

# Climbing Your Brick Walls



*"I have not failed. I've just found ten thousand ways that won't work."*

*Thomas Edison*

## Record everything you know

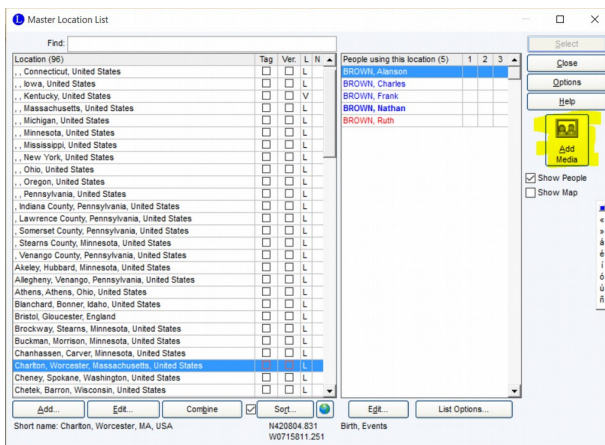
Fill in the whole family, all sibs, cousins, grandparents, great grandparents as far as you know.

Add confirmed birth and death and marriage dates and confirmed locations, citing documentation.

## Geographic Information

Legacy warns if a county did not exist at a certain date. Use ani-map or similar software to get the correct county so that you will search for records in the right place.

Find out when a location was first populated and by whom.



Was the location involved in a war? An epidemic? A flood?

See if the town your ancestor lived in specialized in a specific industry, had an important school, etc. Record this information as a Word (or whatever) document and attach it to the location in the master list. It is likely your ancestor worked in that industry, attended that school, etc.

Create a document with this information and attach it to the Master Location.

## Do census lookups of the whole family

Use sharing...use relationships (son, daughter, father, etc.)

- Are relationships consistent?
- Is there more than one instance for a person of this name in a census? Have you got the right one?
- Are the family members consistent? If not, can you think of why not?
- Record the whole family. Then do census lookups for all the siblings. Reverse search until you find living descendants (cousins!) who may have Bibles, letters, photos, etc. Contact them!

Record occupation, education level, real estate info, slave ownership, etc., whatever the census provides. Do this for every census, using an Event (occupation, education, etc) and a date. This will keep you from thinking someone of the same name is your ancestor. It will also let you get to know your ancestor better and how his life changed over time.

For censuses before 1850, make a note of the family makeup and compare that to what you know of the family, when children were born, etc. Make sure this is the right family! But remember that household members could include nieces and nephews, in-laws and even boarders. You can “share” this entry if you are sure of the family.

Example: 2 males < 5 (1835-1840) Moses, George

1 male 40-49 (1790-1800) James

1 female 5-9 (1830-1835) Susan

1 female 10-14 (1825-1830) Elizabeth

1 female 20-29 (1810-1820) Martha

## If appropriate, get Social Security applications

If ancestor worked anyplace after 1935, get his application. Good information there, including mother's maiden name. Request for Deceased Individual's Social Security Record at

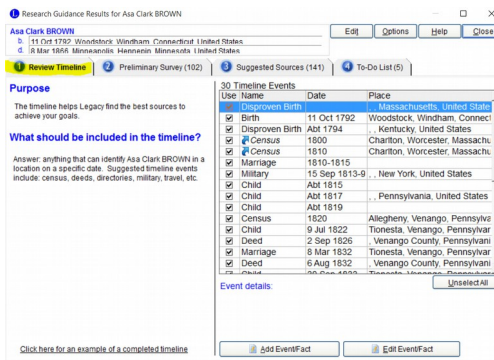
<https://www.socialsecurity.gov/forms/ssa-711.pdf>

## Map the Family

Click MyToolbar, Map Family

Can you explain the migrations? Do they make sense?

## Use the Research Guide



Click on the research icon at the bottom of the Husband or Wife toolbar.

## Step 1: Review the Timeline

This is the information used in further steps to display suggested sources that you should look at to find addition information for the individual. In general, the more timeline events that are known, the better Research Guidance can suggest helpful sources to research. If you know any addition information, even estimated information that would help, click the Add Event/Fact button, located below the Timeline Events list.

### Better Results with Estimated Dates

Don't leave date fields blank! You will get better searching and sorting results if you have estimated dates for the date fields where the exact date is not known.

Define a source: **Estimation**. When you use this source, put the basis of your estimate in the Details section. For the date, prefix it with Est or for a range use Between ... and ...

For example, there is a married couple that has 5 known children but you don't know when the parents were married or when they were born. Taking into consideration the time period and the local customs, you can put in an Est. date for their birth dates and their marriage date based on the date of birth of their oldest child.

This isn't an exact science, of course, but a more complete timeline will also help you when you are ruling people in and out when trying to determine if a certain person is YOUR person. You can do the same thing with death dates.

Here's another simple example. There is a man that appears on the 1850 census. In 1860 his wife appears but he doesn't. Of course a divorce is possible but it is more likely he had died between the two census dates. You could put a death date of "between 1850 and 1860."

This will also help you if you use the Research Guidance. For estimated dates use your **Estimation** source, adding detail explaining how you came up with the estimated date.

## Step 2: Preliminary Survey

Before starting original research on an ancestor, you should learn if that ancestor has already been researched and documented by another fellow genealogist. Legacy suggests various sources and Internet sites where you can see if anything has already been published concerning your ancestor.

The Preliminary Survey tab contains five sub-tabs:

- Lineage-Linked Databases: Websites such as Ancestry and FamilySearch. You can probably use your **Estimation** source a lot if you take information from these usually undocumented trees.
- Surname MB / ML (Message Boards and Mailing Lists): Message Boards and Mailing Lists assist researchers in communication with each other. These should be searched before beginning original research to learn if others are already research your same family lines. These Message Boards and Mailing Lists are also places where you can submit queries about your research.

Again, consider the sources!

- Locality MB /ML (Message Boards and Mailing Lists): Ditto
- Genealogies: If there is a suggested source in the list that you would like to search, you can either click on the Plan to Search button, to add that source to the To-Do List, or, if the source is marked as online, click on the Online button to search the source online. If you want to ignore the suggested source, click on the Options button and choose one of the Ignore... button choices.
- Local Histories: The suggested sources in the Local Histories tab are sources that help you learn about the history of your ancestor. Many of these histories contain biographical information about the people who lived in the area. They may also provide information about where the people came from who settled the area. Finding your ancestor's name in print may not only help you solve your research problem, but it helps them come alive! Remember to keep notes about the location and attach a document to the Master Location entry.

### **Step 3: Suggested Sources**

The Suggested Sources tab contains seven sub-tabs corresponding to the seven possible goals, depending on where you want to put your next effort. These are: Birth, Death, Marriage, Parents, Siblings, History, Maiden Name.

If you would like to see more detail for a particular source, double-clicking it displays all the information.

If you would like to search the source, click on the Plan to Search button to add it to your To-Do List. This is an important step - adding the source to your To-Do List helps you keep a log, or a history, of the sources that you have searched.

Spend a lot of time here and looking at the sources. This is what you have been working towards to get over that Brick Wall!

### **Step 4: To-Do List**

As you search the sources, even the online sources, be sure to update the To-Do Item by clicking on the Edit button. Here you can record your results.

For example, if you searched the International Genealogical Index, and you did not find anything for your ancestor, be sure to record this. Record all variations of the name/surname that was searched, the time periods you searched, and any pertinent information so that you, or a fellow researcher, can understand exactly what you searched.

## **50 Best Genealogy Brick Wall Solutions**

But pay no attention to me... go to the experts:

[http://www.genealogyintime.com/GenealogyResources/Articles/50\\_best\\_genealogy\\_brick\\_wall\\_solutions\\_part1\\_page\\_01.html](http://www.genealogyintime.com/GenealogyResources/Articles/50_best_genealogy_brick_wall_solutions_part1_page_01.html)