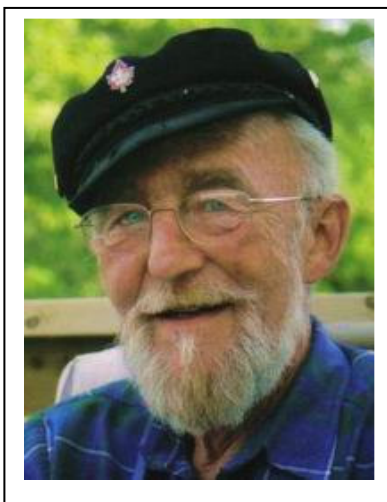


The Family Historian
Patrick Wohler

Column #94

Tearing Down Those Brick Walls



I recently had a fascinating e-mail from reader Barbara Baker. She had hit a brick wall in locating where, in County Antrim, Ireland, her 3X great grandfather had come from. I bet this sounds familiar to many readers.

The major facts in summary are that he came to Quebec 'at an early date' with his son, and died there. The son shows up in 1838 in Lennox and Addington County, Ontario, with his mother. Both of them died there. Three brothers of the original immigrant arrived in New York and settled in Pennsylvania. The Quebec Provincial Archives was unable to help.

Lets look at the 3X great grandfather. There are two websites to start with. It is possible that the Grosse Isle Quarantine Station might have a record of them if they arrived after 1832 . You can check them out at:

<<http://www.collectionscanada.ca/genealogy/index-e.html>> , select 'Databases' and then the Grosse Isle Database.

Another possibility is <www.inGeneas.com> . This is a pay site but you can do a search for free.

You can also check to see if he received a land grant in Quebec. The Quebec Family History Society can look this up for you. Their search fee is \$8.00. Their address is P.O. Box 1026, Pointe Claire, Quebec, H9S 4H9.

The reason for looking for the land grant is to locate him in a township and county so that you know where to look for records of his death and burial, cemetery transcriptions, and obits, all of which might give you a clue as to where he came from.

Another strategy is to focus on Antrim itself. Go to the Genuki site for Ireland at: <http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/irl/> and select 'Antrim'. There are a lot of links on this page to resources that just might be useful to you.

Rootsweb maintains Name Lists and County Bulletin Boards. There is no cost for these and you can see who else is researching the same name, perhaps other branches of your family, and you can post queries. To gain access to these go to: <<http://boards.ancestry.com/mbexec?htx=main&r=rw>> and you can find and select the Surname List and/or 'Ireland', 'Antrim' Board. I checked out the Antrim Board and found that it is very active, which increases your chances of success.

Since we know where his son and widow lived and when they died in Ontario, we can check for obituaries in the local newspaper of that time. The GenWeb page for the county is at: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~onlennad/> and they have a number of links that might be helpful.

To check out what newspapers were available in the area at the time we want, we can check with some of the links or go to Library and Archives Canada at: <<http://www.collectionscanada.ca/8/16/index-e.html>> and select 'Canadian Newspapers on Microform' . If there was no Napanee paper, then the Whig-Standard would be my next choice.

If none of this works, then I think it is time to concentrate on the siblings. I once traced an ancestor's parish in Cork from his brother's WW I service record. However, I am running out of space in this column so the search for the siblings will have to be dealt with in a later one.

Sometimes when we hit a brick wall it is because we are asking the right question at the wrong time. We really don't have enough preliminary information to support the search. This, again, highlights the need for a very methodical search backwards in time from what we know to what we want to know.