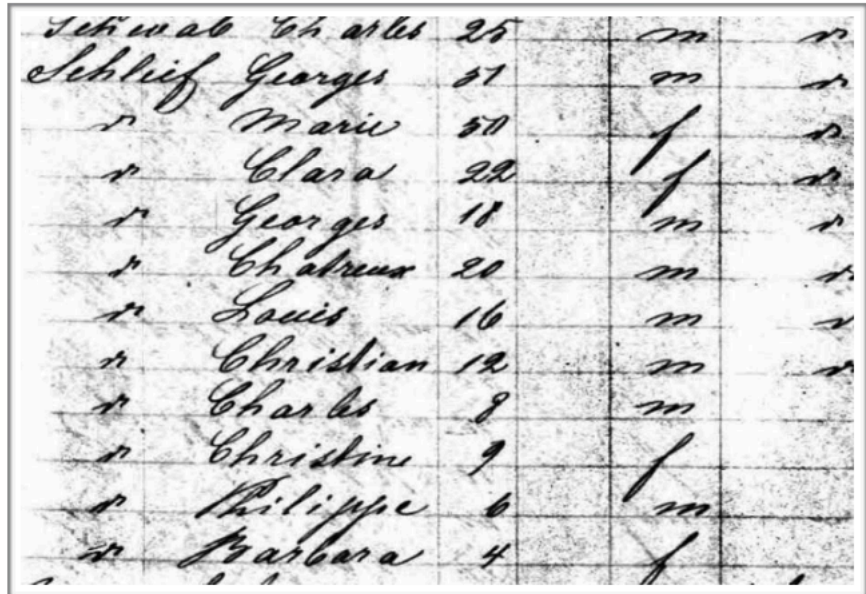


# Thinking Outside of the Box

By Sue Hassenmiller

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What do you do when you can't find your great, great grandfather's marriage record or his naturalization papers, and he doesn't show up in the census? His many brothers and sisters also did not want to reveal any information on where the family came from.



Schwab Charles	25	m	n
Schlif Georges	21	m	n
" Marie	20	f	n
" Clara	20	f	n
" Georges	18	m	n
" Chabreaux	20	m	n
" Louis	16	m	n
" Christian	12	m	n
" Charles	9	m	n
" Christine	9	f	n
" Philippe	6	m	n
" Barbara	4	f	n

Schlif family on passenger list for the St Nicolas, out of Le Havre, France to New York, 1850.

After finding the passenger list for my maternal grandfather's mother's side of the family, I was obsessed with finding out where they came from in Europe.

For my 10th birthday, I received a Rand McNally World Atlas. I spent many hours going through the atlas, dreaming of the places I wanted to visit. Even then, I wondered where all my ancestors had come from. It became a goal of my genealogy research - find the home village and then go to visit it.

I knew where my maternal grandmother came from in Sweden because my grandmother wrote letters to and received letters from relatives in Jonstorp, Malmo, Sweden. I know that my father's family came from Potenza, Italy because the family had my grandfather's naturalization papers. But no one in my mother's family knew where the Schlif family came from in Europe, only that they had settled originally in both Fond du Lac and Washington counties in Wisconsin.

After finding their passenger list while on my first trip to the Salt Lake Family History Library, I knew the whole family came over on the same ship - the St Nicolas, from Le Havre, France to New York, arriving on 13 April 1850.

After going to a genealogy conference in Portland and attending a lecture on loose records, I decided that loose records in the two counties could be the key to finding my answer. But how to get to them was the question.

Going back to Wisconsin was not on my schedule at the time and, of course, I wanted to know ASAP. I got to wondering if there was anyone named "Schlief" still living in the area. Since cell phones had not yet been invented, it was still possible to order telephone books from the telephone companies. So, I ordered the telephone books for Fond Du Lac and Washington counties. When they came, I wrote letters to all the Schlief's listed, giving what information I had and asking if they had any information on the family. Several answers said they were not related and did not know anything. Then the letter from David Schlief arrived. He was the descendant of Phillip Schlief, my ancestor's brother. He was interested in learning about the family and where they came from. David also said that he had just retired and asked if he could help. Luckily he had included his phone number which I already had in the phone books, so in a fairly long call, I told him what to look for at the court houses.

About a week and half later, as I was walking up the driveway to the house after getting off the bus, my husband yelled from the porch to come quickly. It seemed that David was calling every half hour to see if I was home from work. (Remember no cell phones at the time). He had lucked out. David had found the first son's first marriage record. On it was written his birth location - Aspisheim, Hassen Darmstart.

So several years later on a trip to Europe, we stopped in Aspisheim. It is located near Mainz, Germany, founded in the year 700 A.D. and surrounded by vineyards. The cemetery offered a whole family tree, if one had the time to record all the names. The mayor, at the time of our visit, was related to the Schlief family. Sometimes one has to come up with their own research ideas!