Tracing Female Ancestors in America

Class 1: Finding Elusive Maiden Names

Ann G. Lawthers, Genealogist

OVERVIEW

• Presentation (60 mins.)
• Q&A (30 mins.)
Finding the Maiden Name

Marriage Record
- Where and When
- Intentions
- Evidence of marriage

Other Records
- Woman’s death record
- Children’s records
- Census
- Military
- Other

Learn About the Husband
- FAN Club
- Migration
- Religion
- Occupation

Local History
- Settlement patterns
- Families in the neighborhood

Voice of Ann Lawthers, Genealogist

Finding the Marriage Record

- Where did the couple marry?
  - Often the town of the bride’s family
  - Check old maps for boundary and community name changes
- When did the couple marry?
  - Record availability varies by time and place
- Is this a first, second, or third marriage?

Types of Records Indicating a Marriage

- Evidence of intention to marry
  - Before mid-1800’s
    - Intentions
    - Banns
    - Bonds
    - Replaced by
      - License
- Evidence of marriage
  - Certificates
  - Returns or Registers
  - Personal records
Rochester, Massachusetts Intention

"Town and vital records of Rochester, Massachusetts, 1673-1893," Family Search

Marriage Bond, Virginia

"Marriage bonds, licenses, etc., 1797-1900," Norfolk, Virginia

Civil Marriage Register

- New England towns often recorded marriages before other vital events
- Vital Records to 1850 (Tan Books)
- Example from City of Cambridge, Mass., 1899
Vermont Town Clerk’s Card

"Vermont: Births, Marriages and Deaths, 1700-2008," American Ancestors

Church Marriage Register

Example: Drouin collection, Quebec


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Church Marriage Register

Bible Marriage Record
- Homer Family Bible
  - Josiah Homer and Sarah C. Walker
  - Ozema Caroline and Friend Cook

Finding the Maiden Name
Other Original Documents with a Maiden Name

• Woman’s death record
  – Parents named
• Children’s birth, marriage and death records
  – Colonial records tend not to give the woman’s maiden name on a birth record

Woman’s Death Record

• Pre-20th century, maiden name not often captured on a death record
• Death certificates in 20th century

Child Records That May Identify the Mother’s Maiden Name

• Birth/baptism (civil and church)
• Marriage (civil and church)
• Death (civil)
Case Study – Using Children’s Death Records

• Good strategy if the children died in the latter part of the 19th century or later

• Gustave and Frances (MNU) Dorsey
  – Martha Jane 1846-1912
  – Leonard Prindowell 1848-1921
  – Charles Allen 1854-1941
  – Francis E. 1856-1874
  – Alice P. 1858-1920
  – Gustavus Young 1863-1900
  – William 1867- Bef 1880

Sort Death Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child</th>
<th>Death Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>Francis E.</td>
<td>1874</td>
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<td>William</td>
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<td>Alice P.</td>
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<td>Leonard Prindowell</td>
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<td>California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Allen</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>California</td>
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</table>

Online Vital Records

California
• California, County Birth and Death Records, 1800-1994 (FS)
• California, U.S., Death Index, 1940-1997 (Ancestry)

Nevada
• Nevada County birth and death records: COLLECTION RECORD, 1871-1992 (FS)
• Nevada, U.S., Death Certificates, 1911-1965 (Ancestry)
Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child</th>
<th>Death Year</th>
<th>Death State</th>
<th>Results</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Francis E.</td>
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<td>California</td>
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<tr>
<td>William</td>
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Less well-known sources for the maiden name

- Census records
  - living with in-laws, elderly relative listed as "mother-in-law"
  - brothers or sisters living with couple
- Newspaper announcements
- Land records
- Military pension files
- Cemeteries
- Parent's will
- County histories (use as a finding aid)
Censuses That List Relationships

- Ancestry.com:
  - U.S. Census 1880-1940
  - Canadian Censuses through 1921
  - 1841-1911 English Censuses
- FamilySearch.org
  - U.S. Census on FamilySearch.org
  - English and Canadian Census through 1911/1921

Newspaper Marriage Notices

Notices, Advance Argus (Greenville, Mercer, PA)
November 21, 1895, page 8; viewed at Newspapers.com
Newspaper Death Notices

Obituaries, Montgomery County Record
(Pennsylvania) March 2, 1987

Deeds

- An excellent source for proving relationships when VRs not available
- Depending on the indexing system, the woman should be in either the grantor or grantee index as appropriate

Frederick County, Maryland Land Deed, Filler to Filler 1796.

Widow’s military pension

- Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Mexican War, Civil War (Union), Indian Wars, Spanish-American War
- Originals at National Archives

Tombstones

Parent’s Will May Confirm Maiden Name

Social Security Application
Diaries and Letters

- Often part of manuscript collections
- Check local libraries and historical societies
- Large collection at NEHGS

QUESTIONS?

Finding Aids
Finding Aids

- New England Marriages Prior to 1700 by Clarence Almon Torrey

Published Indexes

- AmericanAncestors.org

Finding Aids

- Periodical Source Index (PERSI)
County Histories

• "Mug Books" or "Brag Books"
  – A much-maligned, but potentially very useful source

• Check
  – Hathitrust.org
  – Archive.org
  – Books.Google.com

Naming Patterns

• Some families preserve the wife's maiden name as the child's middle name.
  – Margaret Lawthers Higgins
    (mother's maiden name)
  – Edward Grosvenor Plowman
    (maternal 2nd great grandmother)
  – Peter Carrington Lawthers
    (mother's great-grandmother)
Finding the Maiden Name

- Marriage Record
- Other Records
- Learn About the Husband
- Local History

Where and When Intentions Evidence of marriage
Woman’s death record Children’s records Census Military Other Sources

Learn About the Husband
- FAN Club – Family, Associates and Neighbors
- Migration pattern of family
- Religion/Church
- Occupation

Aaron Huffman’s wife, Martha
- FAN Club principle
- Aaron’s father was Elijah Huffman
- Elijah purchased land in Indiana next to John B. Farrell
- Research on John Farrell’s family shows the Huffman and Farrell families lived in the same Kentucky County
Clergyman’s wife, Emma

• Newton Hervey Bell was born in Kossuth, Iowa
• He married Emma, MNU before 1870 (per census)
• Newton attended Amherst College, graduating in 1866, then attended Princeton Theological Seminary and Bangor Theological Seminary

NEWTON HERVEY BELL, son of Peter B. and Harriet (How- ket) Bell, was born in Kossuth, Iowa, Apr. 22, 1841; lived for college at Yellow Springs Col., Ill., and A. D. dard Academy, Ill.; Princeton T. S., ’66—’67; Bangor T. S., ’71—’72; ordained at Stom- ford Springs, Ct., Aug. 6, 1868, and p., 188—901; s., p., Wilson- ton, Ind., 70—71; a., p., Owadam, Wash., ’71—74; in employ of A. B. C. F. M., Middletown, Conn., ’76—’79; s., s., Schenectady, N. Y., ’77—90; p., First Presbyterian church, Nyack, N. Y., since ’95. Married, Aug. 11, 1868, Emma MUMBY, dau. of John MUMBY, Jr. of Nyack, N. Y., Five children.

P. O. address, Nyack, N. Y.

QUESTIONS?

Finding the Maiden Name

Marriage Record Other Records
Where and when married Evidence of marriage
Women’s death record Children’s records
Census Military
Learn About the Husband
Local History
Settlement patterns Families in the neighborhood
Educate Yourself

• About early settlers
• About migrations in and out
• About boundary and name changes
• Families in the area by time period

Ann Grosvenor of Pomfret, Conn.

Born about 1687
• Married about 1707 based on birth of first child, but no marriage record
• Births of children listed as "d." or "s." of Ebenezer and Ann
• Ebenezer Grosvenor of Roxbury, came to Pomfret in 1700 with his mother, Esther (or Hester)

Early Settlement

• Land in Pomfret was purchased in 1686 by 12 men from Roxbury, Massachusetts, but not settled until 1699
• Woodstock, just north of Pomfret, was purchased by 39 men from Roxbury at the same time and settled immediately (1686)
Births of Ann’s in Roxbury (1685-1689)

- Ann Baker, d. Robert and Mary, 8 June 1685
- Ann White, d. Benjamin, 4 July 1685
- Anna Lyon, d. Thomas and Abigail, 28 April 1689
- Anne Massey, d. John and Sarah, 11 October 1687

Settlers of Woodstock (with ages)

- Aspinwall, Peter (22)
- Bacon, Joseph (20)
- Bacon, Thomas (28)
- Bowen, Henry (53)
- Bowen, John (24)
- Bagby, John (21)
- Bagby, Joseph (46)
- Butcher, John (25)
- Chandler, John (51)
- Chandler, John Jr. (21)
- Corbin, James (21)
- Craft, Samuel (40)
- Davis, Jonathan (21)
- Davis, Matthew (22)
- Eaves, John (23)
- Gaze, Nathaniel (23)
- Griffith, Benjamin (19)
- Griffith, George (25)
- Holmes, John (25)
- Johnson, Nathaniel (49)
- Leavens, John (46)
- Lyon, Thomas (50)
- Lyon, William Sr (65)
- Lyon, William Jr (34)
- Marcy, John (24)
- Maynard, John (23)
- Morris, Ebenezer (22)
- Morris, Edward (56)
- Peacock, Samuel (29)
- Peck, Jonathan (40)
- Peck, Samuel (40)
- Sabin, Benjamin (40)
- Sanger, Nathaniel (34)
- Watson, Andrew (23)

Births of Ann’s in Roxbury Matched to Settlers

- Anna Lyon, d. Thomas and Abigail, 28 April 1689
- Anne Massey, d. John and Sarah, 11 October 1687

Next steps, probate of fathers?
Consider Boundary Changes

- Familiarize with the geography and county boundaries of a state; this dictates where to look for records
- Map of US
  - [https://www.mapofus.org/](https://www.mapofus.org/)
- Newbury Atlas of Historical County Boundaries
  - [https://digital.newberry.org/ahcb/](https://digital.newberry.org/ahcb/)

Record Dates – Two Counties

- Check Family Search Research Wiki for County specific dates ([www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org))

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Finding the Neighbors

- Census
- Counties Histories

In conclusion . . .

- Remember – your ancestress had a life and a name prior to her marriage
- When she married, her family didn’t “go away” – they probably lived in the area
- Search all existing records that might reveal the wife’s maiden name