will include more information of interest to the genealogist.

Before 1922 women were naturalized with their husbands, so you will not find naturalization papers for them. By the same token, women who married aliens lost their American citizenship. From 1790 to 1940, children under the age of 21 automatically became naturalized citizens upon the naturalization of their father. Unfortunately, however, names and biographical information about wives and children was not required, and are rarely included in declarations or petitions filed before September 1906.

Some of these records are still held in the county



courthouse, however, many have been sent to the state archives or the National Archives.

For more information on Naturalization Laws and the changes through the centuries, visit the National Archives & Records Administration (NARA) web site listed on pages 2 & 3.

FINDING YOUR IMMIGRANTS' ARRIVALS

by Barbara A. H. Nuehring

[from the SKP Genies Newsletter Jul/Aug/Sep 2008]

Finding your ancestors on ship manifests is a thrill! However, it is **not** the method for identifying which of your ancestors was an immigrant nor is it a reliable source prior to 1906 for finding your ancestors' places of origin.

To find your ancestor on a ship manifest, you must know his/her age and full name as it was spelled in the old country and the approximate time of arrival. Since lists were kept by port of entry, knowing where your immigrants landed will save you much time and effort.

Passenger lists before 1820 are very hard to locate. If they were created and have survived, they'll most likely be in the hands, basements, vaults or attics of repositories in the vicinity of the port. Some of these passenger lists have been published—check William Filby's *Passenger and Immigration Lists Index: A Guide to Published Arrival Records of Passengers who Came to the United States and Canada in the Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth Centuries*. It and numerous supplements are on the shelves of many libraries and on microfilm through the Family History Library (FHL).

Beginning in 1820, captains of passenger ships arriving from foreign ports were required to create a passenger manifest and submit it upon arrival at an American port. These are known as Customs Passenger Lists and the information on them varies. Typically it will be the name of the ship and it's captain, port of embarkation, date and port of arrival and passenger's name, age, sex, occupation and nationality. Microfilm copies of Customs Passenger Lists are available at the National Archives (NARA) and the FHL, plus more and more of these are becoming available on-line.

In 1891, the federal government took over control of immigration and

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FINDING YOUR IMMIGRANTS' ARRIVALS

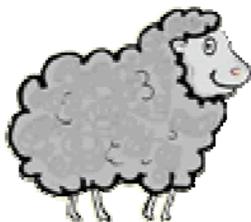
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Immigration Passenger Lists were created with more details: marital status; last residence; final destination; and the name, address and relationship of a relative they were joining. In 1906 even more questions were asked—ones that genealogists love: the exact community of birth; and the name and address of the closest living relative in his/her native country. Search the Ellis Island Immigration Center Database as a starting point—but remember, New York was not the only point of entry.

Regardless of the time of immigration, most of our ancestors traveled steerage class. When searching ships' manifests, keep in mind:

- a) names will not be listed in any particular order, although families are usually listed together;
- b) women in some countries conducted business and thus traveled under their maiden names; and
- c) surnames and given names may not be spelled correctly.

Don't despair if you cannot find your immigrants on ships manifests. Many researchers, including myself, have traced their lineage back many generations before the immigrant was even born, but cannot find their ancestors on any passenger lists. Still we look—hoping that someday we will discover the place our ancestor first stepped onto American soil and find a picture of the ship that brought them here. What a thrill that will be!



GENEALOGY BS - AKA "BLACK SHEEP"

by Carolyn H. Brown

As you gather data in your genealogy research you may come across information concerning a person your family does not want known. Sometimes this information is about someone famous, or notorious, but most of the time it is about ordinary people. In many cases you may have personally been told a nice uncomplicated story, or a document has been passed down telling a particular story, when in truth the real account was all together different.

Verify and document the story as best you can. Make sure it is not just an "old wives tale". If the person(s) are still living and it is something you can talk to them about, get their side of the story.

The question is, do you include the story in a document you are compiling about the family in question? If the person(s) concerned are still living the answer is "no", leave it alone unless you have gotten the approval of the person(s) involved to include it. If it is something that happened in the past and no one living would be affected by it, then it is up to you as to what you do with the story.

If the story is one which you may consider publishing at a later date, put it aside in a folder you have created for the person(s) involved and forget it for now. But do make sure it is recorded in your records so it is not forgotten.

Bouse Genies News

Since we are off for the summer there is very little to report, except that the books donated to us provide some excellent research in Virginia. Those researching anyone in Virginia will surely want to access these books. We still do not have a date for the upgrades to the Library.

At our first meeting we will discuss having night or Saturday meetings to accommodate those in the community who would like to join us but are working during the day. Also on the agenda is setting up a schedule for the Legacy Training CD's to be shown.



2008 MEETING SCHEDULE

Please note that when we set the start date for the fall meetings there was a misjudgement in the dates selected which caused the meetings to fall on the Thanksgiving Holiday. The start date for the meetings has been changed and the new meeting dates are:

September 26, 2008

October 10 & 24, 2008

November 7 & 21, 2008

December 5 & 19, 2008

Meetings are held every other Friday from October thru May at 10:00 a.m. in the Bouse Community Building next to the library.