
Finding the Irish Origins of Charles Doherty

By Elizabeth Kelley Kerstens, CGRS, CGL

Genealogists tracing immigrants face daunting challenges, including vague information regarding origins. Research that includes all possibly relevant sources, pursues all possible clues, and expands beyond a single nuclear family can lead to success in such situations.

Irish ancestors can be particularly adept at playing hide-and-seek with clues to their origins. Family tradition can provide an answer or send the researcher on a fruitless chase. Often when an Irishman was asked where he came from, he responded with the port of departure from Ireland rather than the townland of origin. Generations of descendants may have perpetuated the misunderstanding, making the search that much more difficult. In other families, Irish progenitors may have hidden their origins to avoid the anti-Irish discrimination that was common in the United States in the last half of the nineteenth century.¹ Still other families may have no oral tradition of origins other than “Ireland.”

Such was the case with Charles Francis Doherty, who was born in 1858. Research in the genealogically rich records of Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Detroit revealed that his parents were “Caroli [Charles] Dougherty” and “Maria Helena Piquette.”² This Charles Doherty was unknown to living descendants; therefore no oral tradition was available to begin filling in the blanks.

BEGIN WITH THE CORNERSTONES

As with any new ancestor, Irish or not, research typically begins with the cornerstones—censuses and vital records. Only one Charles Dougherty (of any spelling) appeared in federal census records for Detroit in 1850—a twenty-eight-year-old clerk born in Ireland who was living with a James Toomey family.³ It is

© Elizabeth Kelley Kerstens, CGRS, CGL; Post Office Box 6386; Plymouth, MI 48170-8486. A generational historian, author, and editor, Ms. Kerstens specializes in Irish research.

1. For an article on the falsification of immigrant origins, see Elizabeth Kelley Kerstens, “What If Your Ancestor Lied?” *Ancestry* 22 (May/June 2004): 63–65. For an example of an ancestor who suppressed her Irish origins to avoid discrimination, see Marya Myers, “Overcoming Irishness in Boston: Ann (Anglin-Pettengill) Merritt’s Climb to ‘Respectability,’” *NGS Quarterly* 86 (September 1998): 166–88.

2. Carolus Franciscus Dougherty entry (12 September 1858), Baptism Register, 1850–1939, unpaginated, arranged by date, Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Detroit; microfilm 1252, reel 3, Burton Historical Collection (BHC), Detroit, Mich.

3. James Toomey household, 1850 U.S. census, Wayne Co., Mich., population schedule, Detroit, District 27, p. 42, dwelling 403, family 494; National Archives (NA) microfilm publication M432, roll 365.

unclear whether this Charles was the father of Charles Frances Doherty. In any case, Charles and Mary were found in Detroit with their young family in both the 1860 and 1870 federal censuses.⁴ These censuses indicated that Charles was born in Ireland and Mary in New York. In the 1880, 1900, and 1910 federal censuses for Detroit, Mary was listed as a widow living at 12 National Avenue.⁵ Mary's address lay in a Detroit neighborhood called Corktown. In the latter half of the 1800s, many of the native Irish took up residence in Corktown, where their social life revolved around the then-Irish Catholic church of Most Holy Trinity.⁶ Mary lived about seven blocks from the church.

As the censuses imply that Charles died between 1870 and 1880, a search was conducted of the burial registers of Most Holy Trinity Church for that decade. The record documents Charles's death on 18 February 1876 at the age of fifty-six years and his burial three days later.⁷ The Wayne county certificate of Charles's death, recorded on the same date as the church burial record, reports that he died of inflammation of the lungs, his age was thirty-five, he was married, and his parents' names were unknown.⁸

John Doherty, the first child of Charles and Mary, was born in 1851–52, according to the 1860 census. Consistent with that birth date, the Most Holy Trinity marriage records report that John's parents, "Carolus [Charles] Dougherty" and "Maria Helena Picket," married on 16 September 1850.⁹ The marriage record, which names Charles's parents as John Doherty and Margaret Lynch, provided the first breakthrough to extend the line another generation.

Reports of Charles's birth date vary widely, which is typical for Irish immigrants. The 1850 marriage certificate specifies that he was twenty-five years old, putting his birth in 1824–25. His church burial record places his birth in 1819–20. The 1860 census implies that Charles was born in 1824–25, and the 1870 census, which states his age as fifty-two, indicates that he was born in 1817–18. The county death certificate implies that he was born in 1840–41, which is not believable for a man who married in 1850.

4. Chas. Donaty household, 1860 U.S. census, Wayne Co., Mich., pop. sch., Detroit, Ward 9, p. 68, dwell. 572, fam. 537; NA microfilm M653, roll 556. Also, Charles Doherty household, 1870 U.S. census, Wayne Co., Mich., pop. sch., Detroit, Ward 9, p. 201, dwell. 1568, fam. 1523; NA microfilm M593, roll 715.

5. Mary Dougherty household, 1880 U.S. census, Wayne Co., Mich., pop. sch., Detroit, District 295, enumeration district (ED) 295, p. 48, dwell. 456, fam. 473; NA microfilm T9, roll 613. Also Mary Doherty household, 1900 U.S. census, Wayne Co., Mich., pop. sch., Detroit, ED 91, sheet 14, dwell. 300, fam. 320; NA microfilm T623, roll 680. Also, Mary E. Doherty household, 1910 U.S. census, Wayne Co., Mich., pop. sch., Detroit, Ward 8, ED 111, sheet 1A, dwell./fam. 6; NA microfilm T624, roll 683.

6. JoEllen McNergney Vinyard, "The Irish on the Urban Frontier: Detroit, 1850–1880" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1972), 78, 82–84.

7. Charles Doherty entry (18 February 1876), Burial Register, unpaginated, arranged by date, Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Detroit, Mich.; BHC microfilm 1286, reel 6.

8. Charles Doherty entry, Wayne Co. Deaths 3: 207, County Clerk's Office, Detroit, Mich.

9. Dougherty-Picket marriage, 16 September 1850, Marriages 1850–1910, unpaginated, arranged by date, Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Detroit; BHC microfilm 1286, reel 5.

BEYOND THE BASICS

Searching the census, vital records, and church registers revealed many important pieces of information about Charles Doherty, including his parents' names and his death date. However, they indicated only "Ireland" as his place of origin—information that was too broad to be useful. Locating his origins more exactly required deeper study of Charles's life. His residence narrowed the choice of sources to search next. Charles lived in the city of Detroit, where newspapers, cemetery records, and city directories are available. (Had he lived in a rural area, farm directories, county histories with biographical sketches, records at local libraries and historical societies, and more detailed obituaries in newspapers, might have been helpful, as well as cemetery records.)

Charles's death was announced in *The Evening News* in Detroit on the day after his death.¹⁰ The notice was brief, as is frequently the case in cities, and gave no biographical information. Researchers should not bypass an urban newspaper, however, because it might include a detailed obituary.

Tombstones of Irish natives frequently contain information on the decedent's place of origin. Therefore, researchers pursuing Irish ancestors should visit the cemetery or obtain a photograph of the gravestone. Cemetery transcriptions, which may be incomplete, should not be a substitute for visiting the cemetery. For example, transcriptions may include only names and dates and not the other writing or symbols on the marker. Their primary value is in identifying the location of a burial. Death certificates, death notices, or obituaries also may help researchers locate an ancestor's grave site. Without that information it may be difficult to determine where the ancestor is buried without checking every cemetery in the area. Catholic ancestors in the United States probably were buried in Catholic cemeteries, although the same is not always true for burials in Ireland. Catholic churches often used a specific cemetery, so a call to the church could quickly narrow the search.

Mount Elliott Cemetery, founded in Detroit in 1841 as a result of population growth in the Irish community, originally was the parish cemetery for Most Holy Trinity.¹¹ Although other Catholic parishes used the cemetery in later years, it remained the cemetery of choice for Holy Trinity parishioners. Charles Doherty was buried at Mount Elliott, as was his wife Mary, but the tombstone states only their names and years of birth and death. The cemetery's plot card adds nothing to the research.¹²

The first mention of Charles Doherty in Detroit city directories occurs in

10. Charles Doherty death notice, *Evening News*, Detroit, Mich., 19 February 1876, p. 1.

11. Mt. Elliott Cemetery, *A History of Mt. Elliott Cemetery* ([Detroit?]: privately printed, no date), 2.

12. Charles and Mary E. Doherty tombstone and plot card, graves 5–6, lot 635, section 84, Mt. Elliott Cemetery, Detroit, Mich.; photographed by the author on 16 October 1995. The dates on Charles's gravestone, 1819–1876, are consistent with the church burial record cited previously.

the 1852–53 volume. He was a laborer living on Beech Street.¹³ The entries for 1862–65 are the most meaningful genealogically. In those directories, Charles's occupation was either soldier or "USA"—for United States Army.¹⁴ Considering that the family had no tradition of a Civil War soldier, this crucial information might have been overlooked if some directories had been skipped.

With the information about possible military service, a return to census records was in order. The 1890 *Special Schedules Enumerating Union Veterans and Widows of Veterans of the Civil War* still survive for Michigan as well as the other states alphabetically after Kentucky (about half of the Kentucky schedules also remain).¹⁵ Because Charles died in 1876, the census might enumerate Mary and reveal Charles's military unit. Interestingly, the census names Charles and does not mention his widow, perhaps because it was viewed as a "veterans census." He was enumerated at the address where the family had lived since the 1860s—12 National Avenue in Detroit. The census indicates that Charles had been a private in Company A, Fifteenth United States Infantry, from 1862 to 1865.¹⁶

Soldiers who served during the Civil War and later—whether as volunteers or in the regular military establishment—could have created two important records that might help in the quest for a place of origin. The easiest to find is a pension file.¹⁷ Not all soldiers qualified for a military pension—or even applied for one—but those who did left an often rewarding paper trail. If the soldier died while enlisted, his wife, a dependent, or parent may have applied. Charles Doherty was receiving a pension of four dollars a month at the time of his death. Mary's widow's pension was approved on 18 October 1888 with back pay beginning 19 February 1876 at eight dollars per month.¹⁸

13. J. Shove, *Shove's Business Advertiser and Detroit Directory, 1852–1853* (Detroit: Free Press Book and Job Office Print, 1852), 118.

14. *Clark's Annual Directory of . . . Detroit, for 1862-'3 . . .* (Detroit: Charles F. Clark, 1862), 189; and *Clark's Annual Directory of . . . Detroit, for 1864-'5* (Detroit: Charles F. Clark, 1864), 115.

15. 1890 Federal Population Census, online <http://www.archives.gov/publications/microfilm_catalogs/census_schedules/1790_1890_federal_population_census.html>.

16. Charles Doherty entry, 1890 U.S. census, Wayne Co., Mich., special schedules enumerating Union veterans and widows of Union veterans of the Civil War, Detroit, ED 253, unpaginated, dwell. 222, fam. 237; NA microfilm M123, roll 17.

17. Ancestry.com has indexed and scanned the index cards for National Archives microfilm publication T288, *General Index to Pension Files, 1861–1934*. Anyone can search the database, which Ancestry.com calls the "Civil War Pension Index," but a subscription is needed to view the scanned images. The files are not microfilmed, but researchers with a reference to a pension application file number can request the file at the National Archives or order photocopies via mail or the Archives Web site, "Order Online!," <<https://eservices.archives.gov/orderonline/start.sw?SWECmd=Start>>. Researchers have the option of ordering the complete file to ensure that they obtain all of the possibly relevant documents.

18. Charles Doherty, Deceased, Mary E. Doherty, Widow, Original Invalid Claim, form 3-125, dated 15 October 1888, and Mary E. Doherty, widow's pension application, form 3-128, dated 18 October 1888, Charles Doherty (Private, Company A, 15th U.S. Infantry) file, soldier's certificate SC 411,267 and widow's certificate WC 248,361; Case Files of Approved Applications of Widows and Other Dependents of Veterans of the Army and Navy who Served Mainly in the Civil War and the War with Spain ("Civil War and Later Widow's Certificates"), 1861–1934; Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Record Group (RG) 15; National Archives, Washington.

The file shows that Charles enlisted on 14 February 1862 in Detroit and was discharged at Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, 14 February 1865.¹⁹ None of the records in the inch-thick pension application file indicates where Charles was born, but several documents give details about his family and advance the investigation. The most significant is a deposition by Charles's widow, Mary. She described her husband's robust health before entering the Army and said that he came back a weak man. She compared his health with that of his family, stating:

I saw my husband's father[,] he lived to be about 90 years old was very stout for that age. I understand his mother died at childbirth when my husband was born & one sister died age 64 years was only sick about three days took a severe cold and he has a brother living in Oakland Co. [Michigan—just northwest of Wayne County] near 82 years old and I understand he has two brothers living in Ireland but I don't know them.²⁰

The second military document that could assist with the search for a place of origin is the soldier's enlistment paper. These are original, unfiled records available at the National Archives.²¹ Enlistment records of soldiers in the regular army are in a separate series from volunteer soldiers' records. They are filed by soldier's name, but an approximate date of enlistment or age will help in the search. If the soldier was a volunteer, the enlistment paper can sometimes be found filed with the compiled military service records. The enlistment paper contains a space for the soldier's birthplace. For a person born abroad, the information may be specific. In Charles Doherty's case, however, the enlistment paper says merely that he was born in Ireland and that his age was thirty-five.²² This information places his birth in 1826–27 and expands the range of credible years for his birth to 1818–27.

As is often the case in the search for Irish ancestors, none of the documents pertaining to Charles revealed his place of origin. A direction for further research was indicated, however. Charles's widow had reported that he had siblings and a father who lived to be at least ninety. Because Mary had met this man, he may have lived in the United States.

EXTENDED FAMILY RESEARCH

The closest extant population census to the date of Mary's deposition (1888) is the 1880 United States census. The census was searched for Charles Doherty's

19. Letter from J. R. Martin, Assistant Adjutant General, to The Commissioner of Pensions, Washington, D.C., dated 17 April 1871, Charles Doherty pension application file, soldier's certificate SC 411,267 and widow's certificate WC 248,361; National Archives.

20. Mary E. Dougherty deposition A, dated 4 June 1888, Charles Doherty pension application file, soldier's certificate SC 411,267 and widow's certificate WC 248,361; National Archives.

21. "Registers of Enlistment in the U.S. Army, 1798–1914," Records of the Adjutant General's Office, RG 94; NA microfilm M233 (81 rolls), contains much of the same information as the enlistment papers and also may contain details of the soldier's service.

22. Charles Doherty enlistment record, entry 91, Second Series, 1798 to July 14, 1894, Enlistment Papers of the Regular Army, 1794 to 31 October 1912; RG 94; National Archives.

Oakland County, Michigan, brother, who would have been about age seventy-four in 1880. Only one possibility emerged—Nicholas Doherty, age seventy-one, born in Ireland and living in White Lake Township, Oakland County. (One other “Dorrity” born in Ireland was listed but, at age thirty-five, he was not a viable candidate for Charles’s brother.)

Nicholas Doherty was found in the federal census for White Lake Township in every decade from 1840 to 1880 and the 1845 Michigan state census.²³ He was not found in the 1900 federal census. Because Nicholas was always listed as a farmer with real estate of considerable value and because he was in Michigan so soon after its 1837 statehood was achieved, he might have acquired land from the federal government. A search of Michigan land patents on the Bureau of Land Management’s Web site under the surname “Doherty” revealed two Edmonds, three Jameses, and one Joseph.²⁴ All but one entry for James were from the Detroit Land Office. Both entries for Edmond were in fact land transactions for Edmond, Nicholas, and James Doherty, of Oakland County.²⁵ When the land descriptions were compared with the township map for Oakland County, both tracts were found in White Lake Township. Could Edmond, Nicholas, and James have been Charles’s brothers?

The next step was to see if any information about these Dohertys appeared in county histories or “mug” books. A letter to the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society in Pontiac, Michigan, proved to be the catalyst for revealing the identity and origins of the three Dohertys. The volunteer who responded sent copies of the pertinent pages from *History of Oakland County, Michigan* and other Doherty family documents and traditions. The following excerpt provides possible answers to several questions:

Nicholas Doherty left county Tipperary, Ireland, in March, 1834, and arrived at New York city the first day of May. . . . He entered three hundred and twenty acres of government land on sections 25 and 26, and now resides on a portion of it, on section 26. His two brothers, Edmund and James, accompanied him. . . . Edmund, the oldest of the brothers, afterwards went back to Ireland; James entered the United States

23. Nickelow Dohney household, 1840 U.S. census, Oakland Co., Mich., White Lake Twp., p. 42, line 12; NA microfilm M704, roll 209. Also, Nicholas Dougherty household, 1850 U.S. census, Oakland Co., Mich., pop. sch., White Lake Twp., p. 16, dwell. 2151, fam. 2188; NA microfilm M432, roll 359. Also, Nicholas Doherty household, 1860 U.S. census, Oakland Co., Mich., pop. sch., White Lake Twp., p. 196, dwell. 1470, fam. 1433; NA microfilm M653, roll 556. Also, Nicholas Dougherty household, 1870 U.S. census, Oakland Co., Mich., pop. sch., White Lake Twp., p. 3, dwell. 21, fam. 20; NA microfilm M593, roll 695. Also, Nicholas Doherty household, 1880 U.S. census, Oakland Co., Mich., pop. sch., White Lake Twp., ED 275, sheet 3, dwell./fam. 30; NA microfilm T9, roll 599. Also, Oakland County Genealogical Society, *Michigan State Census for Oakland County, 1845* (Birmingham, Mich.: Oakland County Genealogical Society, 1985), 245. In the latter source, Nicholas is enumerated as Nickolass Dorherty.

24. “Bureau of Land Management: General Land Office Records,” online <<http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/>>.

25. Edmond Doherty, Nicholas Doherty, and James Doherty cash entry files, final certificates 10954 and 10955, 3 August 1839, Detroit Land Office, Michigan, Land Entry Files; Records of the Bureau of Land Management, RG 49; National Archives.

regular army, and died in the service. Nicholas has lived on his farm ever since he arrived in the country.²⁶

Suspecting that Nicholas was in fact the brother that Mary Doherty referred to in her deposition, the researcher turned to heritage centers in Ireland. These centers have extracted and indexed genealogical records for their respective areas, including those of Catholic rites.²⁷ County Tipperary is large. Tipperary North Family History Research Centre covers north Tipperary, and Bro Boru Cultural Heritage Centre covers south Tipperary. Bro Boru provided a computer printout containing the baptism details for Charles Doherty, son of John Doherty and Margaret Lynch, born 3 April 1818 and baptized in Caher Parish in the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore.²⁸ The transcription, which was later confirmed with the microfilm version of the baptism records at the National Library of Ireland, does not provide a baptism date or townland. Neither heritage center had information on Charles's apparent brothers, Edmund, James, and Nicholas Doherty.

County Tipperary is unique in that it has not only the two heritage centers but also Tipperary Family History Research (TFHR), located in Tipperary town. TFHR (formerly the Tipperary Heritage Unit) is the only organization with access to Catholic records of the Diocese of Cashel and Emlý, which covers most of County Tipperary. Researchers, who are not permitted to consult the records themselves, must go through this organization to get information from parish records in this diocese. The Tipperary Heritage Unit (THU) provided a printout indicating that Edmund Doherty was likely a brother of Charles, as Edmund's parents were John "O'Doherty" and Margaret Lynch.²⁹ Additionally, the THU provided a printout of the baptism of Margaret Doherty, daughter of John Doherty and Margaret "Lynche."³⁰ Margaret Doherty could have been the sister of Charles who died at age sixty-four, according to Mary Doherty's deposition. Both Edmund's and Margaret's baptism records specify that their parents were living in Cashel. No record of baptism was found for Nicholas or James. Although these extracts are derivative sources, they led to original records verifying the family's

26. *History of Oakland County, Michigan, With Illustrations Descriptive of its Scenery, Palatial Residences, Public Buildings, Fine Blocks, and Important Manufactories, from Original Sketches by Artists of the Highest Ability* (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1877), 184.

27. To find a heritage center in Ireland, visit the Irish Family History Foundation Web site, "Welcome to 'Irish Roots'," online <<http://www.irishroots.net/>>.

28. "Birth Research Screen," printout in the author's possession from Bro Boru Cultural Heritage Centre, Cashel, Co. Tipperary, Ireland. The printout includes an extract of Charles's birth record from Caher Parish Register 2: 208, entry 395.

29. "Baptismal Record Search in the Parish of Cashel, 29 September 1997," printout in the author's possession from the Tipperary Heritage Unit, Tipperary, Co. Tipperary, Ireland. The printout includes a reference to Edmund Doherty's baptism, 9 March 1807, Baptismal Register Cash/120, record 2043, Cashel Parish, Diocese of Cashel and Emlý, Ireland.

30. *Ibid.* The printout includes a reference to Margaret Doherty's baptism, 9 November 1815, Baptismal Register Cash/170, record 4934, Cashel Parish.

residence in the townland of Outeragh, County Tipperary, a short distance from Caher and Cashel.³¹

FURTHER RESEARCH

As often happens, once the hard work of proving the origin of Charles Doherty was accomplished, documents appeared that would have aided the search tremendously. Correspondence with another descendant of Charles revealed a handwritten family story detailing the history of the John Doherty family and listing six children: Edmund, Nicholas, Matthew, Margaret, James, and Charles.³² The story focused on the family of the daughter Margaret, who married James Conklin and lived in Livingston County, Michigan (just west of Oakland County). Research into Margaret's family led to tombstones for the family and for her father, John. Etchings on both Margaret's and John's tombstones read "a native of Co. Tipperary, Ireland." John's tombstone also indicates that he died "Jan. 20, 1854, aged 94 years," giving further credence to Mary Doherty's deposition in her pension request. Margaret's tombstone states she died "Mar. 1, 1879, aged 62 years, 9 months."³³

CONCLUSION

Charles, son of John Doherty and Margaret (née Lynch) Doherty, was baptized 3 April 1818 in Caher Parish in the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore, County Tipperary, Ireland. The record documenting his birth, parentage, and precise Irish place of origin lay at the end of a circuitous path that began with the baptism of Charles's son in Detroit in 1858. The circuit wove through vital records, censuses, and city directories that indicated Charles's army service during the Civil War. His widow's pension application testimony revealed that Charles's father and brothers had lived in Michigan—information previously unknown to Charles's descendants. Records of those relatives pointed to the Irish county of origin. At the end of the path, correspondence with the county's genealogical research centers unearthed Charles's baptismal record and other information about the family.

The search for Charles Doherty's Irish origins would have failed if the researcher had not painstakingly pursued every source on the path from Detroit to Caher. Spot checking city directory entries, for example, could have missed the

31. For example, John Doherty to Edmond Doherty, mortgage, Memorial Book 1841, 77: 23, Registry of Deeds, Dublin.

32. Mary Eveline (née Doherty) Treadwell, "History of the Captain John Doherty Family" (1940); owned 1998 by her grandson John Parkhurst, Wilton, Conn. Author Treadwell's handwritten account is based on a story written or told by Mary Conklin, daughter of Margaret (née Doherty) Conklin. For more on this family story and how it was proved, see Elizabeth Kelley Kerstens, "Fact or Blarney? Proving the Legacies Left by Irish Storytellers," *Ancestry* 17 (March/April 1999): 60–63.

33. John Doherty tombstone, row 17, stone 156, and Margaret Doherty Conklin tombstone, row 17, stone 157, Saint Augustine Church Cemetery, Deerfield Twp., Livingston Co., Mich.; photographed by the author, December 1996.

critical clues pointing to Charles's service in the Civil War. Gleaning the clues from each record and pursuing the next logical steps, including research on collateral relatives and tedious examination of city directories year by year, eventually led to success.

Genealogists tracing immigrants face daunting challenges, including vague information concerning origins. Research that includes all possibly relevant sources, pursues all possible clues, and expands beyond a single nuclear family can lead to success in such situations.

Kissin' Cousin Counties

Genealogists need to pay close attention to state and county boundaries, mostly because ancestral families on the move often *didn't*. Today we think of the American geopolitical landscape as permanent, but many borders and names went through confusing changes in the past. One source of potential confusion is the county border change which is unaccompanied by a change in name. Although no American state has two counties by the same name, in at least seven instances counties with the same name face each other across a state line. They are the following:

Bristol County	Massachusetts and Rhode Island
Escambia County	Alabama and Florida
Kent County	Delaware and Maryland
Pike County	Illinois and Missouri
Sabine County	Louisiana and Texas
Teton County	Idaho and Wyoming
Union County	Arkansas and Louisiana

There are some near-misses, too. Larimer County, Colorado, abuts Laramie County, Wyoming. Vermilion County, Illinois, and Vermillion County, Indiana, have a common border. San Juan County, New Mexico, and San Juan County, Utah, touch at a single point—the Four Corners—and San Juan County, Colorado, is just one county away from both. The fourth county at the Four Corners, Apache County, Arizona, didn't miss out entirely; its county seat is St. Johns (the English equivalent of San Juan).

—Contributed by William Bart Saxbe Jr., CG, FASG