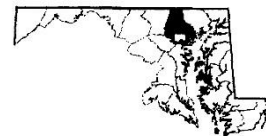


The Baltimore County Genealogical Society



THE NOTEBOOK



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Winter 2023-2024

Research Tips for the Quarter

10 True Genealogy Brick Walls and How to (Possibly!) Break Through Them

By David A. Fryxell

(Excerpted from the December 2015 *Family Tree Magazine*)

Genealogists love to commiserate about the brick walls blocking their backward march into their families' pasts. Often these brick walls turn out to be merely detours that you can find your way around with a fresh look, different records or some [sideways or "cluster" research](#). Other times, your brick wall proves to be a genuine dead end. After all, every family history reaches a point where you can go no further—otherwise we'd all be connected to Adam and Eve, or at least to Cleopatra and Caesar. How can you tell when you've really hit the end of the road and it's time to stop beating your head against a brick wall? Just how far back do historical family records go, anyway?

The answers depend on the nature of your brick wall and why you can't seem to make progress in this branch of your family tree. Let's look at 10 possible ultimate brick walls, in roughly increasing order of finality, and find two potential paths around them.

1. You've run out of online records.
2. The records you need aren't (yet) available to the public.
3. You face maiden and other name mysteries.
4. The records you need have been destroyed.
5. The specific records you need were never created in the first place.
6. The only "records" you can find are compiled genealogies.
7. You've run out of American records.
8. You've reached the end of written records—at least for commoners.
9. You've exhausted records of your noble or royal ancestors.
10. You've reached the "begats."

Now that's a brick wall.

Tip: Can't find an ancestor? Try looking for other relatives who lived in the same place. Their records may name your ancestors.

Tip: Even if you discover you're not at a "true" brick wall, it's fine to put the problem aside for a while. This might give you a fresh perspective—or time for new resources to come to light.

Note—Member research contributions to the *Notebook* are always welcome!

In this Issue...

Research Tip of the Quarter.....	1
Restoring St. Peter's Catholic Cemetery.....	2
Maryland Episcopal Parish Records	3
Kirk Family -Planting the Roots a Little Deeper (Part 2).....	3

Efforts To Restore Saint Peter's Catholic Cemetery in West Baltimore

By Dan Phelan and Jennifer Johnson



This photo shows the very overgrown south-western section of the cemetery. The cemetery property has an extensive stand of fairly large trees; however, the undergrowth has taken over any semblance of its being a cemetery.

St. Peter's Cemetery is located in West Baltimore at Moreland Avenue and Bentalou Street. Burials began in 1851 for the parish of St. Peter The Apostle Roman Catholic Church. The church, constructed at the northwest corner of Hollins and South Poppleton Streets, was often referred to as "The Mother Church of West Baltimore." That parish served those in need, as well as many of the Irish workers who helped build the B&O Railroad. The church performed its last Mass in 2008 and although no longer Catholic owned, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The cemetery contains the remains of around 15,000 former residents of West Baltimore, many of whom were former members of the church including many Irish, but also many Germans and other European immigrants, as well as numerous African Americans.

The last regular interments at the cemetery were in 1969. One of the last "special" interments was in December 2002 for Philip Berrigan, the former Catholic priest who was a member of the "Catonsville Nine", a group that protested the Vietnam War by burning draft records in Catonsville in 1968. Around 1996, members of Jonah House, which is a faith-based community centered on the concept of nonviolence, resistance, and community, became the official caretakers of the cemetery. This responsibility was taken back by the Archdiocese of Baltimore in 2023. Jonah House owns two buildings located on the grounds of the cemetery. A few other burials, mostly those connected with Jonah House, have occurred since 2002. To learn more about Jonah House, which is celebrating its 50th Anniversary, please visit their web site at <https://jonahhouse.org>

Somewhere around 1980, the entire cemetery was in danger of reverting to wilderness. By 2004, members of Jonah House and other volunteers had cleared roughly one third of the cemetery.

In 2023, Jennifer Johnson and her mother Sandra Johnson, a longtime well-respected leader throughout Baltimore City, searched for her mother's (Jennifer's grandmother's) grave at St. Peter's Cemetery. Jennifer's grandmother was one of many African Americans buried there, and one of nine of Jennifer's relatives who were interred in the cemetery. Once she discovered the current condition of the cemetery, she knew it was time for a change. She began applying for grants and has started a restoration and preservation effort for the cemetery. The first grant was awarded in July of 2023 from the Trader Foundation for Maryland Burial Sites which assists cemetery preservation and those engaged in such efforts. Their web site is: <https://cpmbs.org/trader-foundation/>

Jennifer was blessed to have been given the original burial records for the cemetery by members of Jonah House, and she delivered all the records to the Archdiocesan Archives located at the St. Mary's Seminary in Roland Park. The Baltimore County Genealogical Society is in discussions with the Archives regarding our possible scanning those records so that the images can be available in our library.

A petition has been started by Jennifer to get Historic Landmark Designation for the cemetery to protect the site for generations to come. The petition can be signed here:

<https://www.change.org/p/st-peter-s-cemetery-historic-landmark-designation>

A 10-minute documentary was produced this past summer by Jennifer about the cemetery, and it can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/JYMUY69_4jw



This photo shows part of the eastern section of the cemetery that has a recent history of being fairly-well maintained.

Maryland Episcopal Parish Records at the Episcopal Archives, Baltimore

Parish records from over 80 closed parishes of the Episcopal Church in Maryland are stored at the Cathedral of the Incarnation, 4 East University Parkway, Baltimore. For more information about the Archives, see: <https://episcopalmaryland.org/resources/archives/>

In 2015, members of the BCGS scanned the church and cemetery records of the All Saints Episcopal Church in Reisterstown. Those records are available on our library computers. In 2019, that church closed and those records were transferred to the Episcopal Archives on University Parkway.



Cathedral of the Incarnation

Planting the Roots A Little Deeper Kirk Family—District 2 Baltimore County, Maryland

(Continued from Fall 2023 Notebook article)

By Lisa Woolfson (great-great-granddaughter)

Frederick and Margaret Rhine Kirk (formerly known as Friederich Karg and Margreth Reining) emigrated from Bremen to Baltimore Maryland on 11 June 1840 on a ship named "Ferdinand". This continues their story.

Frederick Karg and Margaretta Karg (Americanized to Kirk) pick up roots and plant them somewhere else in the years between 1851 and 1874. The following deed documents the sale of property between Frederick Karg to Adolf Weidemyer. The deed is transcribed as it was written in the original handwritten copy:

Frederick Karg wf. Deed to Adolph Weidemyer. This deed made this six day of April in the year eighteen hundred and sixty by Frederick Karg and Margaretta Karg his wife of "Baltimore County in the state of Maryland, witneseth that in consideration of five hundred and fifty dollars the said Frederick Karg and Margaretta Karg, his wife doth grant unto Adolph Weidemyer in fee simple all piece or parcel of land situate and lying in Baltimore County, aforesaid, being part of a tract of land called "Wells Manor". Beginning for the same as a stone planted on the side of the old road and running thence with said road south forty nine degrees last eight perches to a stone thence north three degrees west two and a half perches thence south eight degrees west eighteen and a half perches to the place of beginning containing three acres of land, being the same parcel of land that was conveyed Henry Justice and his wife to the said Frederick Karg by Deed dated the eleventh day of June eighteen hundred and fifty one and recorded in liber H.M....Folio 317 vc. one of the land record books for Baltimore County and the said Frederick Karg and Margaretta Karg, his wife covenants that they will warrant specially the property herein conveyed, and that they will execute such further assurance as may be requisite.

Witness Our Hand and Seal Frederick Karg (seal), Margaretta Karg (seal).

State of Maryland, Baltimore County to wit:

I hereby certify that on this sixth day of April in the year eighteen hundred and sixty, before subscriber, a justice of the peace of the state of Maryland, in and for Baltimore County aforeseeded personally appeared Frederick Karg and Margaretta Karg, his wife and did each acknowledge the foregoing deed to be their respective act.

John Moke

Recorded in the sixth day of June 1860 and examined Geo H. Carmon clerk"

Baltimore County Genealogical Society

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Baltimore County Genealogy Society

Located in the Parkville Senior Center

3rd Floor, room 308 (Elevator Available)

Monthly Meetings:

4th Sunday of the month

- Eastern European Group—11:45 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- General Meeting—2 p.m. to 3 p.m.
- Speaker—3 p.m. to 4 p.m.
- Library open 12 noon to 2 p.m. for research before meeting

Our Research Days are:

2nd Tuesday of the Month—5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

2nd Thursday of the Month—10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

2nd Saturday of the Month—10 a.m. 2 p.m.

4th Thursday of the Month 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.