

Getting past those brick walls

(with examples from my research)

(also for demonstration I have used a few from "Alexander born at sea" which is not mine but since we are related somehow without a doubt way back and not before having any references have wondered about some of the facts for this family)

Information that is incorrect will most likely produce a brick wall

- **knowing what they may be** is a great help to know where to research more
- **be skeptical to ALL information** - no matter how sure you are that it seems to be correct you may irritate older relations when you don't expect what they tell you as a fact (I have definitely irritated some)

Go through your information especially your oldest known generations and **change facts that are not known 99.9% to be true** to

Reported Maybe Possibly Most likely Hearsay

And **date most of them to source** so you later know how long after event it was reported

Reported 2 years after most likely, 50 years after probably and a 100 years or more is only maybe

Here is what I would write *with the information I know (this is not my family)*

Alexander Nisbet b ca 1731 **was reported in 1898 to have been born at sea** his father is John Nisbet b ca 1705 **maybe in Hardhill Scotland** and mother is Sarah Brevard

*(I have used **maybe Hardhill** assuming this information was from 1898 almost 200 years after the fact)*

As both these facts to my knowledge were reported almost 200 years later they may not be correct but from other known records the year 1731 is most likely correct b ca

If I didn't have other information for birth year I would have written

was reported in 1898 to have been born at sea in 1731

From above there is possibility that he was not born Hardhill and a slight possibility not born at sea

(I have a paternal ancestor (British Army not my Nisbet line) reported to be born at sea on way from Britian to India that I am almost 99% sure he wasn't **and if I had not questioned the information had never found his baptism recorded two months before his parents sailed from England to India** more about him later)

Do this also for books

when was it published

and how well referenced to sources

or is it just taken from a lot of other books and sources

Try and find original resource

Very little is a 100% correct

Errors in original records when recorded

by the recorder especially if there is one from another county

I transcribed a long time ago some records recorded by a German priest for Irish immigrants in Canada and there **was no doubt errors because of misunderstanding from the different accents**

or when **informant doesn't remember correct information**

My mother's date of birth is a day off as when her father **registered it he mixed up the day so she is officially born 25th but actually born 26th** and it has never been corrected and she considers her b'day as 25th

The longer after the fact is recorded the more chance there is an error (maybe more so if the father reported??)

Information purposely recorded wrong

My maternal grandfather **lied about his age to enlist in WWI as he was too young** so his birth year is given as 1898 instead of 1899 (a easy error for me to find since I knew when he was born but **if it was older generation would have given me trouble if I only looked for that year**)

I have also **same paternal ancestor** (not a Nisbet as my mother is a Nisbet) **mentioned above to have been born at sea**

I have **loads of information and very good references that says he was born at sea**

as well as year born that varies from 1836 to 1842.

He was **a member of Parliament in Manitoba and even books given out when he was still alive give wrong information such who is "who in Manitoba" as do government and military records.** This wrong information keeps getting repeated from source to source

Both he , his father and grandfather where in the British Army

by following Muster rolls and other Army records I have found **he enlisted at a very young age and no doubt lied about his age** to enlist earlier that what was allowed

(they were a allowed to enlist at age 10) **and he enlisted at age 7**

and the extra pay no doubt helped the family wonder if the born at sea also was so his birth record couldn't be checked.

Family hearsay and stories of older generations and family history sometimes is not true but often there is some kind of truth in it

Related to famous person often it is not true but often there is some kind of truth in it

Don't think that **if surname is same it automatically means relationship is the direct male line**

Maybe a **relation through marriage not blood relation**

**My mothers maternal family was told they were related to Belgian royal family (incorrect)
my great grandfather inherited the right to a title as Count (correct)**

**The 1st did have some truth in that a direct ancestor had a brother that married a relation of the royal family
but they were of course not related to me**

Follow other known children they may have a record that gives you needed information

My Nisbet ancestor mentioned before who was baptized at age 21 led me to check for possible siblings and I found 2 sisters also baptized after age 14 and the original records said their father was a Quaker the reason they were not baptized earlier

So by checking Quaker records I found his probable wife

Check others of same name in area for information and a connection and follow them for a generation or 2 may produce that piece of information you need

I have solved 2 brick walls by doing this

One is a **testament in 1720 to a sister that I did not know existed** that **mentioned her brother German as John Nisbet of Chapleton** and **her father as James of Auchinairn** without that I would have stopped with my John in Chapleton

Another was in Canada that **solved were an Irish ancestor born in 1816 came from**

I found in a local paper in late 1800s for a family in area of same name an article (daughter of a cousin of his that I didn't know about) telling where she came from in Ireland and about her trip

Further research in Ireland **turned up one of his children's baptisms in that place**

Follow naming patterns if actual for nationality

This has **often** helped to know what names of parents may be and narrow your search

Beware as there are exceptions among them

Oldest child name after parent may have **died young** so oldest is actual 2nd or 3rd child

I have also found in Scottish research that sometimes if they **married late the oldest male child was after the father instead of Paternal grandfather**-no doubt were afraid they wouldn't have any more sons that could be named after them

Expand the years you are looking event may have been recorded long after the fact

One of my direct male Nisbet ancestors born 1768 in Scotland **had his birth/baptism registered when he was 21 if I had not checked original records for area** and expanded years I would never have found him and that would have ended my research of that line

Check original records

I had a marriage from indexes for John Nisbet married to Agnes **Miller the original gave me the information that he was a portioner of Kessington** this information helped get me past my brickwall as **being a portioner he owned rights to a portion of land** and **finding this information in Sasines gave his wife's name same as from Quaker records above** name as well as a lot of other information such as his part was also called Chapleton

The Chapleton also led me to another relation in Australia that had copies of letters from 1840 to 1860 written by family members which erased the one "most likely" in 1800 that I had on my ancestor Nisbet line as a couple of the letters were written by him LUCK HELPS

They may have been a lot older when married than you think

Many of my Nisbets were **married after 30 some as late as 40 years old** so my original **estimated birth years for them were off** by a lot