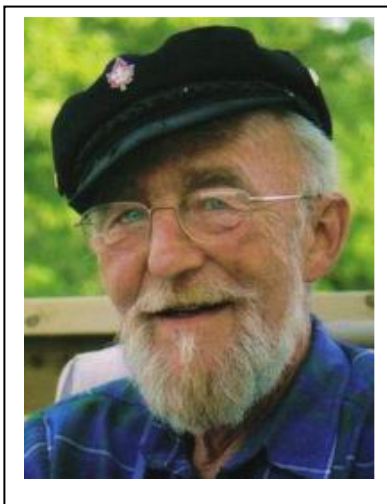


The Family Historian

Patrick Wohler

Column #78

Fun With a Map



Reader, Reva Dolgoy recently sent me on the hunt for a large scale map of Latvia. She had just learned the name of a birth village there from a relative's birth certificate and wanted to know exactly where it was.

The maps in my own collection had too small a scale to be helpful and the same was true for my Atlas. I was pretty sure that, if necessary, I could get one from the Latvian Embassy but I kept that as my contingency plan and soldiered on.

I found a Latvian Tourist website that had a great map with a scale of 1:50,000 and downloaded it as a JPEG. When I reduced the map sufficiently to print it, I couldn't read the text on it, so I put it on a floppy disc and took it to an office supply store.

They took a look at it and told me that it would cost \$35.00 to print it! I wasn't that desperate so I went back to my

computer and brought up the map at full size in a photo program. I then cropped it into sections that I felt would work within my printing constraints, saved the crops, and printed them out.

With scissors and tape, those nine pieces of paper grew into my map of Latvia. And, yes, the birth village shows up clearly.

Looking for a Burial

The other day a researcher contacted me for help in locating where an ancestor was buried. She had a family name and the town where the person was buried but wasn't able to get any closer than that. The town was Erin, a small town in Wellington County, Ontario. The problem was that despite its diminutive size, there are fifteen burial grounds in and around Erin.

A search of the Ontario Genealogical Society's Cemetery Ancestor database didn't turn up anything so I had a go at a very interesting site for cemetery locating: <http://www.islandnet.com/cgi-bin/ms2/jveinot/search>. This is a rich and useful site but when I entered the family name, town, county, etc., nothing turned up.

Erin is near the county line, so I thought maybe the burial was in the adjoining county and deleted the town name. Still nothing. I was getting a little anxious so I did a search for the whole province and added the soundex feature to the search so that even names that sounded like the one I was looking for would be found.

Bingo! I had seven hits and three different spellings of the name. Better yet, two of them were in Erin. The database provided family and given names, the cemetery name, the town, county, and the number of the publication from which the information was drawn.

Another section of the site provided contact information for the publishers of the publication, so the researcher could get right back to sources and more information on tombstone inscriptions, etc.. An altogether satisfactory outcome and another indication of better results with less information fed into the search engine. It is possible, after all, that the other burials with different spellings of the same-sounding name may be connected.

Passengers to Boston

Over one million immigrants entered the United States through the port of Boston between 1848 and 1891. If some of your ancestors might have been among them, there is a new research tool for you.

Volunteers are creating an online database from passenger manifests in the Massachusetts State Archives. If you get a hit for the name you are searching, you can click on it and you will get name, gender, age, country of origin, destination, travelling companions, occupation, ship name, and passenger list number.

The database is not yet complete but you can see what is currently available at: <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/arc/arcsrch/PassengerManifestSearchContents.html>.

I welcome comments, queries, and suggestions at: p_wohler@hotmail.com

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