

No kneeling before Zod! Seriously.

<http://blogs.amctv.com/scifi-scanner/2008/11/scifi-lessons-for-president.php>>Today's subject line brought to you by Jon Scalzi and the letter O</a>.

Good morning, campers! My horoscope said I should allow myself the freedom to daydream today and I'm all about the horoscope (not really). I've been doing a bit of daydreaming already so I know I'm inclined this day. First thing I thought about after doing a bit of writing in bed when I woke up was the last line of my last post.

My (and everybody else's in America) ancestors immigrated to America - from Wales on my dad's side (and some from Germany, Poland, and Ireland probably, but I haven't checked the mommies only the daddies) and from Germany (almost exclusively) on my mom's side. My uncle told me his German ancestors came to America in 1714 - so yeah, they've been here a while. My Welsh relatives are proving a little more difficult to pin down. I've got a few leads on which of the Rhys's had their last name mangled to what it shows up as on my driver's license, but I haven't nailed it down yet.

What's so very cool about researching your ancestors is the stories you can infer from where people were born and where they died. I know my grandfather's grandmother Margaret was born in Pennsylvania, was married to Hezekiah, moved to Ohio where Hezekiah died, then moved to Indiana and died herself at the ripe old age of 78. Just those bare facts tell me very little, but I can make assumptions about what her life must have been like. She married young, her husband may have fought in the Civil War or could possibly have died then (I haven't found much about him yet because I keep getting sidetracked), after his death she moved with relatives (probably her children) to Indiana instead of remarrying.

It made me think this morning of how amazing it is that I'm here at all. I'm no statistician, but the chance of two people finding themselves in the right place at the right time to combine their DNA to make someone else who makes someone else who makes someone else down the line is so remote it boggles the mind. Don't think about it too long or you'll go cross-eyed.

I was thinking this morning about the things my ancestors had to go through to make it to America. They had to really want to get here. It was months on a ship with sails for propulsion only. They weren't rich so they were in the bottom of a wooden boat pressed shoulder to shoulder with strangers who may or may not speak the same language they did. There were people getting sea sick and dying and being born in the middle of this sea of people.

I looked at lot of ship manifests trying to figure out which of the people on the boat were "mine" and I noticed a lot of instances where a pregnant woman boarded in Liverpool and a motherless baby disembarked in New York. These women knew they were pregnant. They knew it would be healthier to hang out in England or Ireland or Norway or wherever before crossing an ocean, but they got on the ship anyway. They figured they were young and strong and healthy. What could go wrong? They didn't factor in the lack of hygiene, illnesses from other countries they'd never been exposed to, poor diet and the fact that anything they ate had a good probability of coming back up again during rough seas. They wanted their kid to be an American and they were going.

I wonder what drove those decisions. Was the place they were leaving so terrible or was it the dream of limitless possibilities in a new world? I think about how many times I've joked I was moving to Canada

and I feel a tiny bit guilty. I'm sure if Margeret were here she'd give me a stern talking to about being ungrateful for the sacrifices my ancestors made. My ancestors crossed an ocean, fought a war for self governance, fought another war to keep a country together (on opposite sides since dad's family lived in Ohio and mom's family were Virginia plantation owners), survived a Great Depression, and two World Wars to allow me the freedom of saying whatever I want, worshipping how I chose to worship, and living freely wherever I want as whoever I want to be.

I think a lot of people forget that no matter who the president is or what color our state turned on Tuesday, we owe it to our ancestors not to screw up what they fought for by fighting amongst ourselves over what may or may not happen. The fact that we're here at all proves that everything will turn out as it should.