



Volume 26 Issue 8

August 2015

SILICON VALLEY COMPUTER GENEALOGY GROUP

PastFinder

Crossing the Pond



Bridge of Tears Gaelic monument (Muckish Gap, Gweedore, County Donegal, Ireland). Translation: "Friends and Relations of the person who was emigrating would come this far. Here they separated. This is the Bridge of Tears." Photograph by [Joseph Mischyshyn](#) (Geograph.co.uk, Wikimedia Commons)

By Janet Brigham

Consider a few scenarios — only a handful of the millions of stories of immigrants from the British Isles to North America.

These scenarios from my own family history are not exceptional, but they are useful examples:

1. 'Plantations of religion'

1635: An 11th great-grandfather, a Puritan, immigrated from the North of England to Massachusetts. He married within a couple of years and raised a family. His voyage and resettling were part of a great wave of immigration from England to the Colonies, the first major wave but hardly the last. He was cited at least once for letting his pigs run loose.

From the Library of Congress website on Religion and the Founding of the American Republic:

Many of the British North American colonies that eventually formed the United States of America were settled in the seventeenth century by men and women, who, in the face of European persecution, refused to compromise passionately held religious convictions and fled Europe. The New England colonies, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland were conceived and established "as plantations of religion."

Perhaps we do not always recognize the depth of our religious beliefs and practices until they are denied us. Few of us in the United States experience the persecution experienced by those who fled to the Colonies to escape it.

We have searched to determine whether these and our other Puritan ancestors went on to persecute those with beliefs different from theirs. So far, we haven't found that — but we did learn that Puritans persecuted Quakers.

2. Church building

In the mid-1600s, a religiously inclined man from Essex, England, gained permission to settle on Aquidneck Island, the largest island in Rhode Island.

Another man, who might be his son, was ordained a minister in the Baptist

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Outside and Inside

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Whadya think this is?

Whadya think this is? (*Answer is on page 8.*)

- A. Religious icons from an Irish church
- B. Vintage earrings
- C. Good-luck bracelet charms
- D. Vintage button studs

Crossing the Pond (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

Church. He left the First Baptist Church and formed a Second Baptist Church, where he served as pastor for some years. He moved in 1666 to form another church, where he was pastor until his death in 1710. Sources differ regarding this church-building fellow. Was he influenced by Roger Williams? Was he actually our ancestor? Great questions, and maybe someday we'll find answers.

3. Which side of the Revolution?

A German family immigrating in the mid-1700s to New York found themselves fighting for the Colonies in the American Revolution within a couple of decades. It is possible that in fighting against the British, they also fought against their fellow Germans. During the Revolution, Britain's King George III was able to recruit German troops and mercenaries partly because he was also the Elector of Hanover.

4. Canada-bound

A Scottish family (perhaps Scots-Irish, but accounts differ) apparently immigrated from Scotland to Canada after a Scot married a woman from Normandy. We have no idea how they met. A son was born in 1808 in Lower Canada. The father died in Scotland in 1848. So many unanswered questions! Did the couple immigrate to Canada and return back to Scotland? We haven't researched this family yet.

5. Dutch/French/English/Canadian/

One family line that may have been in England for a time had murky beginnings. Some now claim it was a French Huguenot line, others say a Dutch line with no French beginnings, and all we really know is that the family showed up in North Carolina before the Revolution and didn't leave information about where they originated. Thanks to a Society of Gene-

alogists collection in London, we found the surname among Huguenots seeking refuge in London's Threadneedle Church.

It makes sense that when a group is fleeing persecution from country to country, they might not leave a broad trail of breadcrumbs.

6. Relocating to Canada

The extended family of two Irish orphan boys sought and gained permission from the British government to immigrate to Upper Canada in 1819. By encouraging Canadian settlement by British subjects, Britain hoped to prevent Americans from invading and subsuming Canada, as they had attempted previously. The boys' extended family voyaged to Canada and settled on farm land. At least one of the boys migrated to the American Midwest, and one of his sons married a descendant of the German immigrants from scenario 3. They homesteaded in Idaho Territory — their daughter, my father's mother, was born in a covered wagon somewhere on the way to Idaho. Intrepid people in a big country.

7. Religion, again

Fast-forward to 1843. A family living in Buckinghamshire, England, converted to a new American religion. Many thousands of such converts emigrated to the United States. The parents and some grown children in this family joined the larger group of converts, taking a two-month voyage on the *Swanton* from Liverpool, England, to New Orleans, Louisiana, where they then headed up the Mississippi River to join their fellow converts.

Fast-forward again, and another group from the same family made the same voyage, this time in 1854 on the *Windermere*. The eight-week voyage was beset by a smallpox outbreak, with 39 cases and ten

(Continued on page 3)

Crossing the Pond (continued)



Immigrants at Castle Garden, New York City, 1866. Wood engraving in "Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper," 20 January 1866, vol. 21, p. 280-281. (Library of Congress, Wikimedia Commons)

(Continued from page 2)

deaths — a malady “suddenly checked in answer to prayer,” according to an account in a religious publication called *Millennial Star*.

Perhaps one reason we use a benign phrase such as *crossing the pond* to refer to trans-Atlantic migration to North America is because it helps us trivialize the process enough that we can wrap our brains around it. In our day, we are used to moving from place to place, but not the way our ancestors left their homelands and took lengthy high-risk ship voyages to reach the uncertainty of North America.

Historian Bernard Bailyn, in *The peopling of British North America: An introduction* (1988) a book still quoted and recommended, referred to the “peopling” of the Americas as —

... the greatest population movement in early modern history, and yet, despite all the recent writing on early American history, our understanding of this great westward transfer of people is a blur, lacking in structure, scale, and detail. We know only in the vaguest way who the hundreds of thousands of individuals who settled in British North America were, where precisely they came from, why they came, and how they lived out their lives. The few patches of concrete information we have bring out by contrast the vastness

of our general ignorance (pp. 8-9).

Historians including Brandeis University’s David Hackett Fischer and Carleton University’s Bruce S. Elliott have brought clarity to the “blur” that Bailyn described.

In a lengthy but surprisingly readable tome titled *Albion’s Seed*, Fischer described four major British “folkways” in America. He addressed issues of interest to genealogists, including intergenerational family naming patterns that varied according to the areas of origin and time periods of immigration. He also discussed family life practices such as family structure, child-rearing, marriage, gender roles, death, religion, education, food, clothing, liberty sports, work, time usage, money, status, migration, settlement, and order.

In short, Fisher’s work described life as it was in Britain and as it became in North America. His other works include *Paul Revere’s Ride*, a detailed account far more compelling and enlightening than the literary account (i.e., the familiar “Listen my children and you shall hear”). For the story of Paul Revere, history trumps poetry.

A complementary approach to grasping our ancestors’ historical roots and migratory patterns is that of Elliott, whose work has focused on Canadian set-

(Continued on page 4)

The upcoming all-day October 10 seminar **Discovering Our Ancestors' Records** is approaching quickly.

The seminar will be free and open to the public. Participants with any level of genealogy experience — from beginners to experts — are welcome. Preregistration is recommended, to make sure that adequate seating and seminar materials can be provided.

The October 10 seminar will be at the Quince meetinghouse, 875 Quince Ave., Santa Clara, California, from 9 A.M. to 4:15 P.M.

Register by clicking through the registration link at www.svcgg.org. Only a name and an email address are needed for registration. Those without email access can telephone SVC GG through the listing on the last page of this newsletter.

Keynote speaker for the opening session will be Rodney DeGiulio, executive vice president for records at FamilySearch.

SVC GG seminars are always free of charge. Persons of any race, any ethnicity, and any faith are welcome. Adults and children ages 12 and older are invited to participate in the seminar. Babysitting service for younger children will not be available.

SVC GG will contact registrants by email regard-

ing lunch options, a seminar syllabus, directions and maps, and seminar updates. The building will be open from 8 A.M. that morning. A lunch will be available for pre-purchase, or participants can go out for lunch or bring a sack lunch (which can be refrigerated).

A seminar syllabus with handouts from the presentations will be available for purchase. Registrants will be notified by email of its availability and cost.

Classes will cover numerous types of records for genealogy, including census, land, immigration, cemetery, and vital records. Other classes will cover transcribing records; and using family documents, newspapers, and obituaries.

Family history and personal database software tutors will be available in the Santa Clara Family History Center.

A selection of RootsTech 2015 conference videos will be available in English, Mandarin, and Spanish.

Co-hosting this seminar with the Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group will be the Santa Clara and Los Altos Family History Centers. The seminar is part of the worldwide RootsTech Family Discovery Day series under the auspices of FamilySearch.



Crossing the Pond (continued)

tlement. His book *Irish migrants in the Canadas: A New Approach* (1988) was a “microstudy” of 775 families who came to Canada between 1815 and 1855.

An unusual aspect of Elliott’s approach is that (in his words) “it embodied a story that had left very little in the way of written, literary remains or secondary commentary. The overall narrative had to be pieced together by tracing the individual experiences. . . . The patterns that could be teased out of the individual stories formed the structure of their collective or group narrative” (p. 244).

In this sense, those of us who are tracing family immigrations often draw hypotheses from the documented snippets left behind. As with Elliott’s “microstudy,” we assemble the larger picture from the pieces of information we find.

One immigration story comes to mind: A few years

ago, a new Family History Center patron indicated that he wanted to trace his father’s ancestry in a British colony outside of North America.

He used British census information and New York passenger arrival lists to find where an immigrant ancestor lived and when he arrived in New York City. As it turned out, the ancestor came to New York the first time as a stowaway and was sent back home. Weeks later, he arrived again, this time as a seaman. That second time, he apparently simply walked off the boat and melted into New York City without formally immigrating.

His descendants have had successful, fruitful lives in North America.

Whatever the time period, whatever the immigration wave, moving to the Americas probably required motivation, means, and tenacity.



Ask the Doctor

Looking backup-ward

Q I used to have no sympathy for people who lost all their electronic genealogy files in a computer crash — until it happened to me. I know I should back up everything, but there's so much of it. How do I manage all the digital devices — iPad, laptop, desktop, cell phone, backup drives, digital camera? Staying backed up seems beyond me.

Ah, yes, the cry of the overwhelmed genealogist. My late father once turned a piece of PVC pipe into an elk whistle that he — and only he — could make sound like an elk. But who can imitate the wail and whimper of the overwhelmed genealogist? (And, moreover, who would *want* to?)

Not to worry, it's not as unapproachable as it may seem. Try following these steps, starting with a paper (or file) that you label *Digital* and divide into five columns:

Column 1: Make a list of all the electronic devices where data are stored. Data can refer to photos, documents, scans, email, or anything else that's stored digitally. This is column 1. Include everything including flash drives, backup drives, and computers. As your list grows, you might initially feel overwhelmed, but then you can have a sense of resolution knowing you've listed it all, and it's contained.

Your list then becomes a checklist. As you figure out how to back up each device, check it off your list. Cell phone? Back up to a computer hard drive. Tablet computer? Back up to a computer hard drive. And so forth.

You then will back up your computer hard drive — ideally, in more than one way. An external drive can back up your computer in case your computer fails. But you also need an off-site backup in case everything fails. Backup drives do fail.

A time-tested strategy is the 3-2-1 redundancy rule:

- Have at least **three** copies of everything, in different locations. (*Not* three copies of the same thing, all in the same folder.) This will prevent a single disaster, such as a hard-drive failure, from destroying all of your copies.
- Have these copies in **two** different formats, such as print and digital images, or a copy on your hard drive and a copy you put on an external

drive that does not live next to your computer. To be on the safe side, use formats that are not likely to go extinct at the same time (such as paper and an external drive, or a digital image and a print of a photo).

- Store **one** of those copies off-site. If you live on the San Andreas Fault, you might want to make sure all of your copies are not on the San Andreas Fault. Or, perhaps not near Mount St. Helens or Hurricane Alley.

One way to apply this strategy would be to scan paper documents, store the scanned images on your computer, and have an automated service back up your computer daily.

Authors such as Denise May Levenick (aka the Family Archivist) have written books to help you strategize how to extend this storage approach to all of your family artifacts and documents.

In short, your strategy for backing up all of your digital devices is to frequently copy the files (photos, documents, information) from the device to some other location, then to back up that location frequently.

To avoid losing your contact list from your phone, for example, you might use the free backup remote storage that sometimes comes with a phone. Or sync your phone with your desktop, then back up your desktop. Whatever works.

Be smart. If you have photos on SD cards from a digital camera, do a double backup of the images from the SD card before erasing the card. Back up the card to your computer and external drive, then to a Cloud backup service before you delete the photos from the card to make room for new photos.

Buy an extra SD card, or maybe take fewer photos for a day or two. Just don't clear your SD card until it is thoroughly backed up.

The Doctor has it on good authority that Dropbox and similar file-sharing sites are not designed for backup. Some people use them as Cloud storage, but experts indicate that's not the best approach. Instead, arrange for secure, regular backup by a remote storage service such as Backblaze, Carbonite, Mozy, or one of many others. You can still use Dropbox for file sharing. Use tools as they were designed to be used.

Imagine the worst, and plan accordingly. The worst probably won't happen, but you'll be prepared if the next-worst does. 

How I found it Aunt Betty's well-documented vacation

By Richard Rands

While tidying up some loose ends on a recent project, I came across a notation I had made earlier on one of my census analysis worksheets for the family of Henry Carlton “Carl” Pierce of Meriden Township, LaSalle County, Illinois.

My research had found that Carl was born in 1889 in Cooperstown, New York, and married Marjorie Smith in December 1917. Marjorie was born in 1890 in nearby Earlville, LaSalle County, Illinois. My census analysis followed the family first in the 1920 U.S. Census and then the 1930 U.S. Census, when they had two children, Marian and Chad, ages nine and seven.

It was on the entry for the 1940 U.S. Census that I made the notation indicating something that seemed odd to me, but not totally out of the ordinary.

In the 1920 and 1930 census entries, Marjorie was listed as Carl’s wife, one year younger than Carl, as one would expect from their 1889 and 1890 birth years, both born in Illinois. Yet in the 1940 census, Carl’s wife was listed as an Elizabeth, two years younger than Carl and born in New York. The two-year age difference would not normally cause concern, but the different given name and birthplace led me to note that some extra research was needed. It had the telltale signs of a second marriage.

My first step was to check out Carl’s World War II Draft Registration record listed among the links of suggested records at Ancestry.com. The card, from the 1942 draft campaign, listed the name of the person who would always know Carl’s address as Mrs. Marjorie Pierce – fairly strong evidence that Carl had not remarried an Elizabeth before 1940. I could not uncover a marriage record that would explain the Elizabeth listed as Carl’s wife in 1940. Marjorie died in 1983. I checked online newspaper collections, but

nothing appeared to resolve the conflict.

Fortunately, I had one great means of finding an answer. I knew one of Carl’s granddaughters, who grew up down the street from Carl’s home. She knew Grandpa Carl and Grandma Marjorie well and had been in their home often. We don’t always have the luxury of a resource who knew the people we are researching.

I showed her the 1940 census record listing Elizabeth as the wife of her grandfather. She was certain her grandfather had married only once – she mentioned the death dates of Carl and Marjorie and said she’d been at their funerals. So who was Elizabeth?

Without any hesitation, she said matter-of-factly, “Oh, that would be Aunt Betty.” Aunt Betty – the nickname for her Aunt Elizabeth – traveled by train from her home in Connecticut

to visit family in Illinois every year. Carl’s wife Marjorie “was probably out in the field tending the beets” or something. Aunt Betty was born two years after her brother, Carl, in New York. Her full maiden name was Elizabeth Clark Pierce.

It isn’t difficult to imagine any number of scenarios that might cause an enumerator to make this inaccurate entry. Unfortunately, this particular enumerator did not follow the instructions to mark who the informant was on this or any other entry in the enumeration district. All it would take is for the sixteen-year-old son or his dad to be the only ones home at the time with the visiting Aunt Betty, and the enumerator could have assumed she was immediate family.

In any case, I now had a plausible hypothesis. It could be difficult to validate but easy to disprove. The first step would be to search for Elizabeth in the 1940 census at her home in Ridgefield, Connecticut, where

(Continued on page 7)



The streamlined Twentieth Century Limited leaving Chicago, c. 1938 – perhaps with Aunt Betty on board (Wikimedia Commons)

How I found it (continued)

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|----------|---|--|---|-----|---|---|----|---|----|-----|-----|----------|----------|
| Pierce, Henry C. | Head | 0 | | π | yes | M | W | 40 | M | 28 | No | yes | New York | New York |
| Marjory | Wife-H | | | X | | F | W | 39 | M | 27 | No | yes | Illinois | Illinois |
| Marian | Daughter | | | X | | F | W | 9 | S | | yes | | Illinois | New York |
| Chad B. | Son | | | X | | M | W | 7 | S | | yes | | Illinois | New York |

1930 census entry for Carl Pierce in Meriden, Illinois, showing wife Marjorie (Ancestry image)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|------|---|---|---|----|---|----|----------------|----|----------|
| Pierce H. C. | Head | 0 | M | W | 50 | M | No | C ₂ | 50 | Illinois |
| Elizabeth | Wife | 1 | F | W | 48 | M | No | C ₄ | 70 | New York |

1940 census entry for Carl Pierce with "wife" Elizabeth (Ancestry image)

(Continued from page 6)

she lived with her husband, Henry King McHarg. Surely Elizabeth could not be in two places more than 900 miles apart at the same time! I looked – but there was Elizabeth McHarg, born in 1891 in New York. Elizabeth was marked as the informant.

Hypothesis shot down? Not really. The story was in the details.

Since Elizabeth visited family in Illinois often, I looked more closely at the circumstances of her life. Elizabeth was Henry McHarg's second wife and was 40 years younger than he. The McHarg family had been major players in the railroad and banking industries, so Henry was very well off. In 1940, he was 89 years old, and Elizabeth was 48.

Henry's five children from his first marriage had grown and left home; the household consisted of Henry, Elizabeth, a cook, a waitress, and two nurses. The nurses may have been caring for Henry – he died the next year. With a household of caregivers and domestic help, Elizabeth apparently had the freedom to travel.

I checked the enumeration dates of the censuses in Connecticut and Illinois. The McHarg household in Connecticut was enumerated on 10 April 1940, and the Pierce family in Illinois was enumerated on 20 April 1940 – a ten-day difference that meant Elizabeth could have been in both locations during the two census enumerations.

To be sure, I checked the rail travel Elizabeth

(Continued on page 8)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|----------|---|---|---|----|---|----|----------------|----|----------|
| McHarg Henry K. | Head | 0 | M | W | 89 | M | No | 214 | 30 | New York |
| Elizabeth C.P. | Wife | 1 | F | W | 48 | M | No | C ₄ | 70 | New York |
| Kangas Sophia | Cook | 7 | F | W | 45 | F | No | 3 | 3 | Finland |
| Multo Sigrid | Waitress | 7 | F | W | 40 | S | No | 6 | 4 | Finland |
| Luison Evelyn J. | Nurse | 7 | F | W | 35 | S | No | C ₂ | 56 | New York |
| Yore Olive | Nurse | 7 | F | W | 25 | S | No | C ₂ | 50 | New York |

1940 census entry for Elizabeth McHarg in Ridgefield, Connecticut (Ancestry image)

What didja think it was? Were ya right?

(Answer to question on page 2:) **D.** Vintage button studs, which might adorn a woman's shirt or blouse over buttonholes, also could be used as cufflinks; came in pairs. (Earrings? Ouch!)

Thanks to Melissa Schultz of JewelryRepairCompany.com for helping us identify these pieces of costume jewelry that have been passed down for at least two generations. Melissa specializes in identifying and repairing vintage costume jewelry. 

How I found it (continued)

(Continued from page 7)

might have used. Ridgefield, Connecticut, was near the border with New York, so it could have been a quick trip by rail to New York City. At that time the famous Twentieth Century Limited train ran between New York City and Chicago overnight in 16 hours,

Upcoming meetings

The Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group **meets monthly except December**, on the second Saturday of the month from 9 to 11 A.M. at the meetinghouse of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 875 Quince Ave., Santa Clara, California (see map at right).

8 August 2015, 9–11 A.M.

- British immigration to North America
- Real-time organizing, cataloging
- Reunion 11 for the Mac
- Reunion 11 basics
- Getting started in genealogy

12 September 2015, 9–11 A.M.

- Wills and administrations
- Scanning photos and documents
- Reunion 11 for the Mac
- Reunion 11 basics
- Getting started in genealogy

10 October 2015, 9 A.M.—4:15 P.M.

Seminar: Discovering Our Ancestors' Records (see p. 4) 

arriving daily at 9 a.m. at Chicago's LaSalle Street station. From there it was another quick trip to Earlville, LaSalle County, a few miles from Meriden. Elizabeth could have made the trip in less than three days. She probably had the connections, the liberty, and the means to do it at least once a year — as her brother's granddaughter recalls.

One final check was to see if any of the local newspaper's society pages at either end of the journey made mention of Elizabeth's comings or goings. None showed up, but I did find mention in the Athens Messenger in Ohio of a McHarg family reunion the following September. I could not locate any connection between the Ohio McHargs and the New York McHargs, so that didn't help.

In any case, my hypothesis is still standing. My client is convinced it is valid. And until further proof one way or the other is uncovered, that is how I found it! 

About the Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group

SVCGG, the former Silicon Valley PAF Users Group, is a nonprofit group of more than 500 genealogy users. We are based in Silicon Valley in the Bay Area of northern California; members live all over the world.

SVCGG offers classes, seminars, and publications to help family his-

PastFinder
First place, Major Society Newsletter, 2013-14
First place, Local Society Newsletter, 2012
National Genealogical Society

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Meeting site has ample free off-street parking, with a wheelchair-accessible entrance at the front.

torians improve their skills in using technology for genealogy research.

PastFinder is published monthly except December. It is distributed at meetings to members and mailed to others after the meetings. Members can receive the newsletter digitally by emailed link. 