

# Breaking Down Brick Walls: Strategies for Success

## *Broadening Your Scope: Employing Ancestral Associates in Your Research*

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### **Associates**

Reasons to Research Associates:

1. Tracing group migrations to identify a place of origin
2. Discovering more about military service
3. Study of a particular place or event - associated places can be important
4. Develop a more holistic view of an ancestor

Your Ancestor's Network:

Who – Noting individuals that appear in your ancestor's records

What – One event? Multiple?

Where – Did their interactions occur in one place? Multiple?

When – For how long were the individuals associated?

Why – Why were they interacting?

### **Networks to Consider: Things to note**

1. Religious
  - a. Pastors/ministers/priests/rabbis, etc.
  - b. Witness to religious family events
  - c. Godparents
  - d. Church organizations
2. Educational
  - a. People that graduated in the same class
  - b. Participants in the same sports or clubs
  - c. Friends that signed your ancestor's yearbook
  - d. Teachers or professors in their field at the time they attended
  - e. Colleagues that published with an ancestor
3. Occupational
  - a. When searching census records, note those close by with the same or similar occupation
  - b. Research the employers/owners of the institutions where your ancestor worked
  - c. Labor Unions or Workmen's Organizations
  - d. Note the history of the industry in the area (this could reveal if they moved there for that occupation)

4. Social
  - a. Fraternal organizations
  - b. Genealogical organizations
  - c. Hobbies and/or hunting organizations
5. Political
  - a. Political Organizations
  - b. Political involvement of your ancestor (if any)
  - c. Tribal affiliations
  - d. Loyalists
6. Place and/or migration
  - a. Did your family reside in the same place for a number of generations? What other families did as well?
  - b. Did your family migrate somewhere? What other families made the same migration?

## Organizing and Processing Information

Tip: Limit your scope first and then expand if necessary

Find a method that works for you! You want it to do the following:

1. Make it easy to collect information
2. Be “at-a-glance” so you can easily compare information
3. Document where information came from
4. Provides a section for noting anomalies

## Migration Studies

- *The Great Migration Begins Immigrants to New England 1620-1633* - Robert Charles Anderson
- *The Great Migration: Immigrants to New England 1634-1635* - Robert Charles Anderson
- *Early New England Families 1641-1700* - Alicia Crane Williams
- *The Settlers of the Beekman Patent* - Frank J. Doherty

### **Example 1: Migration Associates**

Johann Phillip Meckel immigrated to Texas from Germany in the 1840s. The task was to determine where in Germany he originated. Examining a family he was associated with helped to pinpoint this location.

- In 1870, Phillip Meckel had a housekeeper living in his household by the name Anna Nickel. She was a few years older than Phillip and was also born in Prussia.
- Based on his marriage record, his wife’s maiden name was Kloes, so it was not apparent that she was related to Anna Nickel.
- Working further back, the 1850 U.S. Federal Census recorded a John and Anna Nickel residing just a few doors down from Phillip Meckel and his family. Since both were in the area so early, we speculated that they migrated together.

- The information on Phillip Meckel's voyage only recorded that he arrived from Germany on the *Herschel* in October 1845. His destination was the Fisher-Miller Grant (a clue that he was a part of the planned migration of Germans to Texas in the 1840s).
- John Nickel also arrived on the *Herschel* in October 1845. His entry gives place of origin as Bricken. Tip: Search for others that made the same voyage on the same ship. It's likely they knew each other.
- We know Meckel received a land grant. The land grant documents for both men record their arrival as October 1845.
- Locating more records on the planned migration, we were able to identify Phillip Meckel's place of origin also as Bricken, Nassau.

### **Example 2: The Mystery of George T. Perry**

Researching associates can also help you fill in gaps in your research. In this case, George T. Perry was born in Boston, married in Philadelphia, died and was buried in Philadelphia, and his funeral was held in Weymouth, Mass.

- What was George T. Perry's connection from Philadelphia to Weymouth, Mass.? Family must have been involved.
- Initial research focused on associates and occupational networks, including George T. Perry's lithography job with P.S. Duval & Sons.
- Why was there no more information regarding George T. Perry in Philadelphia? He and his wife died young; their children were cared for by his wife's family. Therefore, any information on his parentage stopped with his death.
- We eventually found a land deed mentioning his brother's wife and showing the family that George T. Perry belonged to.

## **Bibliography**

Geue, Chester W. and Ethel H. *A New Land Beckoned: German Immigration to Texas, 1844-1847*, (Waco: Texan Press, 1972)

Galveston Immigration Database [www.galvestonhistory.org](http://www.galvestonhistory.org)

Texas General Land Office: Land Grants <https://www.glo.texas.gov/land/state-lands/land-for-sale/index.html#search>

### **Census Records:**

- **United States**- 1790, 1800, 1810, 1820, 1830, 1840, 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940, and 1950 (1890 U.S. Federal Census missing due to fire)
  - [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)
  - [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
  - [www.americanancestors.org](http://www.americanancestors.org)
- **Canada**- 1825, 1831, 1842, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1906, 1911, 1916, and 1921
  - [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)
  - [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)



- NEHGS microfilm
- **UK-** 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911, 1921
  - [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)
  - [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
  - <https://www.findmypast.com/>
- **Scotland-** 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911
  - [www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk)
- **Ireland-** 1901 and 1911
  - <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/>

### Land Records:

Maintained on the local level (county or town), these records can be found through searches using online databases, microfilm, transcription form, or the record may still be on local level.

- **Grantor-** Individual(s) selling property
- **Grantee-** Individual(s) buying property

Some land record websites and repositories:

- [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- Family History Library
- NEHGS Library

<https://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/default.aspx> (Federal land)

### Newspaper Databases:

Genealogy Bank [www.genealogybank.com](http://www.genealogybank.com)

Newspaper Archive [www.newspaperarchive.com](http://www.newspaperarchive.com)

Chronicling America <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>

Massachusetts Historical Newspapers <https://www.mass.gov/doc/list-of-historical-newspapers-in-the-state-librarys-collections/download>

Historical Newspapers Online Guide <http://www.library.illinois.edu/hpnl/newspapers/historical.php>