

Genealogy Basics – Immigration Networking within a Family

By Joe Petrie

BACKGROUND:

Somebody had to come first!

When I am researching families especially when I volunteer for individual consultations, I often look for the family member(s) who came to the United States first. Why? My view is that the first to arrive provided information and even a lifeline for those who came later.

I'll admit it. My search is not always successful. Often, I think that the individual may have been the first to arrive..

INTRODUCTION:

The emphasis is on family networking! I'll cover situations where one family member came followed by others in the family or by close relatives. They came in waves.

I'll cover two of my Cape Breton families. Specifically, in individual sections, I'll cover: one of Dad's families, the Andrew Parks Family of Bridgeport and one of Mom's families, the Richard Tobin Family of North Sydney. All are situations where the individuals came and stayed. They were followed by family members in the same generation and in later generation(s). All have situations where some of the family did not migrate.

I'll not cover the following family migration situations. In the 19th Century and 20th Century, thousands of people were recruited by industries that were searching for workers. Typical examples were the textile and shoe mills in Maine, Massachusetts and New Hampshire. In my home town of Norwood MA, immigrants who became railroad and mill workers expanded the rural populations of the towns. In Norwood, there were seven nationalities that migrated mostly as families. The families (husband, wife and children) were recruited to work at a number of leather, paper, ink, and printing factories.

In addition, I'll not cover the "Missing Friends", the over 90 thousand Irish Immigrant Advertisements placed in "The Boston Pilot," 1831-1920. My Tobin Pedigree Chart goes back to six generations due to a great grand uncle's "Missing Friends" advertisement where he identified his siblings, their parents and where in Ireland the family came to Newfoundland from.

Finally, I'll not cover the hundreds of women who came to New England to work as domestics. My paternal Grandmother Petrie, my paternal aunt Hazel Petrie, and my maternal grandaunt, Catherine Camus (aka Kate Comes) would be on that list. As a trained Economist, I often described sections of the world as places where people were from. Essentially because there were not enough opportunities or jobs, people moved elsewhere.

My online sources are: Ancestry, US Census Collections; Ancestry, State and Federal Naturalization Declarations; Ancestry, Border Crossing Records; Ancestry; Massachusetts Passenger and Crew Lists; and Ancestry; Pre-examination forms.

ANDREW PARKS (abt 1797 – abt 1859) FAMILY (ALSO KNOWN AS PARK):

Oral history indicates that the Parks family migrated to Bridgeport in the 1840s. Andrew Parks, the head of the family, was a miner, mining engineer and eventually a mine owner in Illinois. His migrations took him to New England and eventually to Illinois.

Andrew and his wife Agnes had 10 children: three boys (John, Edward and Andrew) and seven daughters. (Margaret, Janet, Mary, Elizabeth, Jennette, Agnes and Ellen). Supposedly, all 10 were born in Scotland. Janet died young in Scotland.)

The First Parks Migration to the USA:

Andrew's daughter Mary Parks was the first to leave Cape Breton. She arrived in Boston on the Primrose on 2 July 1849.

Mary was followed by 2 brothers: Edward, John, John's wife Charlotte and their 3 children. They arrived in Boston on the Primrose on 27 May 1850.

Mary's sisters Agnes and Jennette (Jane) arrived on the Primrose on 1 July 1850.

Mary, Agnes and Jennette are enumerated on the US Census of 1850 living in Manchester, Hillsborough, New Hampshire. (I suspect that the Census-taker may have delayed the census by a few days or Agnes and Jennette were enumerated based on Mary's input.)

Oral history is that Andrew Sr., Andrew Jr., Ellen and Margaret, along with Margaret's husband John Handley and their 2 sons followed later. They were enumerated in Illinois in the US Census of 1860 along with Mary and Jennette. Two of Andrew Sr.'s daughters, Elizabeth and Agnes did not move. Elizabeth married Michael O'Brien in Cape Breton. They stayed in Cape Breton. Agnes married Robert Heyworth, They lived in Lawrence MA.

The Second Parks Migration to the USA:

Two of Elizabeth Park O'Brien's sons (Michael and William) lived with their aunt Agnes Parks Heyworth in Lawrence, Essex, Massachusetts.

William arrived in 1870. William moved to Danbury, Fairfield, Connecticut.

Michael arrived in 1885. Michael stayed in Lawrence. He was a very successful businessman.

The Third Parks Migration to the USA:

Agnes O'Brien, (Andrew Parks Sr. grand-daughter) married Richard Petrie in Cape Breton. Agnes and Richard had 10 children. Richard and Agnes' farm was in the Gardiner Mines section of Bridgeport.

One of Agnes O'Brien Petrie's daughters, Laura Petrie, stayed with her uncle Michael O'Brien in Lawrence.

Annabelle Petrie, Laura's sister, joined her sister a few years later. Both Laura and Annabelle were married and stayed in Massachusetts. Laura had 2 children. Annabelle had 1 child. Very late in her life, Annabelle lived with her daughter in Vermont. Annabelle is buried in Barre Vermont.

In 1923, Hazel Petrie, a grand-daughter of Agnes O'Brien, moved to Dorchester MA. She died in Boston in 1932. She is buried in Dominion's Ocean Ave Cemetery.

Later in 1923, Charles Edward Petrie, Hazel's brother, moved from Halifax to Brookline, Norfolk, Massachusetts. He eventually moved to New York, married in New York and returned to Cape Breton. He died in 1936 in Cape Breton. He is buried in Ocean Ave Cemetery.

In 1925, Edmund Petrie (Agnes O'Brien Petrie's son and father of Hazel and Charles Edward) settled in Brookline, Norfolk, MA. Edmund came with his wife Esther and 5 children. Edmund left in 1925. One son left soon after. The others left in 1932 when Hazel died. My father was the only family member that stayed.

In 1925, Michael Petrie (Edmund's, Laura, and Annabelle's brother) with his wife Catherine and 5 of their 7 children settled in Boston, Suffolk, Massachusetts. They lived a few miles away from Edmund's family in Brookline.

Please note that another genealogist claims that the Surname was Park (not Parks) and the Agnes's Wilson's Maiden Surname was Irvin. Based on his daughter Elizabeth's Conditional Baptism record and her Marriage record in FamilySearch, Canada, Nova Scotia, Antigonish Catholic Diocese database, I believe that Elizabeth's mother's surname was Wilson. Oral history from my father was that his great grandmother's Maiden Name was Wilson.

Also, in the web sites that I used, Mary's Passenger record in 1849 on the Primrose was the first time where the surname was Park.

RICHARD TOBIN (abt 1840 – abt 1900) FAMILY OF NORTH SYDNEY:

Richard was a Newfoundlander. He was the owner-captain of a ship that was based in Channel Newfoundland, North Sydney and St. Pierre & Miquelon. He met and married Honorah (Nora) Dooley in North Sydney. Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada. Richard and Nora had 8 children; William Richard; Mary Elizabeth (Sister Maria Loretta, SCH); Margaret; Annie Bridget (Sister Joseph Aloysia, SCH); Johanna Maud (who died young and is buried in St. Joseph's Cemetery in North Sydney); John Francis; Pierce; and Josephine. William and Mary were born in Newfoundland.

The First Tobin Migration to the USA:

Richard Tobin's daughter Annie Bridget (Sister Joseph Aloysia, SCH) was assigned to St. Peter's Convent in Dorchester, M from 1898 to 1906. She was assigned to St. Margaret's Convent in Dorchester MA from 1925 – 1934. She was assigned to St. Peter's Convent in Lowell MA from 1940 to 1942. Finally, she was assigned to St. Patrick's Convent from 1942 to 1953. She died in 1953 and is buried in St. Mary's in Needham, MA.

Richard Tobin's daughter Josephine Bernard (Josie) Tobin came to Somerville, Middlesex, Massachusetts in 1915. She came to be trained as a Nurse. When I met her, she was living in New York City with her husband, Joseph T. Ryan, a Judge in Brooklyn, New York City.

The Second Tobin Migration to the USA:

In 1923, Richard's son John moved from North Sydney to Somerville. His wife Agatha and their two children came with him. John and Agatha's third child was born in Somerville.

In 1923, Richard's grandson, Richard D. Burke, moved from Cape Breton to Worcester, Worcester, Massachusetts. Richard was an executive with the Norton Co., one of the largest employers in Worcester.

In 1926, Richard's grand-daughter Loretta Elizabeth (Ethel) Tobin moved from Glace Bay, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia Canada. Official US government documents identify her as Lorretta Elizabeth and Elizabeth Loretta. She married Leo I Petrie in Boston in 1931. After she became a citizen in 1939, she changed her name to Ethel Tobin Petrie. Ethel was my mother.

SUMMARY:

For both the Parks and Tobin families, the starting point was oral history and some validated oral history.

The Parks history was available on line. The database was the work of Edna Waller. In researching her Park family, she found individuals who had oral history and validated genealogy to share. The validated records were official government records such as Census records. Some of Edna's database may never be validated. (Unfortunately, the database is no longer on-line.)

The Tobin family history was oral. It was compiled by my aunt, Mary (May) Aloysius Tobin. When she was in her 80s, my aunt May dictated the oral history to volunteers who transcribed it and sent it to me. My aunt May was severely visually handicapped since she was 12 years old. I validated most of her oral history using official government records. I am still amazed at her accuracy.

My online sources were: Ancestry, US and Canadian Census Collections; Ancestry, Massachusetts State and Federal Naturalization Declarations and Petitions; Ancestry, Border Crossing Records; Ancestry, Massachusetts Passenger and Crew Lists; and Ancestry, Pre-examination forms for Halifax (a border crossing substitute).

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Your corrections, comments and suggestions are appreciated. Please Email me at joe-apg@norwoodlight.com.

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