

What To Do When You're Stuck

Family Chronicle

The Magazine for Families Researching their Roots

April 2004

\$5.95 US

\$6.95 Cdn

The IGI: Friend or Foe?

Understanding Names:

Names:

How learning the dynamics of surnames can pay off



US Passport Applications:

How to track globetrotting members of your family

Beginners' 10 Most Common Mistakes:

Learn from other people's errors



Multimedia Biographies: Using digital multimedia to save your family history

War Bonus Applications:

How to use this useful but little-known resource

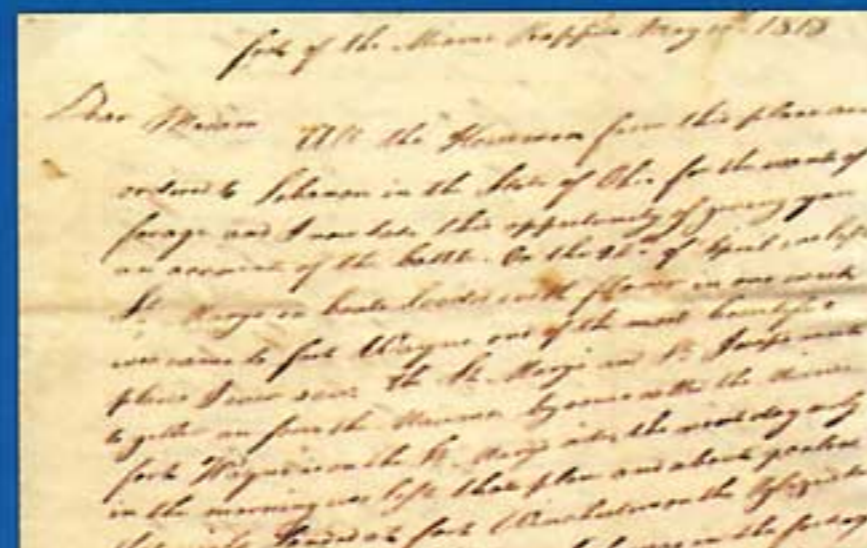


Family History Mysteries: How genealogy can help unravel the truth about the past

www.familychronicle.com



Canadian Publications Mail Agreement
No. 40062922
PAP Registration No. 10630



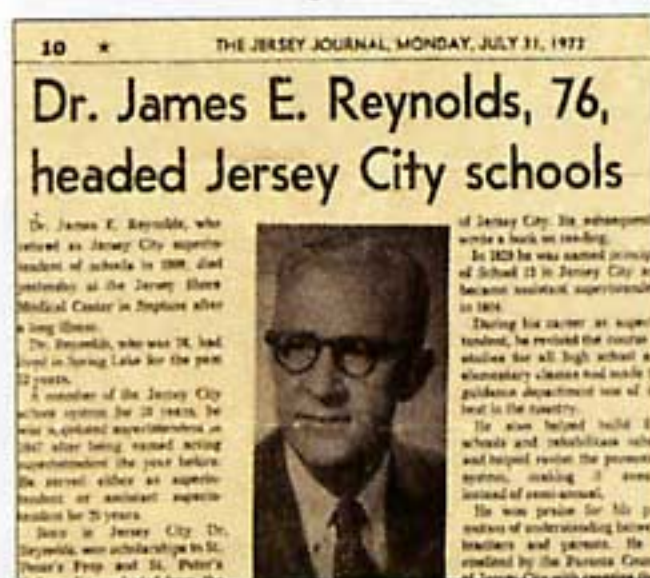
Reading Between the Lines: 12 things to look for in old family letters

Family Chronicle

The Magazine for Families Researching their Roots



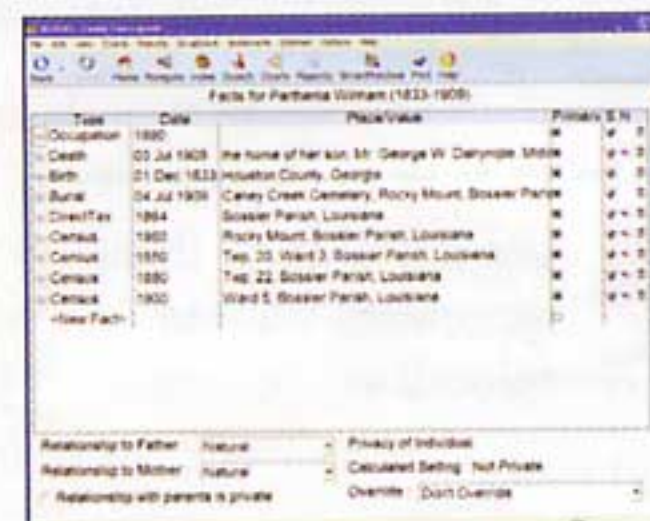
Understanding Names.
Page 10.



US Passport Applications.
Page 19.



Reading Between the Lines.
Page 23.



Family Tree Legends.
Page 27.



The IGI: Friend or Foe?
Page 29.

NEWS AND LETTERS5

RESEARCH RESOURCES7
Products and services for the amateur genealogist.

UNDERSTANDING NAMES PAYS OFF BIGTIME10
John M. Hoenig offers information about the dynamics of surnames.

THE 10 MOST COMMON MISTAKES BEGINNERS MAKE16
Barbara Krasner-Khait outlines common errors, and offers tips on avoiding them.

US PASSPORT APPLICATIONS19
Megan Smolenyak gives advice to those who had globe-trotters in their family.

READING BETWEEN THE LINES23
John D. Reid suggests 12 things to look for in old family letters.

FAMILY TREE LEGENDS27
Jim Byram looks at the companion program to GenCircles.com.

THE IGI: FRIEND OR FOE?29
Donna Potter Phillips examines the history of, and some of the problems with, the International Genealogical Index.

THE PROBLEM OF FAMILY SILENCE32
Emily Croom recommends sharing your memories for the benefit of future generations.

WAR BONUS APPLICATIONS36
Donna Murray Allen looks at a useful but little-known resource.

SOLVING FAMILY HISTORY MYSTERIES37
Barbara Krasner-Khait examines cases when research solved confusion about a family's past.

CREATING A FAMILY BIOGRAPHY39
David A. Beardsley recommends preserving your family history with digital multimedia.

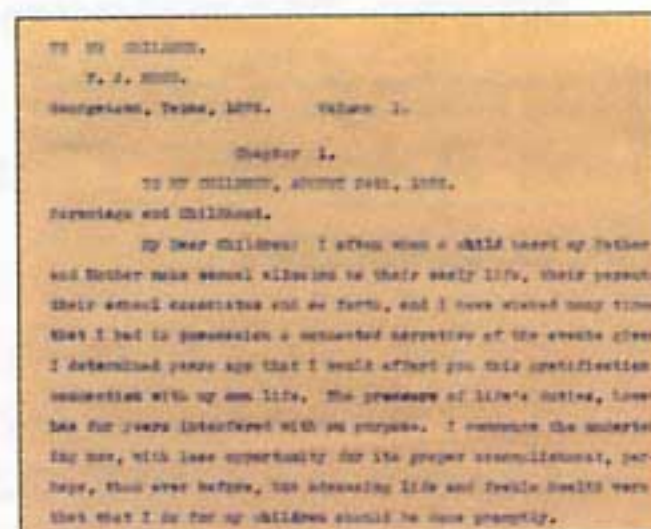
WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU'RE STUCK44
Janice Nickerson offers advice on what to do when the path grows cold.

GENLINE44
Gary Shea takes a test drive of a new tool for those with Swedish roots.

WEBSITES WORTH SURFING50
Leaving From Liverpool, DocumentsOnline, the American History and Genealogy Project, Ancestry — The Polish Connection.

YOU WANTED TO KNOW52
Cemetery Arrangements, Joining Family History Societies, Upper Canada, Searching Admiralty Records.

THE DOG TAX54
Donna Murray Allen invites you to look at ancestors who went to the dogs.



The Problem of Family Silence.
Page 32.



War Bonus Applications.
Page 36.



Creating a Family Biography.
Page 39.



Genline.
Page 44.



The Dog Tax.
Page 54.

US Passport Applications

Megan Smolenyak gives advice to those who had globetrotters in their family.

THE OBITUARY OF MY grandmother's brother held a tantalizing and unexpected tidbit: "He became a teacher at Loyola Prep in New York in 1919 and coached basketball there, but left the following year to tutor a wealthy family in Cuba." Cuba? James E. Reynolds was Jersey City born and bred. As far as I knew, he had spent the whole of his life in his native New Jersey and neighboring New York. Had he really traveled to Cuba?

Fortunately, I knew just the records to consult: the 1795-1925 passport applications held by the National Archives. A frequent skulker in the back portion of old Research Room 400 at the Archives in Washington, DC, I had discovered these records years earlier and had even searched for a few of my family names, but rather randomly and to no avail. Now seemed a perfect opportunity to give this source a second look.

Equipped as I was with a name and fairly narrow time-frame, it took only minutes on my next trip to the Archives to find a passport application for my great-uncle. The documents revealed more than I had expected: birth date and place, name and birth place of his father, occupation, reason for travel, a physical description, the name and address of a lawyer friend who vouched for him and even a photo. I also noticed a sideways remark indicating that he had shown his baptismal certificate as proof of his birth. Finally, the file contained a

Dr. James E. Reynolds, 76, headed Jersey City schools

Dr. James E. Reynolds, who retired as Jersey City superintendent of schools in 1960, died yesterday at the Jersey Shore Medical Center in Neptune after a long illness.

Dr. Reynolds, who was 76, had lived in Spring Lake for the past 12 years.

A member of the Jersey City school system for 35 years, he was appointed superintendent in 1947 after being named acting superintendent the year before. He served either as superintendent or assistant superintendent for 25 years.

Born in Jersey City Dr. Reynolds, won scholarships to St. Peter's Prep and St. Peter's College. He graduated from the Prep in 1911 and from the college in 1915. He had played baseball and basketball at both schools. At college, he majored in English, history and Latin and was given an honorary degree of doctor of philosophy by St. Peter's in 1937.

He taught at Xavier High School in New York from 1915 to 1918. He became a teacher at Loyola Prep in New York in 1919 and coached basketball there,



DR. JAMES E. REYNOLDS
Retired School Chief

but left the following year to tutor with a wealthy family in Cuba.

In 1922 he joined the faculty of Demarest High School, Hoboken, as an English teacher. In 1925 he became one of the original members of the faculty of the Accredited Evening High School

of Jersey City. He subsequently wrote a book on reading.

In 1929 he was named principal of School 12 in Jersey City and became assistant superintendent in 1934.

During his career as superintendent, he revised the course of studies for all high school and elementary classes and made the guidance department one of the best in the country.

He also helped build five schools and rehabilitate others and helped revise the promotion system, making it annual, instead of semi-annual.

He won praise for his promotion of understanding between teachers and parents. He is credited by the Parents Council of Jersey City with creating their annual teacher-parent workshop. He once said Jersey City's teachers were the finest in the nation.

Dr. Reynolds' wife, the former Margaret Ryan, died five years ago. He is survived by five children, 22 grandchildren and 13-great-grandchildren.

Funeral arrangements were being completed today by the Meehan Funeral Home, Spring Lake Heights.

The obituary of James E. Reynolds contained a surprising remark about a trip to Cuba around 1919.

brief, handwritten note jotted on stationery from The Plaza in New York. In it, Mrs. E.J. Conill explained to the Secretary of State that Mr. J. Reynolds was tutoring her son and she would like him to accompany the family to Cuba for the winter to "continue his instructions."

A quick search of *The New York Times* revealed that E.J. Conill was a wealthy Cuban involved in auto and yacht racing, so the obituary was indeed accurate. Uncle Jim had ventured abroad.

Would They Have Applied?

What about your ancestors? What are the chances that they traveled overseas and left a paper trail in the form of a passport application? You probably won't be surprised to hear that it depends. On the

surface, the odds aren't good. While the Department of State has issued passports since 1789, they were not required until 1941 (with two brief exceptions associated with wartime security concerns between 1861-62 and between 1918-21), so most Americans didn't trouble to apply for them.

Having said that, well over 1.5 million passports were issued between 1810 and 1925. And your odds improve if your ancestors lived more recently (over a million of the just-referenced passports were issued during 1912-1925 alone); were male (in the mid-1800s, 95 percent of passports were issued to men, but names of wives and children were often included); were diplomats, businessmen or

merchants, members of the clergy or missionaries, sea captains, or from a wealthy family known to travel for leisure; or were naturalized citizens (such individuals were more likely to secure a passport to protect themselves overseas and ensure their easy re-entry to the US).

Foreign-born ancestors intending to visit their homeland and family also had more incentive to travel in the days when sea journeys were generally considered a misery to be avoided at all costs. And in another minor exception, aliens who had declared their intent to become citizens by filing "first papers" were eligible for passports in 1863-1866 and 1907-1920, so don't entirely rule out the possibility of an application just because Grandpa wasn't natural-

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICANT.

Age: 24 years Mouth: Medium
 Stature: 5 feet, 9.4 inches, Eng. Chin: Medium
 Forehead: High Hair: Brown
 Eyes: Blue Complexion: Fair
 Nose: Medium Face: Oval
 Distinguishing marks:

AFFIDAVIT OF IDENTIFYING WITNESS.

I, Thomas J. Stanton, solemnly swear that I am a [native] citizen of the United States that I reside at 67 Fifth Street Jersey City that I have known the above-named James E. Reynolds personally for 12 years and know him to be a native citizen of the United States; and that the facts stated in this affidavit are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Thomas J. Stanton
Jersey City
Thomas J. Stanton
Jersey City
15 Exchange Place Jersey City

Sworn to Oct 27 1919
James E. Reynolds
228 Grant Ave.
Jersey City, N.J.

One photo
 this space by
 application
 placed on it
 side, but not

**THE PLAZA
 NEW YORK**

Hon. Secretary of State.

Dear Sir: This is to state that Mr. J. Reynolds is tutoring my son & I would like him to go to Cuba with us for the winter to continue his instructions.

Yours truly,
Mr. E. J. Conill
 Oct 28/19

No. 511 11.591

Application for Passport.
 Territory of Utah } ss.
 Great Salt Lake County }

Personally appeared before the undersigned a Notary Public in said Territory, Nathaniel W. Jones, who being duly sworn according to Law, declares that he is a native born citizen of the United States of America, and resides in the Territory of Utah, that he was born in the city of Rochester, New York, and is 37 years of age, and wishes to obtain a Passport for the purpose of traveling in foreign countries.

M. Cummings - being duly sworn according to Law, declares that the above named Nath'l W. Jones - who is applying for a Passport - is personally known to the said affiant, as a worthy citizen of good Moral Character; and the above declaration is true, according to the best of your affiant's knowledge and belief.

M. Cummings
 In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my Notarial Seal at my Office in Great Salt Lake City, this 19th day of September, A.D. 1859.

Edward A. King
 Notary Public

James Reynolds's application (left) included a physical description and photo. Also included in the application file was a letter (middle) from Mrs. E.J. Conill on letterhead from The Plaza in New York City. At right, an 1859 application reveals the age and Rochester, New York birth place of a resident of the Territory of Utah.

ized yet when he supposedly returned to the old country to find a bride.

The Basics

Older passport application records — those extending from October 1795 to March 1925 — are available through the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). While originals are held in the National Archives II in Maryland, microfilmed records (including assorted registers and indexes) can be searched at the main center in Washington, DC.

Conveniently, the Family History Library (FHL) also has these records, so you can order and view appropriate rolls of microfilm at your closest Family History Center. Simply go to FamilySearch (www.familysearch.org), select the FHL Catalog followed by the Subject Search option, and enter "passports." Choosing "Passports — United States" will bring you to the menu you'll want to browse.

Since these earlier records are of the greatest interest to most genealogists, most of the balance of this article will focus on them, but what if you're looking for

more contemporary records — or maybe want to obtain a copy of your own records? For records from April 1925 to the present, you'll need to write to the State Department. Since these more recent records are protected by the Privacy Act of 1974, access is somewhat restricted. If the individual who held the passport was born less than 100 years ago, you will have to supply authorization from the person or a copy of his or her death certificate in addition to the usual requirements:

1. full name at birth and any subsequent name changes
2. date and place of birth
3. your current mailing address, daytime telephone number, and e-mail address, if available
4. the reason for your request
5. the dates or estimated dates the passport(s) were issued; and
6. passport numbers or any other information that will help speed the search for the relevant records

The fee is \$45 (payable by check or money order to "Department of State") for each individual for whom a record search is requested, except for

your own. Requests for your own records (as well as for your minor children) are free, but must be notarized. Requests should be sent to: Department of State, Passport Services, Research and Liaison Section, Room 500, 111 19th St., N.W., Washington, DC., 20524-1705. Visit www.travel.state.gov/passport_records.html for more details.

Types of Applications

Returning now to the 1795-1925 records, most applications were for what is referred to simply as regular passports and this should be your starting point. NARA series M1372 (*Passport Applications, 1795-1905*) and M1490 (*Passport Applications, 1906-31 March 1925*) contain a total of 3,434 rolls of microfilm, so it's clear that the bulk of applications fall into this category. The titles suggest that these records are comprehensive, but most of the 1812-1833 period is not covered.

During my lifetime, passports have been good for five or, more recently, 10 years, and I'm currently on my sixth one. While it's true that we're much more mobile now, regular passports used to

have a shorter lifespan. In fact, they were only valid for two years or less. So if your ancestors did travel, they may have also applied multiple times over the course of their lives. While this reality may expand your research task, the upside is the possibility of locating several documents for a single person.

Although regular passports were the most common, it's important not to overlook other types of applications. Emergency passports, available for the 1874-1926 timeframe, were issued overseas at American diplomatic and consular offices and were only valid for six months. If you have reason to believe that an ancestor stayed abroad for an extended period, these are definitely worth exploring.

Special passport applications, primarily for diplomats and other officials, may be of particular interest to those who know of relatives who served the government in some capacity. There are also miscellaneous related records, such as an index to registration of certificates of widows, divorced women and minors for 1907-17, that may pertain to your family.

As you would expect, finding aids in the form of registers and indexes are available, but the usual complications exist. They vary in content and some timeframes are missing. In some cases, there are even overlapping finding tools, each with its own set of gaps. To facilitate your search, these details have been summarized in the accompanying table.

Just to make things slightly more complicated, some missing regular passports from 1817 to 1834 have been found (in chronological order) among the emergency and special passport applications, a point worth bearing in mind if you suspect people in your family traveled around that era.

If you'd like to try to get a running start by seeing what's online, you'll want to look at Olive Tree Genealogy's Naturalization Records section (<http://naturalizationrecords.com/usa/passports.shtml>), where you'll find at least a partial index to the Register of Passports

NARA Microfilm Publication	Records, Registers or Indexes?	Timeframe	Gaps
Regular Passport Applications			
M1372	records	1795-1905 (694 rolls): • 27 Oct 1795-30 Nov 1812 • 22 Feb 1830-15 Nov 1831 • 13 May 1833-31 Dec 1905	• 1 Dec 1812- 21 Feb 1830 • 16 Nov 1831- 12 May 1833
M1490	records	2 Jan 1906-31 Mar 1925 (2,740 rolls)	N/A
M1371	registers and indexes (note: overlaps with M1848)	• 21 Dec 1810-7 Oct 1817 (roll 1) • 22 Feb 1830-15 Nov 1831 (roll 1) • 14 Nov 1834-28 Feb 1906 (rolls 1-9)	• 8 Oct 1817- 21 Feb 1830 • 16 Nov 1831- 13 Nov 1834
M1848	indexes (note: overlaps with M1371)	• 1850-52 (rolls 1-28) • 1860-80 (rolls 28-29) • 1881 (rolls 29) • 1906-23 (rolls 30-52) • passport extensions, 1917-20 (rolls 53-57)	• 1853-59 • 1882-1906
Emergency Passport Applications			
M1834	records	1877-1907 (56 rolls)	See NARA website for details about countries covered for given years. Germans to America includes data for FHL films: http://www.genealogie.netz.de/misc/emig/pas_s5.html
M1371	indexes	Jun 1874- Dec 1906 (rolls 10-11)	
M1848	indexes	1906-18 (rolls 57-59)	
Special Passport Applications			
M1371	indexes	mostly 1872-94, but some as early as 1829 (rolls 12-13)	See NARA website for additional details
Miscellaneous Related Records			
M1848	indexes	• Consular registrations, 1907-21 (rolls 59-61) • Registration certificates of widows, divorced women and minors, 1907-17 (roll 61)	

A guide to passport application records. (Complete details can be found at www.archives.gov/research_room/genealogy/research_topics/passport_applications.html)

from 14 November 1834 to 1843, the Index to Special Passports 1829-1887 and the Register of Passport Applications 1809-1817 (including some of the misfiled items noted above).

Search Strategy

The key to searching for your own ancestors is to start with a specific name and time period in mind. Since passports were only valid for a limited time, remember to consider the possibility that there may be several applications. In general, you'll want to look first at regular passport applications, but to be complete, consider extending your search to emergency, special or other types of applications.

Begin your search by using relevant registers and indexes, some of which, as mentioned previously, overlap. Flexibility will help as some are organized in a chronological fashion, while others are alphabetical or a combination of

chronological and alphabetical. And alphabetical may mean strictly so, by first letter of surname only, or by first three letters of surname. Depending on the time span of interest, it may be necessary to search several registers, but that's not as daunting as it may sound. Once you find an entry of interest, note the date, number, and/or volume associated with the listing in order to locate the actual passport application on the appropriate roll of microfilm.

Incidentally, if you're convinced that your ancestors traveled abroad, but can find no passport applications, you may want to look at state and local records. While the State Department has issued passports since 1789, it did not have sole jurisdiction until 1856 when Congress passed an act restricting this authority. You may be surprised to find the elusive passport issued by the Governor of Georgia or some other official!

What Do They Contain?

So what will you find for all your effort? Plenty. Like many record sets, the contents vary over time with more recent ones revealing more useful details. Since the 1860s, most applications were submitted on printed forms, so content is fairly uniform. In general, you can expect date of birth, place of birth, physical description (age, height, forehead, eye color, nose shape, mouth, chin, hair color, complexion and face shape), occupation, immigration date and ship, naturalization court and date and a photograph (for applications since 21 December 1914).

Birth details are usually more precise in more recent documents, with earlier ones often just referencing a country or kingdom, while later ones include actual towns. Expect to be entertained by the physical descriptions. Noses may be described as large, mouths as ordinary, chins as prominent, and complexions as florid or ruddy. And those immigration and naturalization details can be genealogical gold for many of us! In fact,


those seeking details on immigrant ancestors are apt to derive the greatest benefit from passport applications, so please consider this resource if you're having a difficult time "crossing the pond".

In 1886 a standardized form was introduced and was modified shortly thereafter into three versions: native, naturalized and "persons claiming citizenship through naturalization of husband or parents." In 1915, the application was amended to include the date and place of departure, means of transportation, and countries to be visited, as well as that possibly one-of-a-kind photo. You may also be fortunate enough to find associated correspondence or other documentation. For instance, it's not unusual to find a letter or affidavit as part of your ancestor's application, just as I was able to learn more about the life of James E. Reynolds from the hastily scribbled note included with his file.

Happy Sailing

While it's true that many of our ancestors spent much of their lives

in one location, or at least, one country, we're often too quick to dismiss the possibility that they traveled abroad at least once in their lives. I certainly fell into this trap when researching my great-uncle. But any collection with more than a million-and-a-half records bursting with juicy genealogical details should not be ignored! And those of us with Ellis Island-era roots and birds-of-passage family lore should be especially swift about adding passport applications to our to-do lists, as our immigrant ancestors were more likely than most to have availed themselves of this protection. Here's hoping that one or more of your ancestors sailed the seas and left a trace for you to discover in these records!

Megan Smolenyak Smolenyak, author of Honoring Our Ancestors: Inspiring Stories of the Quest for Our Roots, In Search of Our Ancestors, and They Came to America: Finding Your Immigrant Ancestors, can be reached through www.honoringourancestors.com. 

CANADA

www.grl.com

5 Million Canadian Ancestors in one massive index

Actual Images of Source Documents for 1 Million Ancestors

Includes:

Vital Records Index — 2,930,845 births, marriages and deaths

Digital Maps & Atlases — 220,000 names with images

Index of Directories — 1,000,000 ancestors — (800,000 images)

Index to Land Records — 489,710 (285,000 images)

Index to Biographies & Family Histories — 90,000

Index to Places in Canada

1,000,000 Miscellaneous Records

An index to census records, patents of invention, cattle breeders, police records, military records, credit ratings of businessmen, advertisements, and the Native and Métis nations