

# ROOTDIGGER

3rd Quarter July — September 2008

The Rootdigger is a publication of the Marion County Genealogical Society, a division of the non-profit Historic Marion County/ Ocala Preservation Society. Annual membership fee is \$15.00.

## How Do I Know I Have the Right Family?

by Michael John Neill

When families migrate from one area to another, it can be hard to determine if you have really located the same group of individuals. The difficulty is compounded if the last name and first names are relatively common. It's important to be certain that the "true" family has been located and that one has not mixed up families with similar names. Male cousins bearing the same first and last name are particularly easy to confuse.

One quick way to track families in the post-1850 era is through population census schedules. The listing of all household members facilitates the matching process, and every-name indexes make the use of these records much easier than before, especially when the residence is not known. However, the first close match on the list of results is not necessarily the correct family. All matches to the search terms should be analyzed and eliminated based upon what is known about the family. What appears to be the "right" entry must be compared in light of other records to determine if there really is consistency.

On the other hand, searches of databases must not be overly strict, as this can sometimes eliminate potential matches. I generally perform a variety of searches for individuals I am seeking, including some using Soundex and wild-card functionality. Sometimes it is easy to determine if the correct person has been found (the person has an unusual name, the person is living in the right location, names, ages, and birthplaces of family members match up, etc.). Other times it is not possible to make a definitive decision that the desired person has been located. When families are eliminated, the researcher should keep notes as to why these families were stricken from consideration.

Generally speaking, when searching online census databases it is helpful to track the type of search that is being performed as it is being performed. Key elements in this tracking are:



*Are they part of my family???????*

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### Special points of interest:

- *Verify your research*
- *Why do I act this way?*
- *Researching the maternal side.*

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## Genealogy Junky

by Linda Jean Shepherd, Ph.D.



*Checking out the latest census listing.*

*I even thought I had no family left, other than my brother.*



*A badge too many genealogists may wear.*

I'm a genealogical junky. It's mystifying, since my family never interested me. I was a scientist immersed in the physical world until the spirits of my ancestors demanded I find them. While other family members are delighted when I share what I've discovered, I'm the only addict in the family. I revel as the name of each new ancestor finds a resonance and place in my body. Knowing them, I feel different inside.

What lures homebodies like me on journeys across the globe in search of gravestones, wills, and church records? What is it about genealogy that makes normal people become obsessed, compelled to discover our ancestors' names? Addiction to genealogy is such a common affliction that online stores sell t-shirts proclaiming "Genealogy Addict." Helpful websites list the symptoms:

- \* You would rather read census schedules than a good book.
- \* Your idea of a great vacation is visiting cemeteries and historical societies.
- \* You have traced every one of your ancestral lines back to Adam and Eve, have it documented, and still don't want to quit.

I knew I was hooked when I found myself tracing the genealogy of the Maine Coon cat we inherited.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has tapped into the mysterious force that causes genealogical addiction and woven it into the fabric of its theology. They consider genealogical data collection a religious duty. In China, people compete to update genealogies burned by the Red Guard during the Cultural Revolution. Genealogy was so important to the Maori of New Zealand that they symbolically inscribed it in the form of moko (tattoos) on their bodies with an albatross's wing bone.

As I discover more about my forbears' lives, I better understand the emotional and psychological patterns that have been passed down to me alongside my DNA.

I've always been haunted by a sense of deprivation, which contrasts sharply with my comfortable material circumstances. I even thought I had no family left, other than my brother. That feeling of deprivation makes more sense, now that I know something about my ancestors' cumulative poverty and struggles: Irish potato famine immigrants; a great-grandmother who lost four children due to undernourishment; and an emaciated, half-blind uncle who was killed robbing a bank.

Now that I'm aware of the origin of certain beliefs and behaviors, I can release old dysfunctional patterns and make new choices. And as I heal my sense of deprivation, I imagine the healing passing to my relatives along the lines of time.

Through genealogy, I've discovered an abundance of family, including

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# Genealogy Junky

*continued*

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a second cousin, an only child of an only child, who believed she had no blood relatives left in the world. When I reunited her with two flesh-and-blood second cousins and a history of our family, she thanked me for "the best, most important gift" she'd ever received.

Genealogy creates webs of connection. The more I discover about my ancestors, the more of humanity I include in my family and the less justification I have for prejudice and intolerance. With each new name, the connections multiply--through time and space--linking me to bygone families as well as present-day cousins across the globe. Every family is woven into the tapestry of humankind, and understanding it gives me a larger perspective. Any vista of time can be reinterpreted when seen from another perspective. New visions of past, present, and future events create alternative routes to explore, expand, and heal.

I have the sense that what I learn in my life reverberates through time and impacts the souls of my ancestors as well as the descendants of our bloodline. Beneath all the cataloging of names and dates, there is something numinous about reweaving this web of family.

Some people derive a deep sense of interconnectedness with the universe through the revelations of quantum physics; I find it through my ancestors. Experiencing synchronicities and help from ancestors opens me to questioning the nature of reality. Where do my ancestors reside? Are the spiritual realms in other dimensions? What is the nature of time? What's the purpose of life? At a deep level, my addiction to genealogy is an expression of my innate desire for connection--to myself, to family, to humanity, to spiritual realms, and to the Creation.

I'm proud to be a genealogy junky, and I savor the delicious rush from each new discovery. Fortunately, I still have many more ancestral lines to trace before reaching Adam and Eve.

*Ancestry Daily News*

*Linda Jean Shepherd, Ph.D. - 4/28/2007 Copyright 2000, MyFamily.com*

## The Order of Things

A modern mother is explaining to her little girl about pictures in the family photo album:

"This is the geneticist with your surrogate mother. and here's your sperm donor, and your father's clone. This is me holding you when you were just a frozen embryo."

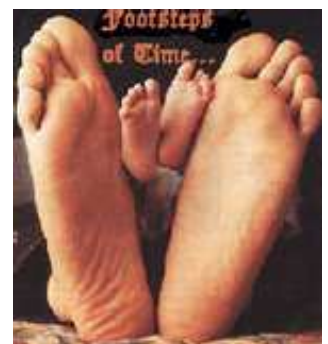
The curious girl pointed to a woman in one of the photos and said, "Who is that lady?"

"Oh," explained the mom, "The lady with the very troubled look on her face is your aunt; she's a genealogist."



*DNA and Genealogy blend together.*

*Genealogy creates webs of connection.*

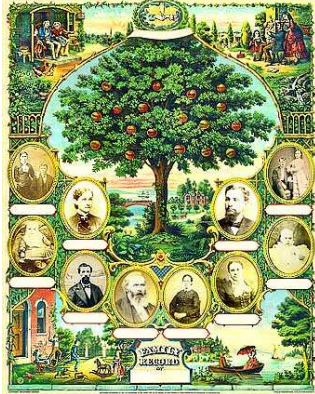


*Maybe the genealogy junky gene has been passed on.*



# How Do I Know I Have the Right Family?

*continued*



*One family's Tree.*

*Generally speaking, census enumerations on any family should not be viewed in isolation.*



*The 1900 census.*

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- The first and last names that were put in the search box
- Whether a Soundex option was used
- Whether a search was performed with wildcards
- What year of birth was used (and what range of years)
- What birthplace was used

Reasons for tracking the search include:

- It is impossible to effectively modify an unsuccessful search when one is not certain how one searched originally or how one searched last week.
- Searching the same static database in the same way will typically produce the same results.
- It is impossible to remember each combination of search techniques that was applied. The "correct" combination will always be overlooked. It's Murphy's Law applied to genealogy.

One quick and easy way to track your online searches is to make a spreadsheet with column headings for the various search boxes for the database being searched. This spreadsheet can be printed and written on while searching or those who are adept at toggling between computer windows can fill out their chart as they search. Personally, I prefer to fill out my chart of searches before I search, making certain no combination of terms was eliminated. Then I can use the chart to make certain I have conducted all the desired searches.

## **The Brices**

An earlier column mentioned the family of William and Anne Brice and how they were tracked in census records from Illinois to Kansas to Missouri between 1860 and 1900. As an example, let's look at how their entries were obtained and what leads me to believe I have the same family in four separate locations over four census enumerations.

Generally speaking, census enumerations on any family should not be viewed in isolation. (Space considerations do not allow us to include the complete analysis in this column.) Rather, other records should be utilized in order to determine if the tentative family structure and migration paths are supported by other documents. Wherever possible, obtain maps of all relevant areas to assist in viewing the family's overall migration path. Search for reasonable alternate spellings before assuming the "actual" family has been located and consider if there are alternate situations that could explain the records that have been found. We should search to see what is found, not search to prove an already determined conclusion.

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# How Do I Know I Have the Right Family?

*continued*

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## 1860 Census-Ursa Township, Adams County, Illinois

*William Brice, age 21, born Ireland, married within census year*

*Anne J., age 22, born Ireland, married within census year*

The reference to the marriage within the year caused me to search the Illinois State Marriage Index. An index entry appears for William Brice and Ann Jane Belford indicating an April of 1860 marriage. It seems very reasonable that this is the same couple, especially since there were no other marriages in the index for a William and Anne Brice (or any reasonable spelling variant).

## 1870 Census-Chili Township, Hancock County, Illinois

*William Brice, age 34, born Ireland*

*Ann, age 33, born Ireland*

*William, Jr., age 6, born Illinois*

*Mary A., age 4, born Illinois*

*Robert, age 1, born Illinois*

Chili Township in Hancock County, Illinois, is close to Ursa Township in Adams County. The ages of William and Ann are consistent with the earlier enumeration. In both cases, William is a farmer (it is important to note any extreme inconsistencies with occupation as well). The ages of the Brice children are consistent with an 1860 marriage. The initial census search was conducted for a William Brice (and Soundex variants) born in 1838 in Ireland, plus or minus five years.

## 1880 Census-Bruno, Butler County, Kansas

*William Brice, age 45, born Ireland*

*Anne J., age 48, born Ireland*

*William, age 16, born Illinois*

*Mary, age 14, born Illinois*

*Robert, age 11, born Illinois*

*Sarah J., age 9, born Illinois*

*James, age 6, born Illinois*

*John, age 2, born Kansas*

The family structure is consistent with the 1870 enumeration. The ages of the parents are off slightly from earlier enumerations, but not so far off as to warrant any special concern. The initial census search was conducted for a William Brice (and Soundex variants) born in 1838 in Ireland, plus or minus five years.

## 1900 Census-Grant Township, Caldwell County, Missouri

*William Brice, age 62 (born March 1838), Ireland*



*Old homestead in Europe*

*The ages of the parents are off slightly from earlier enumerations, but not so far off as to warrant any special concern*



*Family portraits are invaluable.*

*(Continued on page 6)*



# How Do I Know I Have the Right Family?

*continued*



Once translated, legal documents are excellent sources.

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*Ann, age 62 (born March 1838), Ireland*

*Jno. H. M., age 20 (born Mar 1880), Kansas*

An unexpected move of the family. However, this was the only "match" using our previous search terms that came even close to our desired family. Anna Brice's death certificate (obtained via the Missouri State Archives website) indicates that she was born in Ireland on 28 March 1836, the daughter of Daniel and Mary Jackson Belford. This is the same maiden name for the "known" Anne Brice, wife of William. Further research needs to be done, but it appears I have the same family.

## Wrapping It Up

- Perform searches that are not overly narrow so that close matches (which maybe the right family) are not overlooked.
- Constantly review information in light of already known information to be reasonably certain the same family has been located.
- Track what you do, so search terms can be modified as necessary.

## About the Author

*Michael John Neill is the Course I Coordinator at the Genealogical Institute of Mid America (GIMA) held annually in Springfield, Illinois, and is also on the faculty of Carl Sandburg College in Galesburg, Illinois. Michael is currently a member of the board of the Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS). He conducts seminars and lectures nationally on a wide variety of genealogical and computer topics and contributes to several genealogical publications, including Ancestry Magazine. You can e-mail him at [mjnrootdig@myfamily.com](mailto:mjnrootdig@myfamily.com) or visit his website at: [www.rootdig.com](http://www.rootdig.com), but he regrets that he is unable to assist with personal research.*

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*Further research needs to be done, but it appears I have the same family.*

# Speaking of Ancestors

The following was overheard at a recent high society party...

"My ancestry goes all the way back to Alexander the Great," said one lady. She then turned to a second woman and asked, "How far does your family go back?"

"I don't know," was the reply. "All of our records were lost in the flood."

## How many people in the US share your name:

Go to: [www.howmanyofme.com](http://www.howmanyofme.com)

- Census Search Results



*The Arc.*

# A Maternal Ancestry

*continued*

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In 1742 and 1744 Robert sold off all of "Shipley's Discovery" and then acquired a large farm near Sykesville, Maryland, and it was here that he made his home the rest of his life dieing some time prior to 1767, when two of his sons, George and William were made executors of his estate and filed their inventory of his assets. It should be noted that the two older sons, Charles and Robert Jr. apparently were not available to serve as they had migrated away from the homestead as was the family tradition. George is said to have migrated too, so that William was the only son to remain in Maryland.

Robert Shipley Jr., son of Robert and Elizabeth, was born October 9, 1713. His migration to Virginia was some time prior to 1750 where we find his name in Lunenburg County as a tithable, indicating he was over twenty-one and the head of a family. In 1765 Shipley purchased a tract of 314 acres in Lunenburg County in what was later became Bedford County. Part of this land was sold in 1767 and on April 30 1771, Robert and his wife Sarah sold the remaining 164 acres to Daniel Mitchell the brother of his neighbor Robert Mitchell.

In 1771 Robert and Sarah Shipley moved to Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. It was here that they lived during the remainder of their lives.

Although we know that Robert Shipley's wife's name was Sarah Dorsey, we do not know for certain just how many children Robert and Sarah had, but there were at least five daughters: Rachel, who married Richard Berry; Ann, who married David McCord; Naomi, who married Robert Mitchell; Margaret, who married Robert Sloan; and Lucy, who married James Hanks.

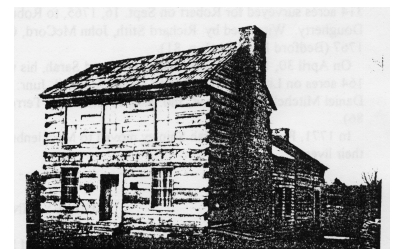
Lucy was born in Bedford County Virginia in 1761 and married James in 1781. Their only child, Nancy was born February 5 1784. James died in 1785 and Lucy, along with her sister's family, migrated, in 1790, to Kentucky where she married Henry Sparrow on April 30, 1790. Sometime after this second marriage, young Nancy went to live with her Uncle and Aunt, Richard and Rachel Berry. Lucy had nine children by Henry Sparrow, five boys and four girls. She is said to have passed away in Hardin County, Kentucky in 1825. That would have made her about sixty four years old.

I mentioned earlier about the pew at the Christ's Church held by Robert Shipley, Sr. and its' relationship to this lineage. Well pew No. 28 was held by a family that seemed to migrate along with Robert Shipley, Jr., first to Virginia and then to North Carolina. That family was the William Hanks family and it was apparently one of his decedents, James Hanks that married Lucy Shipley and fathered Nancy Hanks the mother of our sixteenth President Abraham Lincoln!



*Don't forget to research the maternal side of your tree.*

*Their only child, Nancy was born February 5, 1784.*



*The Berry home, where Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks were married!!!*



**Marion County  
Genealogical Society**

*Mission Statement*

*The Marion County Genealogical Society is dedicated to creating and promoting an interest in genealogy, focusing on research in Marion County, Florida and in supporting members in their research.*

3rd Quarter July—  
September 2008

**The Rootdigger  
MCGS  
P. O. Box 1206  
Ocala, FL 34478-1206**

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Phone: 352-207-0082  
Email: mariongenealogy@gmail.com

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## A Maternal Ancestry

*By Joel Swanson*



*Deed to "Shipleys Choice" ???*

Many people who tract their ancestry through several generations seem to be interested primarily in searching for paternal ancestors. The following lineage may prove to be of interest.

In 1661 a tract of land was surveyed for Adam Shipley bordering on the Severn River in Maryland not far from Annapolis. It consisted of 200 acres and was called "Shipley's Choice." Adam settled on the land in 1668 and married his wife Lois. Their homestead flourished and grew. Together they were blessed with nine sons and two daughters only three of which are known: Richard, Robert and Lois. Robert is the one in whom we are especially interested.

Lois (Adam's wife) died a widow in 1725, Adam having died some years before and from Adam's estate Robert received a tract of land consisting of 240 acres which was named "Shipley's Discovery." It was on the Patopsco River south of Great Falls. This land was surveyed in 1724. Robert and his wife, Elizabeth, were very active members of Christ's Church, Queen Caroline Parish having possession of pew No. 11. (this pew will prove to be of importance later). Robert was a member of the first vestry and the births of his nine children are registered on the church record. It is possible that he had a second marriage, but since the mother's name does not appear on the birth records we can only assume that Elizabeth was the mother all of the children, listed in order of birth: Charles, Robert, Ruth (or Rachel), Ketura, Elizabeth, Sarah, Lois, George and William.

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