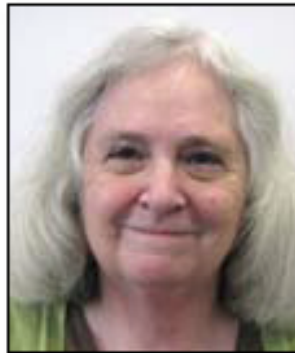


Genealogy Rocks!

Jumping the Pond

Most family historians begin their research in U.S. records such as censuses, deeds, probate records and the like. Eventually, that research will lead to one or more immigrant ancestors. In order to continue the search, it will be necessary to “jump the pond” to a country outside of North America.



Carol Stetser

Many researchers are intimidated by records created in an unknown country, possibly even in an unknown language, but overseas records can actually be easier to use than those created in America. In Europe, most countries had a state church until fairly recently, and that church was tasked with keeping birth, marriage, death and other types of records for all citizens. Many European records are even available online through either free or subscription sites. Even deciphering a foreign language isn't

as difficult as translation sites online are also available.

It is usually quite easy to work backwards in time to find ancestors as far back as the 17th century or even earlier. For example, I have traced my Swedish ancestors back to the late 1600s merely by using online Swedish parish records and without speaking or reading any Swedish!

The biggest issue with researching overseas is knowing where to start. Nearly all of the records were kept at a local level, so it's crucial to know the exact town or parish. Obituaries, local county histories and naturalization records in the U.S. often specify a person's place of origin. Once parish location is determined, jumping the pond is simple and a great way to extend your family tree.

❖ *Carol Stetser is the society researcher for Larimer County Genealogical Society. Our society has monthly programs and many free classes available on our website at www.lcgsc.org or our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/lcgsc.*