

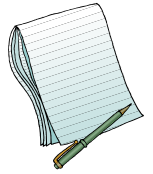
What To Do When You Hit An Ancestor Brick Wall

You will definitely hit one - that frustrating brick wall in an ancestor line. We all do, and they are sometimes extremely challenging. For the beginner in genealogy searches, it can be very disheartening to be stopped at the greatgrandparent level and not be able to get further. Here are several tips to help you have more success and find your way around that brick wall.



Hopefully you have your pedigree chart in front of you - remember this is your guide in your research. Go to the LAST person BEFORE this brick wall ancestor, and taking a piece of paper, start to write out everything you know about this person, all life events, residences, experiences, military, religious affiliation, everything you can possibly find.

On another paper, write out the details (if known) of any brothers and sisters of this last person as well, with their life events and residences, as well. Siblings have information on their own documents about their parents, and one of them may have the detail(s) you need to fill in your brick wall ancestor.



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Keep those papers in front of you and begin to speculate about your unknown or poorly-detailed brick wall ancestor. You are now going to ask yourself as many questions as you possibly can about this person and their life.



Can you see if children were born in different places? Were some in England, others in Upper Canada? When could that possible immigration have taken place? What's your best guess? If the eldest child seems to have been born in 1849, perhaps they got married from 1845-1849. Can you find any records about that marriage? Did a widowed ancestor live with a married child? When that widowed ancestor died, the adult child likely filled out their death registration, and MAY have heard details of their parents and/or birth place. Check it out. Did your ancestor own land? - can you find the land records? Did they make a will? Where might you find the will or probate? Were they members of a local church? How can you find out what records that church may have? What information might organizations or societies of the times have about your missing ancestor? Is there a city/town directory for the years your ancestor may have lived there?

Women tend to have few documents or records about them as individuals aside from the basics of birth, marriage, death. They may have been baptised - check those records if they are available. Burials, cemetery listings, and obituaries may have further information to check out. But remember, that as wives, they may also be mentioned in church records, histories of early settlements, pension applications, land records and more. You are looking for any clue that will help you find a more detailed record.



Always remember to check with any first or second cousins and other extended family members. One cousin



may have a story about his father's greatgrandfather which will help you. A grand-uncle may have his grandmother's diary and letters to the old country, to a relative. You may find wonderful treasure if you just ask.

Go back to the siblings of the last person before your brick wall ancestor. Now start looking for any life event documents where the name of the parent may be on it. Marriage and death documents may list parents' names, including maiden names of mothers (a gold mine!), as well as parents' place of birth. The place of birth may only be a country, or may be a specific place or village. By going back down your chart one step to the last person known, then sideways to siblings, then back up through siblings' documents looking for your ancestor, you may finally be able to find the missing names or information.

Roll up your sleeves, and start digging for any clues you can find. Then dig some more! Come back with a fresh eye and look again at what you have. Remember to take note of names and naming patterns, as that may also help you speculate about your missing ancestor's possible name.



It is very rewarding to finally find the missing information on your ancestor and break through that brick wall! It may take tedious digging as you go through page after page, document after document, but the reward - priceless! Celebrate your wins!

Enjoy your searches for your ancestors, and remember to ask others for help. By joining your local genealogical and or historical society, you will find others who will be pleased to point you in another direction, or make suggestions which may help you search more effectively.

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