

CHIPPING AWAY AT BRICK WALLS
Genealogical Society of Collier County, Naples, FL
Linda Ryan, EdD – March 11, 2025

Identify the research question(s): What do you want to know?

Build a good foundation

Multiple, independent documents
Alternate documents for missing evidence
FAN/Cluster/Collateral research
Newspapers
City Directories
Proof v Clues/indirect evidence

Use a RESEARCH CHECKLIST

Thomas MacEntee, *Genealogy Bargains*, see *Free Cheat Sheets*

<https://genealogybargains.com/free-cheat-sheets/>

Choose “Did I get Everything? Genealogy Research Checklists,”
see [Free Genealogy Research Checklists](#) (Excel, PDF, Word formats)

Keep a RESEARCH LOG

- American Ancestors → *Tools*
Choose *Research Templates* from tabs *Family Charts*, *Research Templates*, *Writing & Publishing*
<https://www.americanancestors.org/tools/research-templates>
- *Genealogy Research Forms* from Family Search and multiple other sources
https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Genealogy_Research_Forms
- National Archive, Resources for Genealogists, Charts & Forms
Includes blank family tree forms, census forms, immigration forms, military forms
<https://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy/charts-forms>

TRACK the EVIDENCE across time: TIMELINE for the person you are researching and/or the family

- Include individual BMD dates as well as BMDs of other family members
plus locations/addresses, occupations, business names/advertising, national & local events,
local epidemics and disasters, inventions (e.g., transportation), ...
- Create a custom timeline (historical events): http://ourtimelines.com/create_tl_2c.html

Map MIGRATION(s) across time: MAPS

Always use a map that is *closest in time* to the migration event

REVIEW often

- Review documents, timelines, notes, maps, Shoebox documents (Ancestry, etc), family trees,
research hints for online family trees (Ancestry, etc)
- Revise research questions regularly
- Identify assumptions that may divert you from thorough research

Use videos, classes, podcasts, print media for search/research IDEAS

- **YouTube** videos: Google *genealogy brick walls AND YouTube* (FREE)
- **Legacy Family Tree Webinars** (FREE & \$): Search *brick walls*
- **American Ancestors**—Brick Wall Strategies classes online (\$)
- ***The Family Histories Podcast***: “A genealogy podcast for and about family historians” hosted by British family historian Andrew Martin, series: 2021-2024.
Find episodes by topic (research problem, locations), plus check the section *Unsolved* to see if you can help with someone else’s brick wall in UK or US
<https://familyhistoriespodcast.com/the-brick-walls/>
- ***Genealogy Brick Wall Busters***, FREE eBook from *Family Tree Magazine*
<https://familytreemagazine.com/freebie/genealogy-brick-wall-busters-free-ebook/>
- ***Overcoming Brick Walls, Research Challenges and Dead Ends***, a study guide by Bryan Mulcahy, Research-Genealogy Librarian, Ft Myers Regional Library.
Email Bryan at bmulcahy@leegov.com for a copy of this comprehensive study guide.
NOTE: In your email request, please include your phone number and the best time to reach you if he needs to contact you. Bryan will be working at the Cape Coral library during the Ft Myers library renovations and will not always have his own dedicated desk or phone extension.
- Always check out **programs from genealogical societies**—in-person and webinars!