

Hidden in the Small Print – Handout

This handout provides information from the *'Hidden in the Small Print'* talk presented via Zoom at the Auckland and Christchurch Family History Expos on 14 August and 20 August 2022 respectively. Note that some information in this handout was not covered in this version of the talk.

Why look in the small print?

- To identify new information about your ancestor
- To follow leads to additional information
- To understand your ancestors' lives better
- To help breakdown brickwalls

Where to look in the small print?

- Beyond the transcript – although many transcripts of records can provide the basic information we need to build a family tree, it is always worth viewing the original image whenever possible to identify if there is additional information (or if the transcript had an error in it).
- Additional information – learn more about the records you are using. Most companies have a 'more information' or equivalent link that describes how the record set was put together both originally and to provide it for use on the website or at archives. More information on researching various topics can be found in the research guides at The National Archives (<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/>).
- Keep turning the pages – always look onto the next page(s) of records to ensure you have seen all the information. This is particularly true for:
 - Census returns
 - Military records
 - Probate records
 - Pension records
 - Occupational records
 - Poor law records
- Examine the details – look through the whole of a document to identify all relevant information. Use the information you find as clues of where to look for additional information (e.g. an indication in a will that someone else has left a will or that there are land/property transfers/purchases that have taken place).
- Follow up clues – take any clues that you find to identify additional information. Use archive catalogues to identify documents not online that can advance your research.
- Family memorabilia – identify what is already in your possession that can give you clues. Read letters, look on the back of photographs, look at inscriptions on items, then follow the clues.
- Digging deeper – follow up links and clues to other websites or documents. Online books can often contain much more information than exposed by indexes to them. Check indexes for additional information such as the relevant page numbers. Similarly, the Family History Library (FHL) film numbers are often given on transcripts. Use these on the FamilySearch website to find the relevant films on their 'Catalog' (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog>) as often they are freely available and you can browse through the original images to find your ancestor.
- Follow the clues – look for information that gives you links to additional information. Identify if there is contradictory information and try to resolve why it is contradictory.
- Write it up – create your own small print by writing up your research (whether a specific ancestor (e.g. via an Ancestor Profile) or family or a research question). Include:
 - What you do know
 - What you do not know (and where you could find the information which can be added to a research plan)
 - What you have looked at and what you have found even if it is negative results (e.g. not found anything)
 - Information that you have found but do not know where it fits in yet
 - Make sure you resolve conflicts in the information
 - Keep updating the information (even if you think you have solved it, more information can come to light that helps support your research or could provide new conflicts)

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Specific Examples

Census

- Ensure you have captured the whole household by looking at pages before/after your entry
- Walk the streets by using the arrows to move between all the pages in the enumeration district
- Read the description of the enumeration district to learn more about the local area
- View the additional pages for 1911 census (e.g. the household cover page can give the address written by another person which may be more legible)
- The Irish census returns for 1901 and 1911 (<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/search/>) also have several additional pages that should be clicked on (see links below the transcription on their website).

1939 Register

- Look at the additional surnames – these are an indication of a name change (normally due to marriage but can be other reasons) that have occurred in the years following 1939.
- On the original image, there are sometimes dates and letters in the same pen as the name change. The dates indicate the date the register was updated (which gives an indication of the approximate date of the marriage where it is a marriage). The letters can indicate an enumeration district. A list of the codes can be found here: <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/articles/1939-register-enumeration-districts>.
- Keep going back if there are redacted entries in the households you are interested in as these are released after a death for the person is identified or they pass 100 years old and can be released.

Parish Registers

- Establish the coverage of the registers (and/or indexes) of any parishes you are researching in.
- Confirm that the years during which the baptism/marriage/burial is expected actually exist online.
- Parish listings at Findmypast (<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/search/historical-records>) can be found by going to the county record set (using ‘All record sets’ search) and then look at the bottom right for the link to the County parish list (e.g. ‘Leicestershire parish list’).
- Parish listings at Ancestry can be found by going to the county record set (using ‘Card Catalog’ search (<https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/catalog/>)) and then look at right hand side for browse parish and use the drop down menus to get a list of dates that are covered.
- Parish listings at The Genealogist can be found by going to the ‘Parish Records (Transcripts)’ selection on the Search page (<https://www.thegenealogist.com/search/advanced/parish/baptism/>). Choose the record type at the top (baptisms, marriages or burials), choose the county and then click on the ‘Area’ box to get a list of parishes and the years they cover.

Civil Registration

- Order the original certificates from <https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/login.asp> (where feasible based on cost – note this GRO website is the cheapest route for ordering certificates)
- Look at all the columns on birth, marriage and death certificates.
- Check the informant on birth and death certificates as these are often relatives.

Military Records

- Identify the service number then search for additional records using just the surname and service number (use the keyword field when there is not a specific field for service number).
- Look for information on description (height, weight, eye & hair colour) and marks (tattoos and scars).
- Ensure you have the right person by looking at next of kin.
- Keep turning the pages to potentially find information on performance, medical information and correspondence.

Probate Records

- Identify all people mentioned and additional information about them.
- Identify any clues to land ownership or transfer/purchase.
- Extract the date of writing the will and the date the probate was granted (the death must have occurred between these two dates).
- Find and examine all relevant parts of the available probate records not just the will (e.g. grants, affidavits, inventories, act books, etc.).

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Newspapers

- Search newspapers to find information about your ancestors' lives by searching for their name or a combination of surname and place.
- Worth searching for just for places your ancestors lived, companies they worked for or occupations they had to find out more about their lives even if they are not mentioned explicitly.

Trade Union Records

- Many trade union records have been collated by the Modern Records Centre at the University of Warwick. Some are available at Findmypast (<https://search.findmypast.co.uk/search-world-records/britain-trade-union-membership-registers>). Also search the Modern Records Centre catalogue (<https://mrc-catalogue.warwick.ac.uk/>).

Directories

- There is more available in directories than just the standard entries by name.
- Read the information about the places your ancestors lived and worked.
- Check for maps and general area information at the start of the directory.
- See if your ancestor had an advertisement in the directory.
- A large collection of directories is freely available via the University of Leicester special collection (<http://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/digital/collection/p16445coll4>).

Coastguard Records

- The Society of Genealogists have a digitised card index of coastguards on their Data Online (<https://sogdata.org.uk/>).
- The ADM 175 - *Records of Service of the Coastguard 1816-1947* collection is available through The National Archives digital microfilm collection (<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/free-online-records-digital-microfilm/>).
- See the research guide for coastguards (<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/coastguard-records/>).

Additional Information

- British Museum archives are now available at the British Library via their Archives and Manuscripts collections (http://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do).
- Online books are available at:
 - Internet Archive (<https://archive.org/>)
 - Google Books (<https://books.google.com/>)
 - Hathi Trust (https://www.hathitrust.org/digital_library)
 - FamilySearch Books (<https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/>)
- More information about the use of Helen COOPER's signature to break down the EAYRS brickwall can be found at <https://www.miagenealogy.com/breaking-down-brickwalls/>.

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