

# Using Cluster Research to Get by a Brick Wall



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# Cluster Research – A Way To Break Brick Walls

- ▶ Everyone has brick walls – Ancestors who have simply disappeared in the mists of time.
- ▶ Cluster Research is a method that looks around the ancestor at other relatives, friends, and neighbors to determine facts about an ancestor.
- ▶ If you can't identify an ancestor's parents, look for siblings. Perhaps the parents of the siblings have been identified. If you can identify an aunt or an uncle, perhaps their parents or siblings have been identified.
- ▶ If you have an immigrant but can't identify where they came from, look at neighbors. Immigrants tend to cluster. This may help identify where they came from and even how they got there. Look at the birthplace of neighbor's children to identify possible origin.
- ▶ This doesn't always work, but it often helps.

# Examples

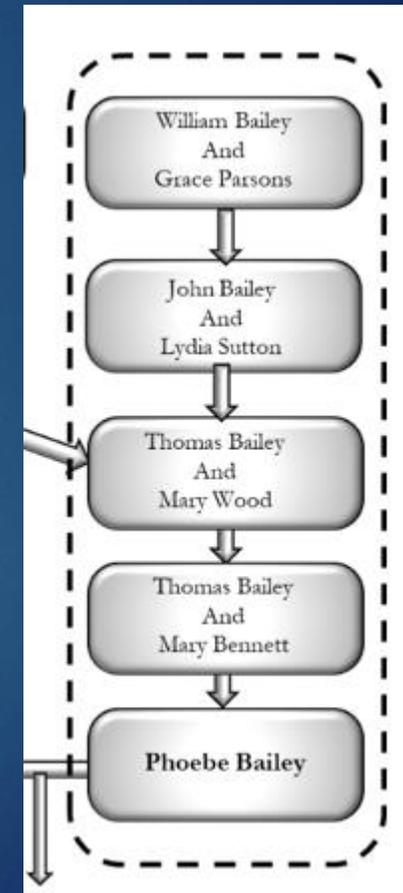
- ▶ You can't identify an ancestor's parents – no birth or baptismal records
  - ▶ Look for siblings in the generation that you know.
    - ▶ Look for birth or baptismal records for them
    - ▶ Look to see if their parents have been identified
  - ▶ Look at land records –
    - ▶ they may have been deeded property by a parent
- ▶ You have what you think is the right name for an ancestor but can't find and records for them
  - ▶ Look at records for a spouse
  - ▶ Look for probate records of people with the name you think is correct.

# More Examples

- ▶ Your ancestor is an immigrant, but you don't know where they came from.
  - ▶ Look at neighbors.
    - ▶ Immigrants often came in groups or clustered after arrival
    - ▶ If your ancestor's neighbor had children born before immigrating, look for their birth records. That will tell you where they came from.
    - ▶ Once you have that, look at records from that location or parish to see if you can find your ancestor.
- ▶ Your ancestor Americanized their name, and you don't know their birth name.
  - ▶ Americanized names were usually derivatives of birth names. For example, Zakrzewski might become Zak or Zakary. Stanishev might become Stanley.
  - ▶ Identify what ship they came on or what ship neighbors came on. Compare immigration lists, which show Americanized names, with Ship Lists or manifests which show birth names
  - ▶ If you can identify where they came from, look for birth or baptismal records of possible birth names along with siblings to find a match

# A Personal Example – William Bailey mid 1600s

- ▶ Phoebe Bailey is a revered ancestor among my Hathaways.
- ▶ She was born a Bailey in Little Compton
- ▶ From colonial records I could easily prove her parents, her grandparents, and even her great grandparents, but her immigrant ancestors alluded me.
- ▶ Old books and other studies identified them as William Bailey and Grace Parsons, but I couldn't find any definitive records, and there were conflicted reports about who they were.
- ▶ There were multiple William Baileys in the area at the time.



# John Bailey

- ▶ I have an image of the tombstone and the will of John Bailey, but no birth or baptismal record.
- ▶ From these we know he was born in 1653 and owned property in Newport, Rhode Island as well as Little Compton. He also owned a weaving business in Portsmouth.
- ▶ I suspect he was William's and Grace's son but need proof.



# Often Quoted Sources

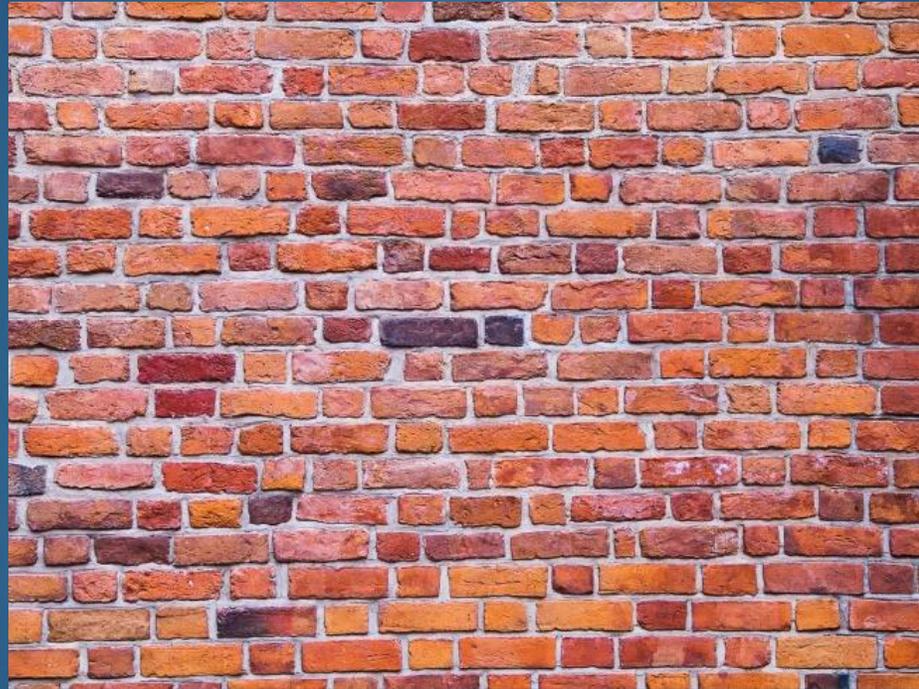
- ▶ Most Genealogies give the book, *Records of the Bailey Family, Descendants of William Bailey of Newport, R.I., by Hannah Bailey Hopkins* published in 1895, as their source.
- ▶ This book contains very little information about William and doesn't provide any valid sources. It names five children, including John, but no birth dates.
- ▶ John Osborn Austin's book, *Genealogical Dictionary of Rhode Island*, published in 1887, is considered a reliable source for early residents of Rhode Island. He mentions William who married Grace Parsons. He does not give birth dates for either but claims William died in 1676, which I easily proved incorrect.
- ▶ Savage, in his famous work, *Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England*, lists many Baileys, but say nothing about a William of Newport.

# Many Baileys, Many Guesses

- ▶ It appears there were at least two, maybe three William Baileys living in Newport/Portsmouth in the mid 1600's
- ▶ Almost all the information on Ancestry, MyHeritage, and Family Search, appears to be copied from either Savage or Hopkins, usually without identifying the source.
- ▶ William Perry Johnson wrote a lengthy paper titled "*Bailey Genealogy*", in 1967, claiming William was the son of William Bailey who was born in England in 1579 and came to Virginia in 1620. His son, William, was born in 1631. This appears to be pure speculation, and there are other assertions in the paper that are clearly incorrect, however his ideas have merit and are not to be ignored lightly.

# No Clear Records for William

- ▶ There are no clear records to prove who William was.



- ▶ We have a brick wall!

# Maybe looking at his wife will help

- ▶ William's wife is reported to be Grace Parsons, the daughter of Hugh Parsons of Portsmouth. If I can prove that, maybe that will help prove my ancestor was William Bailey.
- ▶ Since colonial records often mention males, but seldom females, I start with Hugh Parsons.

# Hugh Parsons

- ▶ Records show Hugh had two daughters from his first marriage, Grace and Hannah.
- ▶ He also had two stepdaughters from his second wife, who was Elizabeth Wood, the widow of John the Mariner Wood, another of my ancestors. This is proven by Hugh's Will. Hugh's Will does not mention Grace.
- ▶ From the Portsmouth Town Records
  - He was involved in a land dispute in 1660 that resulted from the town's construction of a road between his property and Thomas Lawton's.
  - In 1662 he served as a Portsmouth town constable and was involved in tax collection.
  - In 1662 he witnessed a deed between William Corry and William Wood.
  - In 1666 he served on a grand jury.
  - In 1669 he was again a constable of the town.
  - In 1671 and 1673, he served on a grand jury.
  - In 1676 he was again a town constable
  - In 1677 he was a deputy of the Colony Assembly representing Portsmouth.
  - In 1679 and 1681, he again served on a grand jury.

# Declaration in the Portsmouth Records

- ▶ July 20, 1670, Hugh Parson Declared: *“that, having taken into my custody the estate of my grandchild, Hugh Bailey, left and given him by his deceased father, William Bailey, I covenant in the sum of 100 pounds, that at my death and death of present wife, my aforesaid grandson shall be true and absolute owner of all my land I now possess, with buildings, etc.”*
- ▶ This statement proves that William Bailey was Hugh Parsons’s son-in-law. It also shows that William died in or before 1670.

# Reported Family of William and Grace Bailey

1. John, who is my ancestor, was born in 1653 and married Sutton, widow of William Brown, in 1684. John died in 1736.
  2. Joseph was born in 1658-59 and died on October 16, 1702, in Newport.
  3. Hugh was born about 1660 and died in 1724.
  4. Edward was born about 1661-62 and died in 1712
  5. Stephen was born about 1665 and died on October 17, 1724.
- ▶ This list is from Austin. The birth dates are not provable, but the death dates are.

# Thomas Lawton, Neighbor, Benefactor, Husband

- ▶ Searching further through town records I find Thomas Lawton was involved with the Baileys.
- ▶ Thomas Lawton was born in England on April 17, 1614. He Immigrated to Portsmouth in the late 1630s, died there on September 29, 1681.
- ▶ Thomas Lawton was a wealthy man of importance in the colony. He and his brother George were signers of the Portsmouth Compact in 1638 and early settlers in Portsmouth, so they both had substantial land from grants. Thomas and George had land adjoining each other in Portsmouth, now known as Lawton's Valley. George was an overseer of Hugh Parson's Will in 1684. All of this suggests an unusually close relationship between the Lawtons and the Parsons.

# Benefactor

- ▶ There is a deed in the Portsmouth Town Records dated August 13, 1661, from Thomas Lawton to William Bailey and his wife Grace giving them sixty acres of land for farming and hunting on land next to Hugh Parsons's that states Grace is to keep the land after William dies as long as she is a widow and as long as Lawton lives and three years afterward. It also says that William can't sell the land, and if he decides to leave it, it reverts back to Lawton. In addition, William was required to maintain the housing and fencing on the property in good condition.

# Lover and Husband

- ▶ Grace reportedly had an affair with Thomas and then married him after William died.
- ▶ Assuming that Thomas was born in 1614 and Grace around 1634, he was fifty-six in 1670, and she was thirty-six.
- ▶ Grace had five young sons, the oldest being seventeen when William died.
- ▶ From: *“Rhode Island General Court of Trials 1671-1704”* by Jane Fletcher Fiske, 1998: *“Oct. 18, 1671, Upon an Indictment by the Grand Jury against Grace Lawton, the wife of Thomas Lawton, formerly the wife of William Bailey, for committing Adultery with Thomas Lawton. The said Grace being Mandamassed (commanded), Enters pleads Not Guilty and Refers herself for trial all to God and the country. The Jurys Verdict was Not Guilty.”*

# Back to Benefactor

- ▶ From Thomas Lawton's Will written in 1674: *"I do hereby declare that although Grace have not behaved herself towards me as a wife ought to do towards a husband, yet for the manifestation of my care of her I do hereby give and bequeath unto her all the goods that are yet remaining in my custody of those that were hers when I married her, as also one good feather bed and bolster. Item, I give and bequeath unto the said Grace the sum of 12 pounds per annum in current pay at Rhode Island during the time of her natural life to be paid unto her by my executors hereinafter named, in lieu of what right or interest she might have or claim on any of my lands or to any other of my estate."*

# John's Benefactor

- ▶ In John Austin's highly respected and widely quoted book, we find:
- ▶ *"1677, Apr. 29. He (John Bailey) leased the dwelling house, land, and orchard of his stepfather, Thomas Lawton, Portsmouth, and agreed to pay therefore 10 pounds per year to his mother, Grace Lawton, and 3 pounds per year to Elizabeth Sherman, a married daughter of Thomas Lawton. On same date, John Bailey gave a bond for 80 pounds to Thomas Lawton, the obligation being that he said John Bailey should pay 44 pounds in such species as is mentioned in a will or bond made by the Town Council of Portsmouth, for and behalf of Grace Bailey, widow, and ... John Bailey agrees to fulfill terms of the instrument after the death of his mother, Grace."*
- ▶ This legal agreement proves that John was William and Grace's son, and that Thomas Lawton was his stepfather. It also proves Grace was alive in 1677.

# One Popular but Far Out Theory

- ▶ Some claim Grace Parsons did not exist and that the Grace that married Thomas Lawton was the wife of William Sr. from Virginia.
- ▶ The theory claims that our John Bailey was the son of William Sr. and Grace and was born in 1643. Note that William Sr would have been sixty-four in 1643.
- ▶ It also claims that John was William Jr's brother, not his son, that William married Hannah Parsons and that they had one son, Hugh.
- ▶ John's tombstone and will prove he was born in 1653. William Sr would have been seventy-four. This is not credible.

# What have we Proven?

- ▶ From the Lawton deed to John:
  - ▶ John's mother was the Grace that married Thomas Lawton
  - ▶ Thomas Lawton was John's stepfather and benefactor
- ▶ From the court record concerning Adultery:
  - ▶ Grace was the widow of William Bailey
- ▶ From the town records concerning Hugh Parsons:
  - ▶ Hugh Bailey was the son of William Bailey and Hugh Parson's grandson.
  - ▶ Hugh's father, William Bailey, died before mid 1670.
- ▶ Therefore it is proven:
  - ▶ John Bailey's parents were William and Grace Bailey
  - ▶ Hugh Bailey's parents were William Bailey and a daughter of Hugh Parsons.

# Implied but not proven

- ▶ Hugh's mother was Grace Parsons
- ▶ Hugh and John were brothers
- ▶ The Grace Bailey that married Thomas Lawton was Hugh's mother
- ▶ Note that this is not proven, although it seems likely. Hugh Parsons never mentions Grace as his daughter.

# Hypothesis #1

- ▶ Our William Bailey is not the William Bailey or his son William Bailey Jr. who migrated to Portsmouth from Virginia.
- ▶ He was born in England and immigrated to Portsmouth/Newport around 1650.
- ▶ He married Grace Parsons, and they had five sons between 1653 and 1665.
- ▶ William died during or before early 1670.
- ▶ Thomas Lawton married Grace and took care of her and the children, except Hugh, who was under the care of his grandfather, Hugh Parsons.
- ▶ All this fits what Hoskins and Austin, two widely accepted sources, claim.

# Hypothesis #2

- ▶ Hugh Parsons never had a daughter named Grace
- ▶ The William Bailey that married a daughter of Hugh Parsons was John Bailey's brother, not his father, and both of them were the sons of William and Grace Bailey.
- ▶ It was this Grace Bailey that married Thomas Lawton
- ▶ This is plausible only because Hugh Parsons never mentions Grace
- ▶ It is based on William Perry Johnson's claims, but require birth date changes in order for William Sr. to be the father of both John and William Jr.

# One More Tidbit

- ▶ Some genealogists claim (without offering proof) that William was a weaver by trade who established a business in Portsmouth.
- ▶ There is circumstantial evidence that this is true.
- ▶ John Bailey accumulated great wealth as evidenced by his will.
- ▶ In his will he left a large weaving business to his son, Samuel. This was probably the primary source of his wealth.
- ▶ In colonial times, sons usually trained under their fathers. It seems likely that William Bailey was a weaver. As reported, and that he trained his son, who took over after William died.
- ▶ I currently can't prove this assertion.

## Conclusions

- I have found and proven the names of John Bailey's parents, along with some interesting information about them.
- I have a hypothesis for Grace's parents, but haven't proven it.
- William's parents remain unknown

Sometimes to overcome a brick wall, the best approach is to go around it