

ROOTS AND BRANCHES

Genealogy News from Linebaugh Library's Historical Research Room

Issue 6

April - June 2006

Donna Jordon
Reference/Historical Research Clerk

Melinda Bailey
Historical Research Clerk

HR HAPPENINGS

Green grass, blossoming trees and blooming flowers accompanied by the sounds of people sneezing, sniffing and blowing their noses. Yes, I would say these are sure signs that SPRING has arrived. What better time to trek out to the cemeteries and search for those long lost grave markers before the grass gets too high and the sun too hot.

Obtaining an ancestor's obituary is just as rewarding as finding their gravesite. Here in the Historical Research Room we maintain an index of the obituaries published in the Daily News Journal from January 1989 to the current date. Recently, we have expanded that index back to include 1988 and 1987. The index is arranged alphabetically by the deceased's last name and provides the date the obituary was published in the Daily News Journal.

Who, what, where, when and why did they leave their homeland and come to America? Eventually, your research will bring you to these questions. The theme of this newsletter focuses on "Immigration to America" and will hopefully help you discover the answers to those questions.

RESEARCH KNOW-HOW

According to "They Changed Our Name at Ellis Island" by Donna Przecha, the idea that immigrants were misunderstood by clerks and therefore many surnames were changed is "highly unlikely." The reason for this was that Ellis Island clerks did not write down names, but "worked from lists that were created by the shipping companies." For many reasons, including "Americanizing" surnames to seek employment in the U.S. and the need to fit into American culture, immigrants often "used two given names during their lives: an Americanized name for outsiders and the original foreign name within the family." Some things to look for concerning altered names are: a name with too many syllables was often shortened; a name with combinations of letters not usually used in America (like lots of "zs") was often modified; or a long name like "Finkelstein" was sometimes "Finkel" or "Stein."

Immigration records, a/k/a ship passenger arrival records, may provide researchers with information such as one's nationality, place of birth, ship name and date of entry to U.S., age-height-eye & hair color, profession, place of last residence, name and address of relatives they are joining in the U.S. and amount of money they are carrying. More immigrants to the U.S. have entered through New York than all other U.S. ports of entry combined. However, immigrants entered the U.S. through over 300 official ports of entry, land border crossings and scores of seaports. Besides U.S. ports, many arrived at Canadian ports, especially Quebec City and Halifax. Each port earned a history and reviewing the history of an ancestor's port of arrival can produce clues about an ancestor's motivation in coming to America. When you don't know an immigrant's port of arrival, learning more about major ports, their operation years and the immigrants who landed there may help narrow your search. The six major U.S. ports are:

1. **New York** – established by the Dutch as "New Amsterdam" in 1625 and is the oldest major North American port city. In 1825, after the opening of the Erie Canal, it became the busiest port of entry.
2. **Boston** – founded in 1630 and was the leading trading and passenger port in North America until approximately 1750. In the mid 1850's, Boston experienced a major flow of the Irish famine immigrants into its port and by 1879 was ranked second to New York. There was an estimated two million people immigrating through the port of Boston between 1820 and 1920.
3. **Baltimore** – founded in 1729 and became the second U.S. city to reach a population of 100,000. It is the nation's best protected deep water port and the closest east coast port to the Midwest. The construction of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad enabled Baltimore to become a major port of immigration. Interesting, is the fact that Baltimore did not have a major immigrant processing station. About 1.5 million immigrants sailed into Baltimore.
4. **Philadelphia** – founded in 1682 and was the leading port of immigration until New York rose to prominence. It's major period of immigration ran from the mid 1870's until World War I. Approximately 1.2 million immigrants came through between 1820 and 1920 (the majority arriving after 1870).
5. **New Orleans** – founded by the French in 1718 and controlled by Spain from 1762 until sold to U.S. as part of the Louisiana Purchase. By 1840 it was a significant immigration port and the fourth largest city in the U.S. Steamboat travel along the Mississippi river made New Orleans the best way to access the western interior. Over 710,000 immigrants came through New Orleans between 1820 and 1920. The Civil War brought an abrupt end to it's heyday as a port of immigration.
6. **San Francisco** – settled by the Spanish in 1776 and became part of the U.S. in 1847 as a result of the Mexican War. The gold rush brought dramatic growth to the city and by the end of 1849 it boasted over 25,000 residents. The majority of immigrants who sailed to San Francisco were Asian and came to work in California during the gold rush and the construction of the transcontinental railroad. Angel Island, called "Guardian of the Western Gate", was a processing and detainment center built to enforce exclusion of these immigrants. An estimated 500,000 immigrated through San Francisco between 1820 and 1920.

GENEALOGY GEMS

In "Guide to Finding Your Ellis Island Ancestors" by Sharon DeBartolo Carmack be sure to read the Foreword to obtain a true sense of the enormous task of making the Ellis Island immigration records accessible at the museum. It states "an army of 12,000 LDS volunteers worked an amazing 5.6 million hours to create a database by extracting from the original microfilm the immigration data on the 25 million individuals who entered the Port of New York between 1892-1924." It goes on to say that the launching of the Ellis Island website on April 17, 2001 was the first time immigration records and ships' passenger manifests could be researched and viewed online at no charge. The site was receiving 27,000 hits per second. The U.S. News and World Report declared that the site, "...may well be the most popular launch in Internet history, eclipsing Madonna and the Beatles." In her book, Sharon Carmack provides everything from a primer for getting started on your family history immigration quest to valuable tips and tricks for using the Ellis Island database and many other available resources. This book is a true gem in immigration research.

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

1. European immigration started with the Mayflower in 1620 carrying 102 immigrants crossing the Atlantic in 66 days.
2. In 1838 the Great Western was the first steamship boarded with immigrants to cross the Atlantic in 15 days.
3. Between the period 1847 and 1852 there were 43 immigrant ships that failed to reach their North American destinations.
4. In 1847, approximately 17,000 immigrants died of typhus aboard ship or in quarantine shortly after arriving in America.
5. In August, 1858 approximately 500 immigrants died in a fire on the Austria.
6. The single largest immigration of people to the U.S. was the 2 million potato famine Irish immigrants from 1846-1856.

SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE

Immigrant – a person who comes to a country to settle permanently from another country

Emigrant – a person who leaves a country to settle in another country

Melting Pot – a country, locality or situation in which a blending of races, people or cultures is taking place

Custom Lists – passenger lists from 1820 to about 1891

Castle Garden – America's first official immigration center from 1855 to 1890 located at the tip of Manhattan

Foreign Colonies – established neighborhoods of immigrants from the same country helping newcomers with the language, find a job, and settle in America

WEB CONNECTIONS

www.castlegarden.org – free online database of New York passenger lists

www.naturalizationrecords.com – learn about various records and follow the links to online searches

www.ellisland.org – free online database with 25 million names of who entered the Port of New York between 1892 and 1924.

<http://uscis.gov/graphics/aboutus/history/poelist/poe.htm> - has a state-by-state list of ports of entry

PERIODICALS AT-A-GLANCE

Exit Strategies on page 46 of the February 2006 issue of Family Tree Magazine

Rediscovering Passenger Lists on page 21 of the Nov/Dec 2001 issue of Ancestry

America's Lasting Allure (pg 18); *Beyond New York* (pg 21); *Getting Here: through Hell and High Water* (pg 24) of the March/April 2006 issue of Ancestry

GENEALOGY GATHERINGS

June 10, 2006 at 2:00 p.m. – "Civil War Genealogy" presented by Dr. George Schweitzer at the Marshall County High School in Lewisburg, Tennessee. This program is provided by the Chestnut Ridge Cousins as part of their 5th Annual Reunion beginning June 9th. For further information visit <http://www.chestnutridgecousins.org>.

HR BOOKSHELF

The following is a partial list of new books added to the Historical Research Room collection:

French and Native North American Marriages 1600-1800

The Glebe Houses of Colonial Virginia

A History of the French War

The Chattanooga Country: Gateway to History

Unlocking Your Genetic History

Gone to Texas: Genealogical Abstracts from the Telegraph and Texas Register 1835-1841

New England Captives Carried to Canada Between 1677 and 1760 During the French and Indian Wars

Blood Kin: Pioneer Chronicles of Upper Georgia Centered in Forsyth County

Unhallowed Intrusion: A History of Cherokee Families in Forsyth County, Georgia

1890 Genealogical Census Reconstruction

Black Indian Genealogy Research

Hooper's Medical Dictionary

Georgia Obituaries 1905-1910

Orphan Trains and Their Precious Cargo

Linebaugh Public Library
105 West Vine Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37130
Phone: 615-893-4131

Hours:
Mondays-Thursdays 9-9
Fridays & Saturdays 9-5
Sundays 1-6