Session 3: Strategies for Determining Origins

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Cluster Research (Use the F.A.N.)

1. Family Members-
    a. Those with the same surname
    b. Others too: In-Laws, Cousins, Grandparents, Great-Grandparents, and step siblings
2. Associates-
    a. Persons: politics, religion, education, and occupation
    b. Places: place of birth or death
3. Neighbors-
    a. Persons who share the same address
    b. Persons from the same neighborhood, town, or county
    c. Same cemetery plot or neighboring church pews

Witnesses and Sponsors

Look for members of your ancestor's F.A.N.

- Witnessing a legal document (ex. land deed, will)
- Witness to a wedding
- Godparents at a baptism
- Providing an affidavit for a military file or homesteading claim
- Providing sworn testimony in court (ex. naturalization petition)

Keeping Organized

- Five generation charts
- Family group sheets
- Family tree software
- Annotated research log

Using Cluster Research for Immigrant Origins

- Step #1 – Start with the known
    o Gather as much information found in the U.S. as possible
    o Review vital records, census records, naturalization records, draft registration cards, etc.
- Step #2 – Pull together family members
    o Use census records to identify any family members that immigrated to the U.S. besides your ancestor (siblings, parents)
    o Examine neighbors
    o Identify maiden name of mother
    o Review church records for godparents/sponsors/witnesses

by NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

- Step #3 – Track siblings forward
  - Research where siblings migrated to
  - Use newspapers, probate records, land deeds to locate details
- Step #4 – Research in Ireland
  - Use web sites like RootsIreland and IrishGenealogy.ie to locate vital records, baptisms for family members identified

Identify and Research Candidates

- When the paper trail goes cold, identify candidates with same surname living within the same townland or county of your ancestor
- Identify the candidate's family members
- Track their children forward
  - Look for those that emigrated. Where did they end up?
  - Look for marriages on sites like www.irishgenealogy.ie and rootsireland.ie

RootsIreland.ie Tips

- In addition to searching by county, search by parish (if known) to narrow results
- Enter an approximate year or leave blank to see all results
- If no baptism or birth record found, search for marriage records to help verify parents
- Note: These are transcriptions. Always seek out the original record.

IrishGenealogy.ie Tips

- This site has the civil records for births, marriages, and deaths. For church records, use RootsIreland first.
- Use the more search options feature for an advanced search screen
- Search by mother's surname for births
- Search by 2nd party to locate a specific marriage if you know of one party's surname
- Click on image to see the original – has more details than the transcription. If image not available, you can purchase a copy. See web site for details.
- Use the 1851 townland index to identify registration district for searches
  - Link: https://www.irishancestors.ie/search/townlands/index.php

Social Media and Blogging

- Ask questions in Facebook groups to gain assistance with your genealogy brick wall
- Use county specific Facebook groups to identify local resources. Groups are listed on Katherine Wilson's genealogy Facebook group list - socialmediagenealogy.com/genealogy-on-facebook-list/
- Interact with other genealogists on platforms like Twitter and Instagram
- Tell a story about your ancestor through social media or blogging – this is cousin bait!

Online Conference: Finding Irish Origins: A County is Not Enough!
March 2022

Publications

Belmonte, Jeanne. *Using Catholic Records.* (Boston, New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2017)

Daly, Marie E. *Genealogist's Handbook for Irish Research.* (Boston, New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2016)

Grenham, John. *Tracing Your Irish Ancestors.* (Dublin, Gill Books, 2019)

Wayne, Debbie Parker. Advanced Genetic Genealogy: Techniques and Case Studies. (Cushing, Texas, Wayne Research, 2019)

Websites

- American Ancestors Databases - www.americanancestors.org
- Ancestry www.ancestry.com
- ArchiveGrid https://researchworks.oclc.org/archivegrid/
- Facebook www.facebook.com
- FamilySearch www.familysearch.org
- GenealogyBank www.genealogybank.com
- Instagram – www.instagram.com
- RootsIreland – rootsireland.ie
- Twitter – www.twitter.com

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