



**South Central
Pennsylvania**
Genealogical Society

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Our Name's The Game

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Monthly Newsletter Vol. 39 No. 6 February 2014

OUR NEXT MEETING

Sunday, March 2, 2014 — Letters from Home

This month's meeting will be held at the Meeting Hall at York County Heritage Trust Library & Archives, 250 East Market Street, York, Pennsylvania. A brief business meeting will begin at 2:15 PM and the program will immediately follow at approximately 2:30 PM.

Our speaker, Ron Hershner is no stranger to writing about history. Author of four books, his first three focused on southeastern York County, the history of his hometown and the history of his childhood church. His most recent release, "Letters From Home: York County, Pennsylvania, during the Civil War," follows the same vein. This time, the Springettsbury Township author and attorney focused on a collection of family letters that offer insight into home life in York County during the Civil War. "Letters From Home" is based upon 23 letters written to John Harvey Anderson while he served in three different Union army units between 1863 and 1865. The correspondents were his sisters, brothers-in-law and female cousins. He somehow was able to save these letters throughout his military service, which took him through some challenging circumstances, particularly as a cavalryman in Sherman's Carolina Campaign in 1865.

OUR UPCOMING MEETINGS are scheduled as follows ...

Sunday, April 6, 2014

Frank Grove ... Alphabet Soup of Revolutionary Lineage Societies

Frank has been helping people with their application paper work for the Children, Daughters, and Sons of the American Revolution since about 1990. In 2006, he became the "official" genealogist/registrar for the Continental Congress Chapter, S.A.R. We will look at many of the current requirements of the national organizations, review the "must" areas that need to be very complete, and provide hints to help with unknown dates. We will also discuss the importance of record copies from the organizations and the "cut off" date after which older applications will not be accepted without it being updated.

Sunday, May 4, 2014

round table discussion ... Are You My Mother?: Tracing Your Female Ancestors

Probably the most common problem in researching women is identity. What was her maiden name? Who were her parents? This meeting will be a round table discussion concerning some of the issues faced while researching our female ancestors. Bring your success stories and/or brick walls, and participate in the round table discussion.

Saturday, June 7, 2014

Thinking Outside the Box?: Take Your Research to a New Level

This conference is sponsored by the York County Heritage Trust and South Central Pennsylvania Genealogical Society, and will be held Historical Society Museum and Library, 250 East Market Street, York, PA from 8 AM until 4 PM. The scheduled speakers are Darvin Martin, Jonathan Stayer, and Kevin Shue.

Notice regarding winter meetings and inclement weather: To avoid placing speakers and members in potentially dangerous situations, SCPGS will cancel meetings if roads are snow covered or icy, or if there is the possibility roads will become snow covered or icy before those attending a meeting would be able to reach home. Cancellations are made on the conservative side. To learn the status of a winter meeting that could be cancelled because of the weather, please call Richard Konkel at 717-843-7043.

“Letters From Home”

from yorkblog.com/books; Sarah Chain; June 15, 2013

“Letters from Home” offers a rare personal insight into the Civil War home front. Author Ron Hershner writes, “It is a story of a family coping with the



distance that divided them from each other. And it is a view into the ardently held and fiercely advocated opinions about the war that divided the southern York County community.” Harvey Anderson’s boyhood home serves as a wartime microcosm of what transpired in countless northern communities.”

Following is Mr. Hershner’s description of how this book came to be ...

When John Harvey Anderson’s wife died, he moved in with his daughter, Margaret Anderson Wiley. When Margaret died, the letters passed to her daughter Burneta Wiley Hershner, who was the wife of my great-uncle, William B. Hershner. Knowing my interest in history, Burneta first showed me the letters in the 1970s. Shortly before her death, she gave me the letters on the condition that I write a book about them. I have been working on the book (intermittently) for about a decade and finally pushed to complete the work for this important year in Civil War history.

From the first time I read the letters, I knew they had something to offer that, while not unique, was rare. This was not the story of soldiers and battles. It was an insight into the lives of those back home, who believed in what their family member was fighting for, and wrote both to provide encouragement to him and to keep him apprised of life back home. Most significantly, the letters are first-hand evidence of the deep divisions in York County about the war and its purpose, and the impact of the draft that called soldiers into involuntary service. Harvey’s family were ardent supporters of the Union, the Republican Party, and Lincoln. They were a distinct minority in York County at the time. This is an important aspect of the Civil War, and York County’s role in it, that has not received much attention until recently.

I had nearly finished the book by the time my stepson enlisted in the Army. He is currently deployed in Afghanistan. That very personal experience with a soldier away from home has given me a new and deeper appreciation for what soldiers and their

families go through. Today it is *Facebook* and *Skype*, but the “letters” from home are just as important — for just the same reasons — today as in 1863.

I spent several years researching before I wrote a word. The book is about the letters. I wanted to understand everything in the two years of correspondence. I followed the path wherever the letters led me. That took me many places, from the Confederate invasion of York County in June 1863, to Sherman’s acceptance of Joe Johnston’s surrender at Bennett Place North Carolina in late April 1865. From sleigh rides and church picnics, to wheat harvesting and milling. From bitter political partisanship to teenage romance. The book is heavily footnoted and the bibliography demonstrates the variety of resources upon which I relied. In addition to the many books and articles I consulted, the resources at the York County Heritage Trust Library and Archives were invaluable. The newspapers of the period helped frame the social and political issues of the time.

From the start, the letters opened up for me a keen awareness that there was no united home front in the North during the war. As I delved deeper into the politics, I came to understand that York County in particular was in large measure not supportive of Lincoln and the war. The Copperhead movement (of Northerners who sympathized with the South) was particularly strong here. The Anderson family, while certainly not alone, was in the minority in their strong support of the cause. Jennifer Weber’s 2006 book “Copperheads” was very helpful to me in understanding this movement, its rise and its fall. I also was struck by the degree to which Harvey’s female relatives, who of course had no right to vote or participate in the political process, were so well informed and ardent in their beliefs. They emerge to the reader as passionate, well-informed and articulate young women.

My father had a saying “there are always two sides to every story” and that was certainly the case in York County during the Civil War. “Letters From Home” is a microcosm of what occurred throughout northern communities. There were strong, impassioned, and sometimes violent, disagreements over whether what the Lincoln government was doing was right. Harvey’s family believed it was right, and in the face of substantial and vocal opposition did what they believed was right. History has proven them to be on the side of freedom, justice and liberty. That was not altogether clear in their time.

Bastards, Bridges & Bawdy Houses: Using Quarter Sessions Records in Genealogical Research

Our February program was presented by Gerald Smith is a professional Certified Genealogist who specializes in Pennsylvania research. Mr. Smith explained the role of the *General Quarter-Sessions of the Peace and Gaol Delivery* in colonial history.

This court was fashioned after the British court system. It heard cases for crimes that could not be tried summarily by the Justice of the Peace. The American twist is that it was not only a criminal court for instances when the sentence was not death or life imprisonment but also included administrative/governmental duties such as ... township formation and boundary changes, petitions for roads and bridges, waterway regulation, election results, oaths of office for elected and appointed officials, township appoints for overseer of the poor, road supervisor, etc., licensing such as taverns, shopkeepers and peddlers, admittance to the bar, ensured that illegitimate children did not become wards of the commonwealth, addressed slavery and indenture issues, etc.. Most of these records remain unfilmed and stored in their original jurisdiction.

The criminal process began when the prosecutor asked the grand jury for an indictment and the case is recorded in the *clerk scratch book*. If a "true bill" was found it meant they found sufficient probable

cause to charge a person with committing a crime and the indictment was granted and trial would follow, otherwise the case was marked "ignoramus" meaning there was not enough evidence for a trial. It was also possible for the grand jury to issue a presentment; a charging document of its own initiative, without the involvement of a prosecutor.

Following an indictment or presentment, the sheriff was issued an order to serve papers that compelled the person charged to appear before the court. The judge would set bail (recognizance). After the trial was held, the jury would issue its verdict, and if guilty, a punishment (sentence) would be determined by the judge. Documents from these proceeding were the case papers that were then transcribed in summary in the court docket along with the verdict. In addition, the record for each quarter-session also includes the date that the court met, the judge presiding, and the names of the members of the grand jury.

Quarter Sessions records can provide birth dates, names of parents, bracketing of a marriage date, occupation, place of residence, original signatures, relationships, etc., as well as color commentary for your family history!

Quarter Sessions Records

Our April newsletter listed the York County Index to Court of Quarter Sessions records available on the York County Archives website ...

<http://www.yorkcountyarchives.org>

A search of the web shows that Chester County also has indexes to Quarter Sessions Indictments from 1681 to 1870 available online at ...

<http://www.chesco.org/index.aspx?NID=1399>

Abstracts of Quarter Sessions records for Lancaster County from 1745 to 1901 can be searched online using the website's Discovery Tool ...

<http://www.lancasterhistory.org>

And, Ancestry.com has Quarter Sessions records for Cumberland (1750-1785) and Bucks County (1684-1700).

The website of the Pennsylvania State Archives provides a list of microfilm records by county that includes available Quarter Sessions records ...

<http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/bah/dam/rg/rg47m.htm>

Soundex Converter

The Soundex Code was "high tech" in 1918 when it was invented by Robert Russell. In a nutshell, Soundex Codes provide a means of identifying names by the way they sound. Soundex has been used for many federal, state and local census records and is very popular in genealogy software and databases. You can often find a person's entry by his or her Soundex Code even when the names have been misspelled. This becomes important when you realize that many census takers did not speak the language of the people being enumerated, and for first 150 years of U.S. census records the majority of Americans were illiterate and did not know how to write their own last names. The spelling of many family names also has changed over the years, but often the Soundex Code remains the same. The Rootsweb Soundex Converter available at

<http://resources.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/soundexconverter>

returns the soundex code for the entered surname, plus other surnames/spellings sharing the same soundex code.

100 Years Ago...

articles from the March 6, 1914 edition of Delta Herald and Times, Delta, York County, Pennsylvania

Mansion Burned.

On Tuesday March 3d, "Belmont," the fine mansion owned and occupied by Herbert J. Alexander, two miles northeast of Delta, was burned to the ground entailing a loss of about \$4000, partly covered by insurance in the Dover Company. The fire is supposed to have originated from a defective flue, and when discovered flames were bursting from the roof. The only persons at the house at the time were Mrs. H. J. Alexander, and Mrs. C. R. McConkey.

An alarm was immediately made, neighbors responded promptly, and by strenuous efforts much of the furniture on the first and second stories was saved. On the attic were some valuable relics from India which among other things, were destroyed.

The mansion was built by the late Rufus Wiley about 1859. After his death in 1872, it was occupied by his widow, with her second husband, Rev. Dr. T. M. Crawford. At her death the property was devised to her brother, Rev. James M. Alexander, by whom it was recently transferred to his son Herbert J. Alexander.

Second Degree Murder.

On Saturday, February 7, Charles Stonerider and one or two others, saw-mill men working for Miller Bros. near Cooptown, Harford county, came to Delta and loaded up with whiskey. After their return by the afternoon train they got into a drunken fight when Stonerider picked up a gun and shot Jacob Kunkel, of York. That night he was lodged in Belair jail. Two weeks ago he had his trial. On Feby 19th he was found guilty of second degree murder and was sentenced to penitentiary for ten years. As his neck was in danger, Stonerider seemed delighted with the light sentence, and left the court room smiling. February 23d he was taken to the penitentiary. Thus endeth the 2nd chapter.

Body Found

The body of Spencer Cooper, who disappeared from his home near Line Bridge, December 10th was found lodged on the bank of the Susquehanna river, below the mouth of Broad Creek, on Tuesday, March 3d, by Marshall Hamilton. The body was in a bad condition, was identified by bodily marks and by the clothing. The funeral will be held today (Friday) at 2 o'clock with interment at Mount Nebo. He was the eldest son of the late Thomas J. Cooper, lived on the homestead, and is survived by 6 children, Fred A. Wilma, George, Olson, Elmer and Virginia, also by 5 brothers and sister, Nelson B., Sidney, John, Charles and Mrs. Carrie Henry.

Collinsville Items.

Mr. Clarence Shum and Miss Esta Curran were visiting friends in Delta Friday.

Mr. Joseph McCleary is confined to his home with asthma and grip.

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Heaps spent Sunday at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Keepots of Goram.

The funeral of Mrs. Peter Doll was held at McKendree M. E. Church, Friday afternoon and was largely attended by relatives and friends.

Mr. and Mrs. John Smeltzer and Peter Clun were visiting the former's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Smeltzer, Sunday.

Dr. M. R. Girvin is in attendance at the home of Mrs. Cornelius Tome, she being confined to her home by sickness.

Mrs. Mary Pierce was entertained recently by her niece, Miss Marion McKinley, of Laurel.

A wedding reception was given at the home of Mr. and Mrs. John Flaharty on Saturday in honor of their two sons, who were recently married. The correspondent wishes both Mr. and Mrs. Harry Flaharty and Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Flaharty a long and prosperous life.

Hello, Woodbine, where are you? Are you snowed in, as we haven't heard from you for so long.

[Received too late for last week]

News from the Pennsylvania State Archives

from Access Archives (A Message from the State Archivist); Volume 14, Winter 2014

In an innovative partnership with Ancestry.com the Pennsylvania State Archives is making genealogical records available *free of charge* to Commonwealth residents. Four years ago, Ancestry.com began digitizing selected State Archives collections of interest. Of special note, the digitization of birth and death certificates currently open to the public (Death Certificates 1906-1963 and Birth Certificates 1906-1908) is nearly completed. The indexing of these documents is expected to be finished by late 2014.

This past summer all of the Civil War Muster Out Rolls were scanned. These documents had been the subject of a major conservation effort to prepare them for scanning and public access over the past seven years. A very extensive series of veterans' burial cards was also scanned, and work continues now on World War II bonus applications.

All of the State Archives records digitized by Ancestry have been available to those who access Ancestry.com through a membership or at an institution, such as a public library, which maintains a membership. However, in August 2013, these records became available *free of charge* to all Pennsylvania residents through Ancestry.com Pennsylvania. If you are a Pennsylvania resident and

do not subscribe to Ancestry.com you can set up an account for *free access* to the Archives' documents on Ancestry.com Pennsylvania at

<http://phmc.info/ancestrypa>

Already digitized and available collections include:

- Births, 1852-1854
- Civil War Border Claims, 1868-1879
- Deaths, 1852-1854
- Land Warrants, 1733-1987
- Land Warrants and Applications, 1733-1952
- Marriages, 1852-1854
- Naturalizations, 1794-1908
- Over and Terminer Court Papers, 1757-1787
- Records of Marriages, 1885-1889
- Septennial Census, 1779-1863
- Spanish War Compensation, 1898-1934
- Tax and Exoneration, 1768-1801
- Veterans Burial Cards, 1777-1999
- War of 1812 Pensions, 1866-1879
- WPA Church Archives, 1937-1940

Ancestry.com users accessed over three million records from the Pennsylvania State Archives in 2013.

Book Review: Sustainable Genealogy: Separating Fact From Fiction in Family Legends

from Dick Eastman (eogn.com), February 7, 2014; written by Bobbi King

This is the book that tells you what not to include in your genealogy. Mr. Hite begins: My father...and I...were attending a reunion of a prominent Hite family...accounts of this man claimed that he had held the title of "Baron" in his German homeland prior to coming to the American colonies, that he was a native of the area...of Strasbourg...and that his wife was Anna Maria Dubois of a wealthy Huguenot family....Jost Hite...was actually a native of the village of Bonfeld...born there in 1685. His father was...a butcher...and Jost himself was a weaver by trade. His wife...was not a Huguenot named Dubois...but was instead...Anna Maria Merckle...to parents no more prominent than Jost's own. The reunion attendees were not happy to hear the revised family history. Several refused to give up their long-held traditions about the most-venerated Jost Hite and his high-born, illustrious wife.

Mr. Hite tells this story to illustrate our desires, even unwittingly, to match the facts to conform to our fondest wishes to how we want our ancestors to be: noble, strong, fervent, and good. We might be fudging the evidence in order to present our ancestors in the most favorable of light, and elevating our own standing as their deserving descendants. So it's with gratitude that we should thank Mr. Hite for reminding us that we should follow the evidence, not move it around to conform to our narrative. His chapters address the "Ethnic Origins of Family Names," "Maiden Names of Female Ancestors," "Birthplaces of Ancestors," "Military Service of Ancestors," and "How Much Misinformation can be Crammed into One Paragraph?"

Mr. Hite has written a straight-forward guide for evaluating and following up on family stories and legends with hard-nosed research and critical review.

Sustainable Genealogy: Separating Fact From Fiction in Family Legends; by Randy Hite. Published by Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore. 2013. 110 pages.

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Google Alerts - a Great Tool for Genealogists

from Dick Eastman (eogn.com), January 13, 2014

How would you like to have a “servant” that monitors the web for you, 24 hours a day, looking for any new mentions of things that interest you? In fact, you already have that available today. Best of all is the price: FREE of charge. Google Alerts is a service that sends an email to you to inform you of the latest relevant Google results (web, news, etc.) based on your queries. Once configured, you don’t have to do anything for the new information to reach you, other than check your email in-box from time to time.

Using Google Alerts is easy. Go to <http://www.google.com/alerts> and enter a search query you wish to monitor. You will see a preview of the type of results you’ll receive. Enter your email address, and also specify how often you wish to receive alerts (immediately, daily, or weekly). Then sit back and let Google work for you. Each email message you receive contains only *newly*-found entries.

Keep in mind that Google searches for whatever you specify. Your first attempt at searching might be too narrow and produce no results, or it might be too broad a search, giving thousands of results. Either way, return to Google Alerts by clicking on the link at the bottom of any email message you receive for that search term, and then modify the search term as you feel appropriate. Instead of searching only for the name, add other terms to narrow the results such as the city, county and/or state. Get creative with your search terms. With a bit of practice, you can probably specify exactly what you seek.

Google Alerts is useful, free, and available to you now. Try it yourself at <http://www.google.com/alerts>.

Disclaimer: This works unless there are hundreds of such references. In that case, Google Alerts will only show the first few dozen links. As with any web search, it will not find mentions of your search term that are inside a database, such as FamilySearch or Ancestry.