



SEARCHING IRISH WILLS BEFORE 1858

Written by John D. Beatty

[Excerpted from *Genealogy Gems*, published by the Allen County Public Library's Genealogy Center and co-edited by Curt Witcher and Steve Myers.]

Wills, as every genealogist knows, are an excellent tool for researching one's ancestry. In the case of Ireland, probate research is more challenging, in part because the original copies of most early wills were burned in 1922 during the Public Record Office fire. However, not all wills were lost. Sometimes the originals were copied by genealogists, and those abstracts survive. In other cases, Irish lawyers or solicitors made copies of wills for court cases, and those copies have since been deposited in either the National Archives of Ireland or in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. Furthermore, many indexes of wills survive, so that even if the full text of a will is no longer extant, it is at least possible to determine whether a will for your ancestor once existed.

Irish wills were filed in two kinds of ecclesiastical courts before 1858, because the official Church of Ireland had jurisdiction over probate matters. When someone died and all of his property holdings were contained in a single diocese, the will was probated in that diocesan court. If the testator had holdings of sufficient value in more than one diocese, the will was probated in a prerogative court. The majority were of the former category. A useful "Index to Irish Wills" (941.50004 P54i), edited by Phillimore and Thrift, lists diocesan wills from the seventeenth century through 1858. This five-volume set is divided by diocese and arranged alphabetically by testator.

Volume 1 covers Ossory, Leighlin, Ferns, and Kildare. Volume 2 covers the combined Diocese of Cork and Ross, as well as Cloyne. Volume 3 includes Cashel and Emly, Waterford and Lismore, Killaloe and Kilfenora, and Limerick, Ardfert, and Aghadoe. Volume 4 covers Dromore, Newry, and Mourne. Volume 5 covers Derry and Raphoe. A number of other dioceses are not represented in the series. Wills from the Diocese of Dublin through 1800 are indexed in the "Appendix to the Twenty-sixth Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records" (941.50004 Ir216p), while a similar "Appendix to the Thirtieth Report" indexes those from 1800-1858. Prerogative wills are listed in Arthur Vicars' "Index to the Prerogative Wills of Ireland, 1536-1810" (941.5004 V66in).

Some wills also were recorded in the Registry of Deeds, and those dating from 1708 to 1832 have been abstracted in P. Beryl Eustace's three volume "Abstracts of Wills" (941.50004 Ir24r).

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INFO@NorthHillsGenealogists.org

WHO WE ARE NORTH HILLS GENEALOGISTS

We are a group of genealogy enthusiasts who meet on a regular basis to assist one another in establishing our family histories. We meet on the third Tuesday of every month, except December, at the Northland Public Library, 300 Cumberland Road, McCandless Township in the North Hills of Pittsburgh, PA. Tip Time begins at 6:45 P.M., and our general meeting commences at 7:00 P.M. Meetings are free and open to the public.

We publish a newsletter ten times a year for a nominal membership fee of \$15.00 annually. The subscription year runs from August to June, but anyone wishing to join the North Hills Genealogists mid-year will receive back issues of the newsletter for that membership year. Previous years' newsletters are also available for purchase, each containing helpful hints for beginners and for experienced genealogists.

The North Hills Genealogists Board meets at 7:00 P.M. on the first Tuesday of each month in the Conference Room of the Northland Public Library. The Board meeting is open to all members of the North Hills Genealogists organization. Consider joining us this year!

www.NorthHillsGenealogists.org

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

There are two rules of genealogy that have recently been reinforced in my research endeavors. The first rule is the initial step taught in just about every Genealogy 101 class: to always interview your family members as a starting point, particularly your older ones. It seems very simple. Everybody should do that!

The second was highlighted by our All-Star Program Chairperson, Mary Dzurichko, during her February general meeting presentation on *Dating Old Photographs*. One of her slides bore the caption "Question What You Think You Know" as a sub-title. Good advice for a genealogist! In fact, this is good advice for anyone in any endeavor. Too bad I don't pay closer attention to rules.

David Jones is an ancestor I had placed on the Jones branch of my family tree many years ago. He obviously was a well-known member of the family. His picture is in the family bible that my great-grandfather gave to my great-grandmother in 1875. That bible is in my possession but I paid scant attention to David in my early searching. Since he was a life-long bachelor, he had no descendants that I would want to interview and for whatever reason, I just ignored digging into his background.

That changed when my frustration with finding my ancestral home in Wales was mounting. I had investigated most of my Jones/Williams ancestors to no avail. Thinking that perhaps the placement of one more relative might clarify the puzzle, it seemed like it was time to research David.

Since the time had passed when I could have asked my father about him, I turned to my mother. To my question "Do you know how we are related to David Jones?" she replied "Certainly. He was one of your father's favorite relatives. A cousin...or something." That was the extent of her knowledge and the end of the
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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

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conversation, with no further older relatives to talk to. Rule #1 – Start by interviewing your family members, particularly the older ones. I should have done that ten years ago!

So next I went to censuses. The 1860 Census showed that David was the son of Edward and Martha Jones, both of whom were born in Wales. In addition, Edward listed his occupation as a blacksmith. Since Edward's naturalization papers showed that he came to the United States in 1849, I moved backwards to the 1850 Census. That showed Edward living in the household of Harvey Smith, a fellow blacksmith. Hmm....why hadn't Edward moved in with one of the established Jones relatives? Harvey Smith lived about twenty miles from the nearest one, a far distance in rural Erie County. Nonetheless, there was something new to work on. The trade journals of the mid-1800s in Wales surely would turn up an Edward Jones, Blacksmith.

While working that angle, I spent some idle time reviewing a compilation of family history compiled by a cousin in the 1990s. During that review I came across a simple notation in a section about another branch of my family, the Morgan's – *Edward Jones married Martha Morgan*. What!?!? Edward Jones was married to my great-grandmother Mariah Morgan Williams's older sister Martha!! That couldn't be. That would place their son David, the current priority in my research, in the Morgan branch of the family and not the Jones branch. I had known for years that David was a part of the Jones branch. Yet here was a direct contradiction. It was hard to accept.

Overcoming years of bias, I began digging into the Morgan family. In the 1860 Census referenced above, there were Edward and Martha Jones living next door to her parents Benjamin and Rachel Morgan. Mariah, my great-grandmother, was still living with Rachel

and Benjamin. This was further evidence that Edward married into the Morgan family and was not, in fact, a part of my Jones family tree. No wonder he had moved in with Harvey Smith. And Edward and Martha's son, David Jones, was indeed a cousin – through my grandfather's maternal line. So we come back to Rule #2 – Question what you think you know.

While the above is probably very confusing to the reader, the rules are not. Had I followed them, questioning my knowledge base and interviewing older family members, the outcome would not have changed. But the time span and energy expended to reach that conclusion would have been drastically reduced by years. After all, time is the only thing we have, and mine could certainly have been spent at more productive research.

~ Dave

DATES FOR 2009 NHG MEETINGS

Tuesday, 21 April 2009

Tuesday, 19 May 2009

Tuesday, 16 June 2009

Tuesday, 21 July 2009

SAVE THIS DATE:

SATURDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2009

NHG'S FALL CONFERENCE

SEARCHING IRISH WILLS BEFORE 1858

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Be sure to check online in the new e-Catalogue of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (<http://www.proni.gov.uk>) or in the Origins Network's "Irish Wills Index 1484-1858," to which the Genealogy Center subscribes, to see if an abstract of a will exists. Many of the prerogative wills were abstracted by Sir William Betham and are available on microfilm from the Family History Library. Finally, John Grenham's handy guide, "Tracing Your Irish Ancestors" (941.5 G865t), provides a list of additional sources for surviving will indexes and abstracts.

GREAT GOOGLELY MOOGLEY!

Written by Mary Dzurichko, NHG Programs

Your family history research may get an unexpected boost if you try “Googling” a surname. Start with your own and see what’s out there. All you need to do is type www.google.com into the address box of your Internet page, type your surname into the Google search box, and hit enter. If you get too many hits, narrow it down by adding a first name or a city, like Jane Doe Pittsburgh. I have also had luck finding obituaries by typing Jane Doe Obituary, Doe Obituary or Doe Obituary Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

Other search engines can be used to see different results. Try www.ask.com or www.yahoo.com. This method has been especially helpful to me in finding distant relatives whom I don’t know, but I stumble upon an obituary for them or a spouse, which may provide me with women’s married names, cities of residence, children, parents’ names, or a mother’s maiden name. I have found that deaths since 2000 are often located in on-line newspapers. You can keep up to date by revisiting these sites periodically. There are ways to limit the search to anything from the last week, month, or year; just click on the site’s advanced search or search help links to see how it can be done.

Don’t limit yourself to just people. You can also Google towns, both domestic and foreign, and find maps, town history, local genealogy or historical societies, etc., all which can be explored to assist you in your research.

Two rules to follow: Just because it’s on the Internet, doesn’t necessarily mean that it is true, especially if it’s data extracted from the original source. Treat it as you would any other secondary source. Secondly, cite your sources, and not just the website. Look at the article, and find the original source of the information. Maybe it’s an excerpt from a town history book or city directory. Write down all information so

that you can find that source again without the Internet.

If you’re not on-line at home, get to your local library where librarians will be happy to assist you in finding your way onto the Internet search engines. Many libraries offer classes. Northland Public Library has an “Introduction to the Internet” computer class on March 31, 2009, that you might want to attend. Happy Googling!

NHG UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Tuesday, 17 March 2009

HOW TO USE THE FAMILYSEARCH WEB SITE

The March meeting of the NHG will feature Elissa Scalise Powell, CG, offering an overview of the tools and methods for most effectively using the FamilySearch web site. This site is a family history web site of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which provides its resources free of charge to the public. Come and learn what genealogical treasures can be discovered for your family research.

Tuesday, 21 April 2009

GERMAN GENEALOGY, PART 1

NHG member Ed Heinlein will conduct the first of two interactive classes, which will focus on Germany’s history and geography. We will learn of its relevance to those with German ancestors and those whose ancestors may have traveled through Germany and emigrated from its ports. As a retired German teacher, Ed brings a wealth of knowledge and dynamic teaching skills, promising an interesting and enriching program.

Tuesday, 19 May 2009

GERMAN GENEALOGY, PART 2

Ed Heinlein, NHG member, will present his second interactive class, this one dealing with Germany’s language and how it is used in
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Tuesday, 19 May 2009

GERMAN GENEALOGY, PART 2

(description continued from page 64)

genealogical research. German is often found on official documents, and this class should benefit those with ancestors from throughout Europe. Ed will provide research aids at this program, as well as introducing techniques for solving linguistic problems and helpful for any language barrier in genealogical research.

MORE ABOUT DATING PHOTOS

Submitted by Amy Prager, NHG Member

Here is a great follow-up to last month's presentation by Mary Dzurichko about Dating Photographs. If you go to the *Family Tree Magazine's* web site, which can be found at: <http://www.familytreemagazine.com>, you will see a link in the top left corner of their web page to sign-up to receive their free e-newsletter. Once you subscribe, you will be provided with a link to get exclusive FREE access to the 42-page *Best of the Photo Detective*, a compilation of articles by Maureen A. Taylor.

QUERY

CURTIS, John Harlow - b. Sept. 29, 1882, Sevrin Yugoslavia. Imm. 1899. Lived in Pittsburgh until abt. 1918 when he relocated to Utah. -- m. Sept. 29, 1919 in Salt Lake City -- d. Sept. 15, 1957. Seeking info on his life in Pittsburgh. Believed worked for the railroad there. Contact: **Jason Estes #25762, P.O. Box 250. Draper UT 84020.**

NHG NECROLOGY

It is with sadness that we inform you of the loss of two North Hills Genealogists members who have recently passed away. Our deepest sympathies are extended to the family of Janice P. Heddaeus of Franklin Park, who died 21 January 2009. NHG extends its deepest sympathies to the family of John B. Williams of Natrona Heights, who died 4 November 2008. Please keep these families in your thoughts during this difficult time.

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Written by Amy E. K. Arner

At each meeting people can submit questions on index cards. Each month, we will answer one or two questions in the NHG newsletter.

Question: *My mother's brother lived in Pittsburgh but died in an auto accident in Washington, PA and was buried in Ashland, KY. Where would I go to find the death certificate?*

Answer: A death certificate is filed in the locality where the death occurred. Pennsylvania required deaths to be registered at the county level starting in 1893. These registrations were not death certificates as we know them. These were usually one-line entries in ledger books. Starting in 1906, deaths had to be registered at the state level. This is when death certificates started to be used in Pennsylvania. The PA Department of Health's Division of Vital Records in New Castle holds the death certificates. Their web site has information on how to order certificates at <http://www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwp/view.asp?a=168&Q=202275>.

Question: *Where should I start looking for ship records? All I know is the year, 1883. Should I just try the records at Ellis Island and hope for a break?*

Answer: The immigrant-processing center on Ellis Island didn't open until 1892. Prior to that, immigrants coming through the port of New York were processed in Castle Garden. A database of Castle Garden records is available online at <http://www.castlegarden.org>. New York was the largest port used by immigrants, but it was not the only port. [Ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) has databases for many U.S. ports, but its search engine can be difficult to use. Steve Morse has created a better search engine, available at <http://www.stevemorse.org>. It will search Ancestry's databases and give you a list of results. You must have an Ancestry.com subscription or be at a library with one to see detailed results and images of the records.

NHG ANNOUNCES SURNAME FILE PROJECT

Submitted by Al Hartman, NHG Vice-President

A Surname Database is being constructed for members of the North Hills Genealogists. Members are encouraged to use the form below to provide all surnames of their ancestors. This database will serve as a resource for NHG members. When a surname from another member matches your surname, you will be contacted and given the other member's name and contact information. At that time you can contact the other member to see if you share a common ancestor. You might also consider adding the AKA (also known as) names used by your ancestors to the surname database.

Any names and information listed in the Surname Database will be kept private and only given to another member who shares a common ancestor. You can add names at any time. Fill out the form below and turn it in to Al Hartman, the Vice-President of NHG, who will be maintaining the Surname Database. Bring your Surname form and any questions to the next meeting.

NORTH HILLS GENEALOGISTS SURNAME FILE PROJECT

YOUR NAME: _____

HOW DO YOU WANT TO BE NOTIFIED?

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Genealogy Terms: SURNAME – last name of ancestor

AKA – also known as

Please list below all Ancestor and AKA names you want to have stored in the North Hills Genealogists' Surname Database. When your name matches another club member's surname or AKA name, you will be notified. When notified of a match, you will be given the other club member's name and contact information. Please print all names below.

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

WHERE GENEALOGISTS MEET

18 MARCH 2009 7:00 P.M. BEAVER COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

The monthly meeting of the Beaver County Genealogical Society is Wednesday, 18 March 2009 at the Mormon Family History Center, 114 Church Drive, Monaca, PA. This month's topic is "The History of Darlington as Told by Old Free Presbyterian Church Cemetery Gravestones" presented by Daryl Sas. Everyone with an interest in genealogy or history is welcome! For more information about the Beaver County Genealogical Society, go to: <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~pabecgs/> or call (724) 847-9253.

21 MARCH 2009 1:00 P.M. FAYETTE COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF PA

The next meeting of the Fayette County Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania will be on Saturday, 21 March 2009 at 1:00 P.M. at the Uniontown Public Library. For more detailed information, go to: <http://www.fcgsa.org>.

25 MARCH 2009 7:00 P.M. CRANBERRY GENEALOGY CLUB

This month's meeting of the Cranberry Genealogy Club will be held on Wednesday, 25 March 2009. Don Halper will present the program about "Dating Old Photographs." The Cranberry Genealogy Club meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month throughout the year in the Public Library Conference Room at the Cranberry Township Municipal Building, 2525 Rochester Road. For detailed information, go to: <http://www.cranberrygenealogy.org>. Meetings are free and open to the public.

21 APRIL 2009 9:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M. WPGS SPRING SEMINAR

The annual Spring Seminar of the Western Pennsylvania Genealogical Society is a wonderful educational and networking opportunity. This year, an Alumni Distinguished

Professor George K. Schweitzer, Ph.D., will be the guest lecturer, speaking on the following topics:

Military Genealogical Research Tracing Ancestors Back Across the Atlantic Pennsylvania Genealogical Research

Dr. George K. Schweitzer is Alumni Distinguished Professor at the University of Tennessee and holds BA, MS, and Ph.D. degrees in Chemistry, an MA in the History of Religion, a Ph.D. in History of Science, and an Sc.D. in Philosophy of Science. He is Phi Beta Kappa and is listed in *Who's Who in America*. He has authored 220 publications, including 19 genealogical guidebooks. Professor Schweitzer uses historical reenactment to teach genealogy and has traced many of his ancestral lines back to the early 1500s. He has lectured to over 200 genealogical and historical societies in the U.S., Canada, England, and Germany. Find out more about Dr. Schweitzer at his website: <http://www.gensources.com>.

Registration price for the WPGS Spring Seminar includes all lectures and a hot buffet lunch. The fee is \$40 per person for WPGS and WQED Members, and \$45 per person for nonmembers. For more information and/or to register: <http://www.wpgs.org> or go to page 68.

WPGS UPCOMING MEETING DATES

9 May 2009 – Program TBA

13 June 2009 – Program TBA

2009 NATIONAL CONFERENCES

ANNUAL NGS CONFERENCE

13-16 May 2009 Raleigh, North Carolina
National Genealogical Society Conference in the States—"The Building of a Nation: From Roanoke to the West." Registration is now open. For more information or to obtain a registration booklet including all planned sessions, visit <http://www.ngsgenalogy.org>.

2009 NATIONAL CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

14-19 June 2009 **Birmingham, Alabama**

The Samford *Institute of Genealogy and Historical Research (IGHR)* provides an educational forum for the discovery, critical evaluation, and use of genealogical sources and methodology through a week of intensive study led by nationally prominent genealogical educators. Students may choose one of the offerings that range from a course for beginners to courses on specialized topics.

The institute is academically and professionally oriented and is co-sponsored by the Board for Certification of Genealogists. The faculty is composed of outstanding nationally known genealogy educators, including NHG member Elissa Scalise Powell, CG.

For more information, go to: <http://www.samford.edu/schools/ighr/> or contact the IGHR Director, Della H. Darby, at ighr@samford.edu or call (205) 726-IGHR (4447). This program is held at Samford University, 800 Lakeshore Drive, Birmingham, Alabama 35229.

2009 PALATINES CONFERENCE

Final plans for the 2009 National Palatines to America Conference have been completed. This year's conference, where you can "Research with the Experts," will be 18-20 June 2009 at the Allen County Public Library in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. Accommodations for this conference will be at the Clarion Hotel in downtown Ft. Wayne. To find out detailed information about the 2009 National Palatines to America Conference, go to the event's web site: <http://palamnationalconference.org/registration>.

20-31 JULY 2009

Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, PA

The Moravian Archives in Bethlehem, PA is offering a two-week course in reading German script to be held 20-31 July 2009. Upon completion of the course, participants will be

able to read and transcribe 17th-20th century texts written in German script; Medieval texts will not be studied. Participants will be able to identify abbreviations used in 17th- and 18th-century texts and will know where to reference less frequently used ones. You will also learn about different calendar and dating systems used throughout the centuries.

This intensive course on learning to read German script is now in its 39th year and is the only course of its kind in the country. Former participants include more than 400 college professors, graduate students, genealogists, curators, archivists and hobbyists from various backgrounds. They represent such academic fields as history and German, American studies, musicology, religion, anthropology, art history, sociology, genealogy, technology and other subjects.

The course fee is \$535.00 but does not include housing. The number of participants is limited to 15. For more information, go to <http://www.moravianchurcharchives.org/german-script.php>. You can also contact them at:

The Moravian Archives

41 W. Locust Street

Bethlehem, PA 18018

tel. 610-866-3255

info@moravianchurcharchives.org.

ANNUAL FGS CONFERENCE

2-5 September 2009 Little Rock, Arkansas

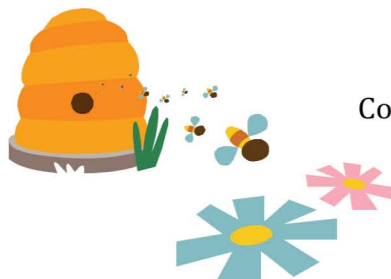
The annual Federation of Genealogical Societies Conference *Passages Through Time* will be held at the Little Rock Statehouse Convention Center, Little Rock, Arkansas. For more information, visit the site at <http://www.fgs.org/conferences/index.php>.

There is also a conference blog with insight for first-time attendees on the web at <http://www.fgsconferenceblog.org/>. This blog is maintained by FGS and offers weekly updates about the upcoming national conference, including specific program and session details.

WPGS Spring Seminar

Saturday, April 18, 2009

Holiday Inn, Greentree
9:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Registration at 8:30 AM



Cost: **\$45** per person
\$40 per person for
WPGS members

Speaker: George K. Schweitzer, PhD

Lecture Topics:

Military Genealogical Research

Tracing Ancestors Back Across the Atlantic.

Pennsylvania Genealogical Research

Reservations required - use form below :

Name _____

Check if WPGS Member ____

Guest Name (s) _____

Check if WPGS Member ____

Address _____

Enclosed is a check or money order payable to **WPGS** in the amount of \$ _____ for
_____ persons.

Mail completed registration form no later than **April 10** to: WPGS Spring Seminar, 4400 Forbes Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15213-4080. For more information, call (412) 622-3154 or visit us on the Internet at <http://www.wpgs.org>



P.O. Box 304
Ingomar, PA 15127

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Dated Material

UPCOMING PROGRAMS FROM NHG

Mark Your Calendars!

Tuesday, 21 April 2009

GERMAN GENEALOGY

Speaker: Ed Heinlein

NHG member Ed Heinlein will conduct the first of two interactive classes, which will focus upon Germany's history and geography. We will learn of its relevance to those with German ancestors and those whose ancestors may have traveled through Germany and emigrated from its ports. As a retired German teacher, Ed brings a wealth of knowledge and teaching skills, promising a set of interesting and enriching programs.

Tuesday, 19 May 2009

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Speaker: Ed Heinlein

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THIS MONTH'S PROGRAM - Tuesday, 17 March 2009 **HOW TO EFFECTIVELY USE FAMILYSEARCH**

Speaker: Elissa Scalise Powell, CG

NHG member Elissa Scalise Powell, CG, will offer an overview tonight of the tools and methods for most effectively using the FamilySearch web site. This site provides its resources free of charge to the public and is one of the most commonly used genealogical Internet sites. Come and learn hints for successful searches on this site!