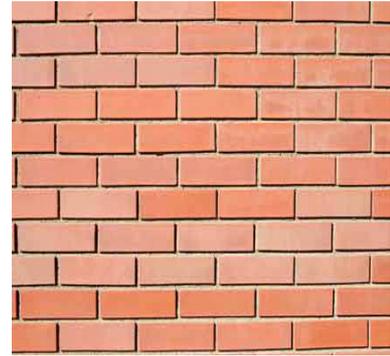


## **BACKING THROUGH THE BRICK WALL**

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When we are researching, we move from the known to the unknown; from father, to grandfather to great-grandfather and so on. We do this because it is the easiest and also the best way to be sure we have the correct information. Finding the PROOF of someone's parentage is usually definitive. This works until we hit that brick wall!

AFTER we have tried all the recommended, usual approaches to brick walls we become desperate enough to try something else. Start with a couple you know and researching ALL their descendants.

Many professional genealogists consider descendancy research to be more difficult than pedigree research. Each individual has exactly 2 parents. That is a no-brainer. But each individual may have any number of progeny. How do you know you have all of them?

There are risks in descendancy research. But it is worth trying!

It can help you round out the information on the family members you already have. You may find out facts or stories that are fascinating!

You might discover the family member who actually has that proverbial Family Bible with everything having been written into it as the events happened with full names, dates and locations.

You might contact relatives now living in some exotic locations.

You might find that some genetic disease shows in some family members. Keep track of causes of death whenever you can find them.

Or, possible organ donors, should you ever need something like that.

## How To Do It

Watch out for “red herrings” - people with the same name, someone Famous with your name, other people on your pedigree chart not part of this research effort. Stay focused!

Assume nothing! Check everything you find. Keep good documentation

## Compiled Sources

Read, read, read! Read published family histories on your ancestor’s surname even if the geography is not quite the same. Or the spelling. “Brown” is the same as “Browne” until you prove otherwise. Read Histories of the Town, County or State where your person was last found. Check the ads as well as the articles. Check Internet sites. Yeah, you had done that but do it little differently. Anything you find is a CLUE! You still have to prove it – but you have more than you had before!

## Census - again

Go back and look at the census pages again. Review all the information on that household. Be sure you know all about everyone listed! On the 1850 & 1860 the biggest clue is the birth location. Who else was born there? Gives you a clue to a place to investigate!

## Obituaries

Obituaries can be awesome! You may have a copy, stored with a death certificate, but go back and read the whole thing, if it is one of the old, wordy ones. Watch the names of the children of the deceased. Females can be disguised with their husband’s name! Fine! That gives some info on other people to try to find and contact!

Where there is a will there is a way!

Wills can be amazing! The old hand written ones may say anything! Look at the date the will was signed and the death date – how long in between? What could have happened? Did the maker really sign – or just make a mark? Sometimes the

writer gives his name, and then says “son of.....”. Does he say “wife” or “late wife”. Sometimes the writer says “my wife, daughter of ....” and there you have that maiden name you wanted!! The writer might give one or more first names and then say “children of my deceased son/daughter .....” and you have information of a death of a child and existence of grandchildren. They were loved enough to be in the will, maybe they (or their descendants) have some information. But a will does not always list all the children someone might have had. Witnesses may not be recipients, but they would not be present if they were not somehow close to the family. Many times if it is the husband making the will it is his wife’s brothers witnessing. If you are still wishing for her maiden name – that could be the clue you need. There can be lots of clues in a will.

#### Church records

Church records might have more than the names and dates of the baptism, marriage or death. Marriages mostly can have information such as residence towns for both groom and bride, parent’s names, occupation of the groom and marriage type. If it is a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> marriage for the bride; what name is she listed under? Her maiden name, or the previous husband? Big difference!!!

#### Look again

These sources are ones you probably looked at before; but now you can look at them from a different perspective. Something you saw before, now makes a very different impression.

Don’t be surprised or discouraged if you find you have been following the trail of wrong people! That is one reason descendency researching is a desperate move – and not the best way to research. But if you have tried everything else .....