Means, Motive, & Opportunity: The Sad Saga of George Richards

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Prepared and Presented by Jean Wilcox Hibben – PhD, MA
Riverside County, California;
909-994-6114; email: circlemending@gmail.com
blog: www.circlemending.blogspot.com
website: https://circlemending.org

I. Work from the known to the unknown
   - A. Interviews (keep in mind that memories blur with age; use information as clues but do not disregard information that appears to contradict the family stories)
   - B. Family Documents/Photos/Memorabilia/Newspaper articles
   - C. Census Records (US or other, as appropriate; state; specialized; etc.)

II. Use Internet sites but keep these as just one resource – consider others (see below)
   - A. Ancestry.com (all or part of which is free at FamilySearch Centers, NARA & some libraries)
     1. Census records
     2. Immigration records
     3. Military data
     4. City directories
     5. Family trees (see comment #4 under FamilySearch.org, in B, below)
     6. more and more and more
   - B. FamilySearch.org – on "Search" tab
     1. "Records"
     2. "Catalog"
     3. "Books"
     4. "Trees" (use for clues, then look up the resources provided for yourself; do not rely on published trees as sole sources of evidence)
     5. FamilySearch WIKI (for background on hundreds of topics)
   - C. NARA – https://archives.gov (note: before ordering military records, check Fold3.com for online copies – Fold3 is free at FamilySearch Centers & NARA)
     1. Military records
     2. Pension records
     3. Immigration records
     4. Land records (also check the Bureau of Land Management)
   - D. CyndisList.com
     1. County websites
     2. Vital Records sources
     3. Family websites (be cautious in accepting information as fact)
     4. Everything! (Please leave donation so she can keep this resource going)
   - E. Newspaper websites & archives; here are a few to get you started:
     1. https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/
     2. https://newspapers.com
     3. https://newspaperarchive.com
     4. https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/
     5. https://FultonHistory.com
     5. Local libraries, websites, historical societies, etc.

F. https://stephenmorse.com
   1. Immigration records
   2. Easy searches for many databases
G. Find-a-Grave.com

III. Examine Records (some on Ancestry, more available at FamilySearch Centers; some digitized and viewable ONLY at FamilySearch or FamilySearch Libraries/Centers; some digitized and online for viewing at home) (select through the FamilySearch catalog)
A. Wills
B. Deeds
C. Vital Records
D. State census records
E. Business directories
F. Cemetery records
G. And more and more

Due to visitation protocol changes because of the pandemic, contact repositories, libraries, etc. in advance for updated hours (may differ from website info) & to make appointments. Be prepared to wear a mask, even if vaccinated, &/or to show proof of vaccination

IV. Do on-site research
A. Historical societies/libraries
   1. Family files
   2. Newspapers
   3. Cemetery records
   4. Local histories & mug books
   5. Business & telephone directories
B. Court houses and other public repositories
   1. Wills and probate records
   2. Deeds and property documents
   3. Court case records
C. Cemeteries
   1. Burial records
   2. Headstones
D. Churches
   1. Baptism records
   2. Marriage records
   3. Death/burial records
   4. Family/church histories

Conclusion: No one method (e.g., Internet research) should ever be considered the only path in tracking a family's life or trying to identify an elusive ancestor. Al-ways consider auxiliary lines (siblings, uncles, aunts, cousins; even neighbors can provide info that will help you trace YOUR people). Also, consider the history of the geographic area & the demographics, economics, & politics of the towns and states where your family settled.

V. Research from home via phone (but research online first to keep from wasting your time or that of any researcher/clerk/service rep/volunteer trying to assist you)
A. Record repositories
B. Libraries
C. Historical Societies

FROM THIS PROGRAM, HERE ARE A FEW HINTS:
1) Do not accept data placed on FamilySearch BY FamilySearch unless you have personally researched it & found it accurate.
2) Use a timeline or "life chart" to identify potentially contradictory information (e.g., a person cannot be born after he has immigrated to the United States).
3) Learn all you can about the different, applicable occupations & the companies or factories that were in the region.
4) Learn about what was happening in local as well as regional, country-wide, & world-wide.
5) Use maps!