

BOUSE GENIES

RESEARCHING YOUR AMERICAN FEMALE ANCESTORS

by Carolyn H. Brown

[from the SKP Genies Newsletter Jan/Feb 2009]

All of us have had the problem of identifying the women in our ancestry. If we have a name at all, it is usually her first name or nickname and her married surname. Women use their husbands' last names and often use a nickname, even in many legal documents. On top of that, their name could be spelled or indexed some way you never dreamed of.

Because women married young, they seldom appeared in documents using their maiden names. Therefore, we must look at all records which might have been created identifying them using their maiden name. These might include them with their parents, siblings or other relatives. There are many types of documents that can help us and we need to look in all of them.

We have been taught to work backwards from death to birth. It is the same method to use when researching your female lines. Start with the known and work to the unknown.

HOME SOURCES: We are taught to start our genealogy research at home and this is certainly true for the women. Look for any letters, photographs, diaries, newspaper clippings, heirlooms and other items that may provide even the simplest clue to the identity of the person you are researching. Take special note of when, where and who sent a letter and to whom it was addressed. These simple facts can provide another state or county in which to search.

FAMILY MEMBERS: Contact relatives to see if they have any information. Not all families kept the same documents (like the family Bible) and photos, so a distant cousin may have information you can not obtain from any other source.

FOLLOW THE MEN: Dig up all you can about *all* of the men in her life, including husbands, father, grandfathers, unmarried uncles, brothers and sons. Depending on the time and place the woman lived she may have had few or no legal rights. Even if the records don't list her by name you may find clues from these documents. **Tip:** A son may have been given a first or second name that was his mother's maiden name.

FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS: If you know the people with whom she was associated, you may find her mentioned in a newspaper article about that person. Friends and neighbors are often related.

CENSUS RECORDS: If you do not know when she died, but you are sure she died between 1850 and 1930, start with the census records. Going backwards in time, identify the 10 year period in which she may have died



Vol 3, No. 1
Jan / Feb 2009

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Bouse Genies

Electronic Newsletter

Published 6 times a year for the members of the Bouse Genealogy Group

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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>

and where she may have lived. This information can be used to locate death records if they are available.

After 1850 the census records can lead to her parents, as they might have been living with her and her family in their later years. Their relationship to the head of household may be in-law. If her husband died, she may be living at home with her parents. Siblings might have lived with her family. Relatives also might have lived within a few houses in the census records, so check the neighbors for any information that might make a link. Many times the family property was divided when a parent died and the siblings might be living next door.

CHURCH RECORDS: It was usually the women who took the family to church. Women often taught Sunday School or participated in other church functions. It is not unusual to find women listed in church records of all types. If the woman changed her name during her life with the church, you may find the name change listed in the church records. Marriage banns posted prior to the marriage of a couple can provide her maiden name. If you have two women by the same name and are unsure which parents are her's, use church records to help prove her parents.

Church records are kept in various places and might not be easy to find. Churches close and congregations merge, and unfortunately, many old wooden churches burned and their records with them. Contact the denomination's central archive to see if the records have been transferred there. Be creative in your research—I have found older church records in the current secretary's home garage!

MARRIAGE RECORDS: Another set of records would be her marriage records. Look for her marriage license (not just the marriage certificate), marriage banns and marriage or engagement announcement in the newspapers and church records. A marriage bond was posted by a relative of the women. Generally, it was her father or brother.

Any one of these records will provide her maiden name, if she was not married before, and often the names of her parents. In some of these records the parents' names might not appear at all. In some cases only the name of her father is listed. Then again, the young lady's mother may have signed the document using her (the mother's) married name. Follow all leads in these records. If she was married before, try for the previous marriage record. I have one instance where I have three marriage records for the same woman. One does not show parents, the other two show different names for her parents, but her father's

surname was Brown (wouldn't you know it?) in both records.

DEATH RECORDS: The death certificate, obituary, tombstone, cemetery records and/or funeral home records are also records to start with. Read these documents carefully for any information that may lead to another record. Any one of these records might provide her maiden name and maybe even her parents names and her mother's maiden name. Unfortunately, as you get further back in your research these records are not available. Especially if you have someone who was moving across the country. Many women died on wagon trains and there are no records of these events.

When you do find one or more of these records, if the information is not readily apparent, try to analyze each document in detail. There just may be a lead you can follow. Who signed the death certificate? Who gave the information? The person who signed the death certificate may be a child or spouse. If not, it most probably was someone from her side of the family.

CEMETERY RECORDS: Study the names of those buried around her and the name of the individual who owned the plot. They are probably all relatives. Some will be related through marriage, but many are blood relatives. Study everyone in the plot. Use the index as a guide only – don't rely on it. Go to the cemetery and photograph all of the tombstones in the plot. If you find tombstones with the same surname in a different plot, study them also.

FUNERAL HOME RECORDS: If you can identify the funeral home which may have taken care of her funeral, try to locate those records. They often contain more information than is on the tombstone or in the newspapers.

NEWSPAPERS: Many events might have occurred that would have caused your female ancestor to appear in the local newspaper. Think of all of the articles in your local newspaper where the names of individuals appear. The list of possible types of articles here is extensive. In the early papers in small towns you may find an article about her visiting her parents or siblings in another town or when some of them came to visit her. In the early days people traveled some distance to visit relatives and usually stayed for weeks—up to months. If she was a socialite, then you may find information on her "coming out" party or some school event. If she was involved with some sort of charity or other event, there may be information based on who else was taking part in the event. Then again, there may have been some court issue or tragedy in which she was involved that may provide her maiden name

and link her with relatives. Don't forget to check out engagement and marriage announcements in the newspapers. Often a woman's sister(s) stood up for her. If you know she belonged to any organization, look for any newspaper that organization may have created.

LOCAL HISTORY BOOKS: The local history of the town or county where she lived may provide information. Check every article for everyone with any of the last names you know of in the area. You never know what may appear when you least expect it to. Many of the old county histories have articles about prominent citizens which can carry the family back several generations.

CITY DIRECTORIES: Check the city directories and use the reverse address list to see if she was living near family. City directories might help identify if the person had been previously married or if she later remarried. Knowing when she appeared and disappeared using a given surname can indicate that she was listed under another surname.

LINEAGE ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIPS: The DAR, SAR, Mayflower Society, and like organizations that require lineage records might provide the information you need. If you know that a sibling or cousin was a member of one of these societies, get a copy of their records.

FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS: The Masons, Elks, Eagles, IOOF and other fraternal organizations are another source to consider. Though you may not find much information of genealogical importance, you can find when and to where the family moved. I have personally used Masonic papers to determine how one family moved through three different counties in one state. Don't forget that many fraternal organizations had a "ladies auxiliary" that will have their own records and membership rosters.

ONLINE RESOURCES: We all know that there is a lot of junk on the Internet, especially in the area of genealogy; however, it pays to look anyway. You may find a family tree listing your female relative where you least expected it to be. Just remember, you will need to locate the source of the information to determine if the data is valid or not.

GATHER EVERY FACT YOU CAN: The more facts about the woman you locate the more clues you will have and the more likely you'll find the missing information.

- 1) Ask questions about her life and life style. Did she belong to any women's organizations? Where did she go to school?

- 2) Get original source documents. Don't rely on abstracts, since they do not always mention everyone listed in the original document. You may miss a very important clue, as many abstracts do not list witnesses.

- 3) Familiarize yourself with the laws, political jurisdictions and government agencies of the particular time and place of your research. They vary greatly and will affect the direction your research should take.

ALWAYS MORE! No one article can cover all of the possible sources and places to look. In the next issue of the *Bouse Genies Newsletter* the theme will be Dead Ends and will include a list of *Records an Individual Might Generate* which may help you in researching your female ancestors. Remember, when one lead fails—try another.

BEGINNERS' PITEFALLS

by Carolyn H. Brown

[from the SKP Genies Newsletter Jan/Feb 2009]

MY ANCESTOR WAS BORN IN THE STATE OF...

If you are looking for records of Oregon in 1830 you would not be looking for the state of Oregon, but for the Oregon Territory. This applies to almost every state in the Union. You need to know when the state became a state, and how the area was identified before it became a state. Was it part of another state, or was it within a larger territory?

Also, you may be researching one of the several areas which belonged to two states at various times. There is an area in southern Ohio and northern Kentucky which was transferred between the states as the Ohio River changed course. The area of what is now Dutchess County, New York was part of Vermont at one time. I have a friend who is researching a family who lived in two states and four counties and never moved. It all depends on the time frame you are researching as to where the records will be held. Knowing the history of the area in question is a must when doing genealogy research.

TIPS

When taking notes during your research trips, always use 8½" X 11" size paper. Never use smaller pieces of paper because they can more easily become lost.

WOMEN AND THE LAW

by Carolyn H. Brown

[from the SKP Genies Newsletter
Jan/Feb 2009]

One of the biggest problems genealogists face is identifying the women and tracing their ancestry. Because of this, many of us research the male line and not the female line. That is due, in part, to a strong identity with a surname.



It depends on the country of origin of the individual as to whether the woman carried the surname of her husband or continued to use the surname of her father. In English-based colonies, the women carried the surname of their husband and their legal status made them less visible in public records. Therefore, the genealogist must understand the laws of the time governing women and use special strategies to identify them. Having even a limited knowledge of how the laws affected women may help you decide where to look for them.

EARLY LAWS: States often granted different rights to women based on their marital status. Women who were single, widowed, divorced or “feme sole” had different rights from married women or “feme covert”. A single woman could enter into contracts, dispose of her property, and sue. On the other hand, a woman lost her legal autonomy at the time of her marriage. Once she married, her husband gained control over her personal property and could do with it as he wished. Everything she brought into the marriage, as well as her wages, were controlled by her husband. A woman could neither execute a will nor enter into any legal transaction without her husband’s permission.

Later on, changes to the laws allowed women greater protection by granting women dower rights. Dower rights typically granted women the right to one-third of her deceased husband’s personal property. In some states this required evidence of her voluntary consent to all real estate sales, but not necessarily the purchase of land. Therefore, it is important to know when dower rights took effect in the state being researched and what requirements were placed on the local government to obtain her consent.

INHERITANCE & WOMEN: Primogeniture was the law of the land until just after the American Revolution. Meaning that women could not inherit land from their father unless there were no male heirs, many times even then the land went to the man’s brother.

Inheritance laws, in general, were changed about 1790 and dictated that intestate settlements of real and personal property were to be divided among the children and the widow was to receive one-third of the estate. Therefore, in most states sons and daughters received equal shares.

EXPANDED WOMEN’S RIGHTS: From about 1850 many states allowed women the right of ownership and control over all personal and real property they had inherited or had been given. This meant that women could will their separate estate property. In some instances a woman could set up a separate estate from her husband’s. This allowed her to enter into contracts, run her own business and conduct other legal and business matters. She could also take care of business if her husband was away or incapacitated.

It was not until about 1890 in most states that a woman could inherit one-third to one-half of her husband’s estate on her own, meaning that she had control over that inheritance.

EXCEPTIONS: There are a lot of exceptions to these rules and they will be found throughout the country. If the man left a will, then all of these basic laws did not apply. Many men did not always follow these patterns and often bequeathed land to their daughters or sons-in-law. Some bequeathed more than one-third to their wife.

Based on the age of the testator the pattern of inheritance at the time of death varied. A younger man with minor children tended to give more to the wife as her dower. However, if the man was elderly then he gave all property to his adult children. Sometimes they charged the eldest son with the support of his mother.

COURT RECORDS: Court records can be a great place to find your female relatives. Even if they did not initiate the record, they can be a part of a record created by someone else. Court records such as wills, deeds, probate, court orders, orphan records, Chancery Court records, tax records, quit claim deeds, marriage bonds, and other court records may provide information enough for you to determine a woman’s maiden name and locate her parents.

DIVORCE & SEPARATION: During colonial times in America it was not legally easy or economically feasible to obtain a separation or divorce. It could be done in England in an ecclesiastical court, however the American Colonies had no such courts. Legal separations would occasionally be granted in local courts, but since marriage was a religious matter, the

courts were hesitant to act in these cases. A few were granted in extreme and unusual circumstances.

A separation could be granted on the grounds of cruelty, adultery, and fear of bodily harm. These agreements effectively granted suspension of marital obligations. Since the man would have to renounce his rights to her property and she suspended all claims on her husband, a woman could establish a separate estate. These agreements did not allow the individuals to remarry. By 1848 some states allowed a complete divorce for adultery, desertion, and other situations.

MARRIAGE BONDS: Under colonial law the marriage bond could not be arranged by the bride or her mother. Therefore, the groom and a male relative of the bride would obtain the marriage license. The male relative was usually her father or a brother. They would, along with the groom, post a bond. This does not mean that the mother of the bride was not living at the time of the marriage.

PRE-NUPTIAL AGREEMENTS: Though not common, pre-nuptial agreements were used by widows to protect the property of their children. As a "feme sole" a woman could enter into a contract with her prospective husband to ensure that her property went to her children and not his children from a previous marriage. These will be found in deed or court-order books. These documents often mentioned the widow's late husband, her children, and occasionally her father if the property was inherited from her parents.

SOCIAL SECURITY APPLICATION: The Social Security Act was enacted in 1936. People who applied for a Social Security Card had to give their birth names and the maiden name of the applicant's mother. You will need the individual's Social Security Number to access these records. You may find it on her death record or tax records. Checking out the Social Security Death Index may help. If the woman did not have a Social Security Number, get the records of her children as they would list their mother's maiden name.

TAX RECORDS: Only adult males were taxed, however, women (often widows) were listed in the tax records. Usually this occurred if an adult male was living in the household. By following the land in the tax records the name of the widow might show up with the property. Investigate the original land owner and follow the land back in both the tax lists and deeds. Unfortunately, not all changes of property ended up in the deed books when the land holder died. If the family continued to live on the land and it was not divided, it may be several generations before the property appears in the deed books. Check marriage records after the

husband died to see if the wife remarried. Older widows with adult children were less likely to remarry.

WILLS & RELINQUISHMENT OF THE DOWERS CLAIM: After a woman's husband died, she could and often did make a will. If she was simply relinquishing her dower claim to real property, the record would probably be found in the deed books or other court or probate records. Because this was usually done at the death of the husband, the death date of the women can not easily be discerned. Sometimes her death can be established through the dispersion of her property. Sometimes settlements of estates without wills can be found under the married names of the daughters rather than the sons.

CHANCERY COURT RECORDS: In some cases children had disagreements over the distribution of property. These cases ended up in the Chancery Court. Do not overlook these records. It may be 10 to 20 years after the parent died before action was taken, based on the age of the child at the time of the parent's death. I have one case where the connection of my ancestor to a particular family was found in a Chancery Court record filed by him when he became of age some 21 years after his father's death. His father had died shortly before he was born and his older siblings had already received land from him sometime before that. He filed for his share of the land and won. This record helped me follow the land back two more generations.

NATURALIZATION RECORDS: Typically, naturalization records will not be helpful in researching your female ancestors since women's names rarely appear in early naturalization records. Until 1922 wives of naturalized men automatically became US citizens, and until 1940 children became naturalized at the time of their father's naturalization. Study the US naturalization laws for the time period in question.

MILITARY PENSIONS: Women are often mentioned in the military pension records. If her husband fought in a war and applied for a pension (whether he got it or was refused), she may be listed with her maiden name. Also, a woman could file for the military pension of her deceased husband. They were not always granted, but if she filed a record, it will give you an abundant amount of information. These records might indicate where the family lived over time and possibly where she was born.

At the very least, you may find information to lead you to another county or state in which to research. When getting these documents make sure you get all of the papers. You have to specifically ask for all papers or you will get the top 10 or so pages and what you need

is several pages deeper in the file. These are much more expensive today than they were a year ago, but they are worth the price. If you can get to a National Archives you can search some of the reels yourself, but to make sure you have all of the papers you will need to order them.

Some pension records can be found online at www.footnote.com. This a fee based site.

.DONNA'S DICTIONARY

If you don't make regular backups, you might as well enter the data and hit delete.

Newspapers prior to 1900 contained mostly town gossip ...about your ancestors.

You will never obtain birth or marriage certificates for every single ancestor, as they do not exist.

Everything you seek is not on the Internet and will not be in your lifetime.

FROM THE COMPUTER DESK

DON'T SAVE YOUR PHOTOS IN .JPG FORMAT by Carolyn H. Brown
[from the SKP Genies Newsletter Jan/Feb 2009]



Ever since the invention of the digital camera most digital photographs taken by these cameras have been created in .JPG (Joint Photographic Experts Group - pronounced "jay peg") format. That is because the file size is much smaller than other graphics formats and takes up much less space on the small storage device in the camera. The problem with .JPG format is that it is a "lossy" format which means that it loses pixels and resolution every time the file is saved. When you open a .JPG photo and save it, some of the pixels are removed never to be returned.

Therefore, all of your .JPG formatted photos should be opened once and immediately saved in .TIF (Tagged Image File) which is a "lossless" format. You can open a .TIF file and save it as many times as you like without losing any resolution.

If you are using an older computer with limited storage capacity you may need to purchase an external hard drive to have enough storage space for all of those wonderful new .TIF photographs as the size of a .TIF file is about 30 times larger than a .JPG file.

This is a great time to start converting all of those very valuable photographs to .TIF format. Make sure that you name each photo copy so you can readily identify what or who the picture is about.

Since most current genealogy programs allow you to "link" photos to the file, you can still have your genealogy file full of photos without expanding the size of the file. This makes it very easy to share the genealogy file without the photos in an email.



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.

Search the Internet for Your Female Ancestor

Female Ancestors - Database
DAR National Society Home Page
American Women in Church History

<http://geneasearch.com/findfemale.htm>
www.dar.org/natsociety/default.cfm
freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~gentutor/women.html
www.geocities.com/Heartland/Hills/6354/Women.html
<http://userpages.aug.com/captbarb/>
www.rootdig.com/adn/4944.htm

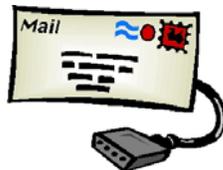
Finding The Elusive Women
Women are Veterans Too!
Married to An Alien

A still relevant article from Ancestry Daily News (28 Nov 2001) by Michael John Neill detailing the history of women in regards to US naturalization laws in chronological order.

MY 9TH GREAT GRANDMOTHER

by Susan Bidwell Williams

[from the SKP Genies Newsletter Jan/Feb 2009]



I am a descendant of the VAN SICKLE line (NJ) which goes back to the Van SALEE-REINIERS, early settlers of New Amsterdam Colony.

One of the loveliest traits of the Dutch and the Dutch Reform Church was the fact that women kept their maiden name in all transactions. Matrilineal lines can be tough, sometimes embarrassing.

This is the story of my 9th Great Grandmother.

Gretjie REINIERS, (Greit REYNIERS 1602-1669) was known for her behavior. Notorious for it is a better term. I had run across her name before, but this says it best.

The Island in the Center of the World (Shorto, 2004 Vintage Books) "...There was a kind of duke and duchess of this era of New Amsterdam who outdid their neighbors for sheer rabble-rousing..."

The paragraphs continue, but to abstract:

In Amsterdam she had been a barmaid well known for 'servicing' patrons. She arrived in America on the same ship as the new Governor, Van Twiller and soon took up her old occupation, being seen walking the Strand, hiking her petticoats to display her wares for the sailors.

She was a self-described whore. One day she marched into the Fort and proclaimed: "I have long enough been the whore of the nobility. From now on I shall be the whore of the rabble!" She was true to her word and appears within the records of the town as such.

She married and had children by Anthony Van SALEE, aka the Turk (1600-1676). He was a pirate born in Morocco. He was the son of a sea-captain pirate who had become Admiral of the Sultan's fleet and who had married a Moroccan woman.

Although married, it appears that Gretjie continued her line of work, so the actual father of each of her children, while legally a Van Salee and claimed by him, can be anyone's guess.

From the supine position of childbirth she once asked the midwife who the newly delivered baby looked like. The woman replied, "If you do not know who the father is, how should I know? However, the child is somewhat brown".

So... although I know I am her 9th Great Granddaughter, WHO is my 9th Great Grandfather?

HOW SUSAN FOUND HER 9TH GREAT GRANDMOTHER

by Susan Bidwell Williams

[from the SKP Genies Newsletter Jan/Feb 2009]

[Editor: It is not often that an editor gets a story and then is told just how the person found the information. I was so interested in how Susan found the story of her 9th great grandmother that I had to know what she did to locate the information from so long ago. One thing I learned from her experience is to never give up. This definitely proves the point that you can find some of your female ancestors. Here is her email with some minor changes for clarity. Thanks, Susan, for sharing your story.]

Carol, The following was much more than what you called for in the article, but here is HOW I heard about it.

Years ago (45 +) I was raised on the legend of Anneke JANS-Bogardus of early New Amsterdam. Her story is one of genealogical fraud, scam, and is a classic in the same "Anjou" type con. I think my family even sent the shyster lawyers some money to help further our claim to all the riches we were due. Well, this was a scam, but within the research I learned a couple things.

1 - Anneke was a real person, with established lines of descent and I was NOT among them.

2 - Within the written records of New Amsterdam are interesting personal stories of real people and things that happened to them. One story was about a lawsuit brought against the VanSalee-Reiniers for slandering Mrs. Bogardus. Mrs. Bogardus was the wife of the Minister of the Dutch Reform Church (DRC) in the colony, so I took special notice when I read it. I remembered the parties causing the problem.

Luckily, the DRC used maiden names for their women and most did NOT get caught in the shuffle of lost identity that we see with New England women.

Anyway, the VanSalee-Reiniers couple became the epitome of how badly one could behave and still remain in the (semi) good graces of the Dutch colony.

How did I locate her? Same as any other Ancestor - a combination of working backward, amassing data that builds your case for a genuine relationship.

- Census and church records, deeds and wills.

- Following migration patterns and routes.
- Walking cemeteries and discovering the DUNHAM, ROLOSON and VAN SICKLE families all in the same area of OH, and intermarrying.
- Paying for copies of local vital records.
- Contact with related descendants who had copies of the old Bible pages.
- Being sent partial copies of the "History of the VAN SICKLE Family in America" and learning it was incomplete.
- Finding (and buying) the out-of-print book. Within that book was the line back to VanSALEE and REINIERS.

Ah Ha...lightbulb goes on!

I know enough about the history of an era to know what books to buy/read and worked these names over and over for 45 years. I have a very retentive memory. I know I've heard that name before and saw the link forming. (OH back to NJ, back to New Amsterdam Colony). I was dead-ended, and waited for new information to surface, and books to be written. I was able to use the Internet for intelligent databases and source material.

I was involved with a Genealogy Chat room where inhabitants are known for their eclectic reading and knowledge bases. One chatterer, (already related to me on many New England lines) asked me if I had read the book I cited in the article. I had not, but it contained subject matter NOT found in past sources, so I ordered it from Amazon. Shorto (the author) has done a great job of amassing his Bibliography but he has also done it without footnotes. The book is on a college-text level but lacks the footnotes for each and every citation that we see in others. This is a scholarly draw-back but one that makes the narrative nature of his book more interesting.

I was glad to see the VanSalee-Reiniers stories with sources cited at last, including the one aspect of Gertjie's life I wasn't aware of. I knew she was a trouble-making, obnoxious shrew, but had NO idea she was also the town tramp with a husband who must have turned a blind-eye to her activities.

NOT your old New England Yankee gene pool!

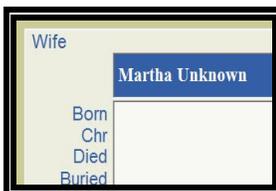
Susan Bidwell Williams, gen.12; John D. Bidwell, gen 11; Louie May (LIPPINCOTT) Bidwell, gen 10; Mary Ellen (DUNHAM) Lippincott, gen 9; Zenas DUNHAM, gen 8; Irena (ROLOSON) Dunham, gen 7; Lydia (VAN SICKLE) Roloson, gen 6; Andrew Van SICKLE, gen 5; Cornelius Van SICKLE, gen 4; Reinier Van SICKLE,

gen 3; Eva (VanSALEE) Van Sickle, gen 2; Anthony and Gretje (REINIERS) Van Salee, gen 1.

I traced my line back until I found the VAN SICKLE (VAN SYCKLYN) line. This was a matrilineal one, and finding Bible records helped a great deal.

I bought the out-of-print VAN SICKLE book which stops at the 1800 era. I continuously buy books on the era of my research. In this case, it was the early New Amsterdam Colony.

Regards, Susan



RECORDING YOUR FEMALE ANCESTOR

by Barbara A. H. Nuehring

[from the SKP Genies Newsletter
Jan/Feb 2009]

One of the first principles of genealogy we were taught is to record individuals on our databases with their birth name. That means that the women in your family tree are recorded with their maiden name. It is important to adhere to this rule because it is that surname that you will need to follow in your effort to identify her parents.

But what if you don't know what grandma's surname was before she married grandpa?

Let's take a look at the case of Jane who was married to John Doe. All records refer to her as Mrs. Jane Doe or the wife of John Doe or the widow of John Doe or the mother of Michael Doe. Now what do we do? How do we record Jane? More than likely she was not a Doe before she married John—although there have been such cases. So we certainly don't want to record her as Jane Doe nor do we want to record her as Mrs. Jane Doe. Neither will aid in the hunt for her parents nor provide accurate information for other researchers to follow.

There are several methods for recording unknown surnames. Many genealogists would record her name as Jane [- -? - -]. With this method there is no question that the surname has yet to be determined. Other formats I have seen have an ancestor recorded as Jane MNU (maiden name unknown); or Jane Unknown; or Jane. In regard to just recording her first name, some databases will "insist" that a name be entered in the surname field and you will have to choose a format. Others will just accept the blank field, which means that those individuals will be sorted to the top of any index. The key is to remain consistent in your choice of techniques and keep searching for her birth name.



USING COLLATERAL LINES TO LOCATE FEMALE ANCESTORS

by Carolyn H. Brown
[from the SKP Genies
Newsletter Jan/Feb 2009]

Too many times we try to take our ancestry back in time using only our direct male surname line. This is a huge mistake because you will, I guarantee, miss some additional information that is crucial to your research. When researching your female ancestors it is important to research all of the family members she associated with. This means members on both her side of the family and her husband's family.

When trying to locate the maiden name of a female ancestor, don't overlook the fact that siblings usually had the same set of parents. Even if they only had one parent in common you should look for that sibling.

In the opening article on page one, I mentioned many of the records you can use to find the parents of a female ancestor. These all apply to any of that individual's siblings—you just may find that a sibling created many readily available records that will help add a new surname to your direct line. If the sibling was well known or involved in some court issues, much more information might be available.

If researching siblings fails, don't forget your cousins. You never know when your ancestor was mentioned in the death notice of a cousin, or in some other record they might have created.

It was through information found in the death record of my husband's great-aunt that I was able to trace his grandmother's family back five generations. His grandmother's death record did not show her parents names, but her sister's death record listed both their mother and father and where they were from.



**A picture is worth a thousand
words, but it uses up three
thousand times the memory.**

RESEARCHING YOUR EUROPEAN FEMALE ANCESTORS

by Barbara A. H. Nuehring
[from the SKP Genies
Newsletter Jan/Feb 2009]



In our ancestor's day, there were no DNA tests, fingerprinting capability, Social Security numbers or photographs to identify an individual. Therefore, in vital records and legal documents Europeans were typically identified by their parentage—making it easier for us to track our female lines. Of course, we must first find the village where their records were created and then learn the idiosyncratic naming customs of that area.

NAMING CUSTOMS

In the counties of the British Isles, a woman took her husband's surname when she married. Many of the problems we encounter in researching our American female ancestors we also face when following our English, Welsh, Scottish, and Irish lines. Therefore, employ the good strategies you used when researching your American female ancestors when you start your British Isles research.

In several countries, women kept their birth names throughout their lives. This practice may make it more difficult to ascertain if a woman was married or not, but it certainly makes following our female lines easier.

Without finding her marriage record, it is almost impossible to tell if a Dutch woman was legally married to the father of her children. On all documents where she is listed—including the birth and marriage records of her children—it will be her birth surname that will be recorded.

On French documents, a woman's full birth name will be recorded. On her children's birth and marriage records, on deeds and on other documents where she and her husband are both listed, if they were legally married, the word *marie* will be noted.

It is common practice for a Hispanic woman to keep her maiden name when she marries. Another helpful practice is that children are given the surname of both parents. Typically, the order of a Spanish child's dual surname is the father's (primary) and then the mother's surname. On the other hand, a Portuguese child's primary surname is the last of his/her two surnames.

In some countries it has been the custom to add a suffix to the woman's last name to designate her status, but it should not be considered part of her surname.

In Germany an unmarried woman's surname may be documented with the suffix *in* or *lein*. For instance, the single women in my HERZOG ancestral line are recorded in church and civil records as HERZOGIN.

Polish women may have the ending *owna* or *a* added to their names and Czech women may have the suffix of *ová* or *á*.

In the Scandinavian countries, patronymics were used to identify individuals until the mid-19th century. Following their given names, women carried the name of their fathers with a suffix (i.e., Sweden - dotter; Finland - tytär; Norway - datter; Denmark - datter).

In both Catholic and Protestant church records, given names frequently will be recorded in Latin rather than the language of the country. In both civil and ecclesiastical records a notation may be made beside the name of the child if he or she was illegitimate. This may affect the surname of the child depending on the responsibility claimed by the father.

SOURCE DOCUMENTS

On the European continent, civil registration of an individual's birth, marriage and death began in various countries at various times starting in 1792. It became law in England in 1837. Before that, churches kept information on their parishioners. In most cases these records are much more detailed than those created in the US, providing us with our female ancestor's birth surname and other valuable research information.

MARRIAGE RECORDS: Whether the surname is changed at the time of marriage or not, you will find that the marriage documents created in European countries will have the birth name of the woman, her previous marital status, her residence and the names of her parents. On records created on the continent, marriage records will also include the birth names of the mothers of the bride and groom. More often than not, a couple married in the parish or town where the bride lived. If any of the female witnesses had the same surname as the groom, check her residence—it just may be a clue to the groom's hometown and where his mother's marriage record may be located.

TIP: If your ancestor's country typically uses a suffix to designate an unmarried woman and the marriage record does not include the suffix on the bride's name, it may mean that she has been married before.

BIRTH RECORDS: Because the names of both parents are recorded—most of the time including the maiden name of the mother—this is a reliable source for finding a woman's name and proving relationships. Usually one of the parents had to appear in person before the civil authorities to report the birth. Prior to civil registrations, churches recorded the parent's names on baptismal ledgers. However, in some countries only the father's name was recorded in the 1500s and 1600s.

DEATH CERTIFICATES: When dealing with death records on the continent, a woman will likely be listed with her birth name. Therefore, it is not a source for finding a birth name. However, the spouse is often listed and thus will validate that the woman is the one you seek.

CENSUS: Not always accurate, not always complete, nonetheless enumerations of the citizens of an area provide great leads for finding vital records and legal documents. The European countries and internal jurisdictions collected various pieces of data at various times for various reasons. The recording of names followed the customs of the country. **TIP:** Check the relationship to the head of the household—especially for in-laws of the husband.

BOTTOM LINE

Traditions and laws of the countries on the European continent make it easy to research our female ancestors. Many source documents will give you several generations of surnames. Recording methods on the British Isles are not as generous in providing birth names of married women, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't examine every vital record for names and clues.

Bouse Genies 2009 MEETING SCHEDULE

We will be meeting every Friday during January, February and March 2009 as follows:

January 2 - 10 AM to 12 - AniMap Training CD
 January 9 - 10 AM to 12 - Legacy Training CD #2
 January 16 - 7 PM to 9 - Census Records
 January 23 - 10 AM to 12 - Legacy Training CD #3
 January 30 - 10 AM to 12 - Open Meeting
 February 6 - 10 AM to 12 - Legacy Training CD #4
 February 13 - 7 PM to 9 - Military Records
 February 20 - 10 AM to 12 - Legacy Training CD #5
 February 27 - 10 AM to 12 - Open Meeting
 March 6 - 10 AM to 12 - Legacy Training CD #6
 March 13 - 10 AM to 12 - Open Meeting
 March 20 - 10 AM to 12 - Legacy Training CD #7
 March 27 - 10 AM to 12 - Barbara Nuehring speaker

COVERED WAGON WOMEN: THE TRUTH ABOUT THE TRAILS

by Janice Schultz

[Branch Librarian, Mid-Continent Public Library, Independence, Missouri. From: *Genealogy News Bytes Volume 4, Issue 1, January 2008.*]



Many emigrant pioneers made journeys on western trails in the nineteenth century. If you are old enough, you may remember the old television series *Wagon Train*. We have some misconceptions of that rough journey from that television show. I can picture a freshly-dressed, gingham-clad, pioneer woman riding in a covered wagon. That was not the case. The journey was arduous and required a lot of walking. What a stout-hearted group of pioneers they were! In a ten-volume set of books entitled *Covered Wagon Women: Diaries & Letters from the Western Trails, 1840-1890* [Glendale, Calif: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1983] we can find a true picture of what the women endured.

Anna Maria King, a pioneer to the Luckiamute Valley in Oregon, wrote a letter to her mother, brothers, and sisters in April 1846. She tells of a journey the year before in which their company of 150-200 wagons left the old route at Fort Boisien at the recommendation of a man named Meiks. They traveled for 2 more months, during which many of their party ran out of provisions. Many, also, were afflicted with disease, often whooping cough, a lingering fever, and measles. Many died. She lists the names of several who died – “Sally Chambers, John King and his wife, their daughter Electa and their babe, a son 9 months old, and Dulancy C. Norton’s sister are gone.” Anna Maria states that those who went by the old road crossed into Oregon six weeks prior to her party’s arrival. [Volume I, pages 41-45]

Mary Burrell wrote a diary during her journey from Council Bluffs, Iowa, to California in 1854. In addition to traveling, everyday “housekeeping” tasks were still expected and necessary. On June 21st the party traveled eighteen miles. Then, “Encamped on Black Fork; good camp; got dinner & spent the rest of the day in washing & baking pies & bread.” Illness on the trail was always a concern. On June 26th she wrote, “Travelling on. Our sick is better. Can see 12 different kinds of flowers within ½ mile. Some trading stations. Mother is taken sick. Oh Dear me! What if we all get sick!” [volume VI, pages 228-261].

Native Americans were often mentioned in letters and diaries. Sarah Sutton wrote a travel diary in 1854. She

and her party began their trip in Illinois in March of that year and completed their trek to Oregon later that fall. On July 20th she wrote, “[S]everal Indians have followed us to our camp ground and help’t drive the cattle. [T]hose that swum our cattle over we give them a shirt apiece, and some thing to eat. Just at dark there was 6 come, and one squaw and unsaddled their horses, and turned them out on the grass, and staid all night with us. [W]e did not wish to insult them, and we got along fine. I suppose it was A visit of friendship and the[y] never fail of visiting the emegrants and are a great deal more enlighten’d & civilized than they formerly have been by seeing so many whites and the most of them have a shirt on or some thing the emegrant has give them, and they are not as dangerous, but think more of the whites than in times past.” [Volume VII, pages 31-77]

Lists of emigrants to the new land are hard to find. Letters and diaries are writings where we can find other travelers listed. We can also read those first-hand accounts which give us a more accurate picture of that difficult journey. The women endured much heartache in leaving family members behind, losing loved ones and friends on the trails, and working tirelessly at mundane tasks after traveling all day. You can read these accounts yourself at the Genealogy Branch, or by checking out one or more of the volumes from some of our other branches. It is time well spent. Enjoy the trip!

FINDING WOMEN’S NAMES

by Bill Tresenriter

[Assistant Researcher, Mid-Continent Public Library, Independence, Missouri. From: *Genealogy News Bytes Volume 4, Issue 1, January 2008.*]

Like so many genealogists, I check obituaries for valuable information that may lead to additional family records. The “America’s Obituaries and Death Notices” database has obituaries that range in date from 1984 to the present, depending on the location being searched. This site allows you to search for a name that might appear anywhere in the full text of the obituary. I found this feature especially helpful when searching for female family members. The maiden name of a female who married into a family may be found using this feature. You may find an unknown married name by entering the maiden name in the search box. Multiple marriages of the female children of the deceased may also be found when different surnames of the children and grandchildren are listed.

[Note: This website is only available through subscribing libraries. You must have a library card for a subscribing library to access it.]

FURTHER READING



Carmack, Sharon. *A Genealogist's Guide to Discovering Your Female Ancestors: Special Strategies for Uncovering Hard-to-Find Information about Your Female Lineage*. Cincinnati, OH: Betterway Books, 1998.

National Genealogical Society. *Reassembling Female Lives: A Special Issue of the National Genealogical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 88, No. 3 (September 2000). This issue is available in the NGS Bookstore at: www.ngsgenealogy.org/book.htm

Schaeffer, Christina Kassabian. *The Hidden Half of the Family: A Source Book for Women's Genealogy*. Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1999.

Shammas, Carole, M. Salmon, and M. Dahlin. *Inheritance in America from Colonial Times to the Present*. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987)

Speth, Linda and Alison D. Hirsch. *Women, Family, and Community in Colonial America: Two Perspectives*. (New York, NY: Haworth Press, 1983.)

Lebsock, Suzanne. *The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town 1784-1860*. (New York; Norton Press, 1984.)

For information on women and the naturalization process, read the article from *Prologue*, (National Archives Records Administration) NARA's quarterly publication. *Any woman who is now or may hereafter be married ... Women and Naturalization, ca 1802-1940* by Marian L Smith:

<http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1998/summer/women-and-naturalization-1.html>

OTHER SOURCES:

National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection, 1848-1921 at the Library of Congress, American Memory Collection:
<http://www.loc.gov/ammem/naw/nawshome.html>

Women's Suffrage, from the University of Rochester's Department of History, Rochester, NY:
www.history.rochester.edu/class/suffrage/home.htm

Women's Suffrage, from the Univ. of Maryland, College Park: <http://www.lib.umd.edu/PUB/search.html>
Search on "Women's Suffrage"



ABCs

THE A-B-Cs OF GENEALOGY

U - V - W - X

by Maryalice Gordon

[from the SKP Genies Newsletter Sep/Oct 2006]

U is for **UX** or **UXOR**. Latin for wife, used in legal documents. Many older documents will list the man of the house and his wife as "Stephen Smith et ux" indicating Stephen and Mrs. Smith. This can make identifying "Mrs. Smith", and also making sure that you have the correct "Stephen", very difficult. Look for other legal transactions. Try to read the entire document looking for given names and identify how they relate to "Stephen".

V is for **VALUE** your history project as a significant contribution in your lifetime to future generations. Someday one of your grandchildren or great nephew/nieces will be overjoyed to find your research!

W is for **WILL**. If you value (see above) your research, be sure a copy of your main research is in the genealogy society's library where you live (you don't have to be a member), and in the counties where your ancestors lived. Write out these instructions and talk to all those who may take care of your estate.

X is for **XENOPHOBIA**, "a fear or hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything foreign or strange" says my dictionary. This is not good for a genealogist. Finding and identifying strangers and foreigners may lead to more about your family. Immigrants rarely traveled alone. Can't find your ancestor? Check out some of his friends.

Bouse Genies News

There are two more evening meetings scheduled. Please note the new meeting schedule on page 10.

We had a good turnout at the evening meeting on December 19th, with several visitors from Quartzsite. As of the last meeting we have 23 paid members.

It looks like, with any luck, the library will be back in operation before the end of January. We will have more space for our books with the new setup.