



**South Central
Pennsylvania**
Genealogical Society

Our Name's The Game

www.scpgs.org

Monthly Newsletter Vol. 37 No. 9 May/June 2012

OUR NEXT MEETING

Saturday, June 2, 2012 — Seminar: *Exploring the Past and Touching the Future* 9 AM – 4 PM

The York County Heritage Trust and South Central Pennsylvania Genealogical Society are co-hosting this seminar at the York County Heritage Trust at 250 East Market Street in York.

The first meeting of the 2012-2013 society year is tentatively planned for Sunday, August 26th.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

During the business portion of the May meeting of South Central Pennsylvania Genealogical Society, the Nominating Committee presented the slate of officers for 2012-2013 society year. No nominations were made from the floor. All positions are one-year terms except those of treasurer and director-at-large, which are two-year terms. The election will be held June 2nd at a brief meeting, prior to the conference. The nominees are as follows ...

President: Richard Konkel

Vice President: Kimberly Grim

Treasurer: Margaret Burg

Recording Secretary: Melody Kraus

Corresponding Secretary: Becky Anstine

Director-at-large: Franklin R. Grove, Jr.

A big thank you goes out to Barbara Rudy for again assuming the role of the “nomination committee.”

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER

The South Central Pennsylvania Genealogical Society welcomes and values your continued membership. Renewing your membership will help us continue to provide services such as special publications and research assistance in the York and Adams County area. Unless you are a life member, your membership will expire on June 30, 2012 and you will not receive membership benefits beyond that date if you do not renew. To renew your membership in SCPGS for the fiscal year 2012-2013, please promptly mail your payment with the renewal notice included in the April newsletter. Please return the entire page.

A GLIMSE OF HISTORY

written by Frank Grove

In April 2004 flags were flown at half staff at all York City fire stations, to honor the 100th anniversary of the deaths of John Harry Saltzgiver, Lewis M. Strubinger, and Horace F. Strine. These three men were the first firemen to die in the line of duty in the city department's history.



According to a newspaper report, on April 6, 1904 at a little after 2 in the afternoon a blaze was noticed at the York Carriage Works located at 238-242 North George Street. As reported years ago in the York Dispatch; upon arrival at the plant, firefighters found the annex on North Street ablaze and they were facing one of the biggest fires in York for the times. All of the fire companies in York responded to help fight the fire. They thought the fire started on the first floor and then quickly roared through all six floors then through the roof. The Dispatch reported that "At four o'clock the entire plant of the carriage works was in flames and the firemen and thousands of spectators realized the plant was doomed to destruction." More than a hundred employees had to flee the upper floors of the building - some even jumped from windows. The Dispatch also reported that the fire was "the fiercest one ever witnessed in York" and that firemen "fought heroically and stubbornly and some of the men even took risks that imperiled their lives." Even after the walls of the building crumbled, fire crews kept battling the inferno. The Variety Ironworks next door was badly damaged.

Despite warning that the wall might fall, between 9 and 10 PM, members of the Vigilant Fire Company were working near the south wall of the carriage works. When the south wall collapsed, five Vigilant firemen were buried in the debris. Two firefighters, William Jones and Ralph A. Shaunessy emerged alive but injured. Fellow firefighters frantically searched for their trapped comrades moving tons of hot bricks, however, Strine (age 23), Saltzgiver (age 35), and Strubinger (age 32) were found dead.

The Dispatch wrote that the three were accorded funeral rites worthy of heroes. The services for the three men were held staggered on the same day so mourners could attend each service. Strine was the first to be buried. Saltzgiver was buried next with a larger crowd than in the morning, and the services again impressive. Strubinger's was the last service. His coffin was surrounded by a large shield made of roses. The Dispatch reported that "At the close of the services, the procession re-formed and returned to the city, and in this way one of the saddest events in the history of the York City Fire Department was brought to a close."

DECEASED MEMBERS

Current member **Harold L. Ditzler**, 82, died April 18th at the Gettysburg Lutheran Home. He was the son of Melvin and Rosella (Miller) Ditzler, and husband of Joan C. (Sanders) Ditzler. Harold was born in Adams County, and spent the majority of his life working for his father at Ditzler Furniture Store, but also owned and operated Ditzler's Laundromat, as well as an antique store. Harold was also a member of the Biglerville Historical Society and SAR. He was "passionate about genealogy and helping people research their lineage."

Former member **Arlene K. Lentz**, 91 died Easter Sunday, April 8th at her home in Spring Grove with her family by her side. She was the daughter of Charles E. and Lottie A. (Oberdier) Wire, and wife of the late George D. Lentz. Arlene worked at Bernsteins Shirt Factory, National Biscuit Company, and BNY all in York. She was a member of the Spring Grove Historical and Preservation Society.

TAX TALK — Using Pennsylvania's Real & Personal Property Tax Returns 1711-1913 written by Becky Anstine

Jack Landis, our April speaker, talked about using tax records and the genealogical information that can be found in those records. Pennsylvania tax records can be found in five places: local county government archives, local county historical societies, LDS Family History Centers, Pennsylvania State Archives, and the Pennsylvania Archives Third Series, Volumes 11-22 and Fourth Series Volume 7.

From 1683 to about 1711, the tax system was based on the English system and collected by sheriffs. Very few records exist from this time period. The Colonial system was from 1711 - 1841. These records were hand written and standards varied; the only thing that mattered was that the tax had been correctly calculated. The Pre-Progressive System was from 1841-1913. The settling of Ohio caused Pennsylvania to improve its methods of finding taxable incomes. Records were standardized and on pre-printed form. The Progressive system is still in use today.

Mr. Landis said that each time period affected the records and their interpretations. He said that it was necessary to put oneself in the shoes of the tax collector and ask "what were they looking for at the time of the collection?" Tax lists depended on who was doing the collection – an assessor or a tax collector. People were not assessed on what they owned or possessed according to today's standards, but on what the county needed in order to fill its tax requirements. Taxes were not based on the actual value of real estate. For example – a

farmer could have a large herd of cows but would only be taxed for the number of cows over a certain age – said age would vary from year to year.

Before 1840, there were three classes of tax payers:

freeholders ... over 21 years of age and possesses land

inmates ... over 21 years of age, living with a freeholder and owns no land

freemen ... over 21 years of age, single, owns no property

A freeholder did not have to own personal property, an inmate could be taxed on personal property over a certain limit, and a freeman had no personal property over the limit.

After 1840, the three classes became:

owner ... over 21 years of age, possesses real estate, and may or may not own personal property

tenant ... over 21 years of age, lives on rented property, and owns taxable personal property

single person ... over 21 years of age, single, living with an owner or tenant, owns no real property, and may own taxable personal property

Mr. Landis also talked about what property was considered taxable (land, horses, cows, stills, servants), non-taxable (chickens, goats, wagons) and exempt (soldiers, churches, schoolmasters). There were also three classes of taxable property: real (such as land), personal (such as watches, horses, pleasure carriages) and intangible (such as stocks, loans).

He also presented a case study using tax records to determine events such as marriage, age, death, and if there were minor children. The presentation had many commenting that they were going to have to go back and take a second look at the tax records they had copied many years ago and re-interpret the information on those records.

The Pennsylvania State Archives has the following tax records on microfilm ...

Adams County Tax Records, 1798-1959 ... 248 rolls (LC 15)

York County Tax Records, 1758-1772, 1774-1775, 1777-1789, 1792-1849 ... 52 rolls. (LR 51, LR 146)

BIBLE DOCUMENTATION DAY

written by Becky Anstine



Our May meeting offered several activities. It was our 2nd Annual Bible Documentation Day held in conjunction with the York County Heritage Trust.

A display of Bibles in a variety of shapes, sizes and conditions were displayed to tie in with the presentation by Hollis Beedle and Betsy Shaw. Hollis and Betsy talked about the publishing and preserving aspect of Family Bibles. Starting with Gutenberg's Bible in 1440, Hollis discussed the types of Bibles that were printed, leading up to the development of Family Bibles. In 1808, the Aitken family included blank inserts in their Bibles for the purpose of recording family information. The founding of the Philadelphia Bible Society and the International Bible Society transformed Bible publication in America. Stereotype plates were used to mass produce Bibles; creating a competitive market in publication. Printers decided that the addition of dictionaries, maps, pictures, illuminated pages and decorative covers would allow them to market the Bibles as a display piece in the home. By the 1840's, pages were specifically included for the recording of family information. Betsy discussed the care and preservation of family Bibles. The best ones were bound in calf leather. Bibles should be kept out of the sun, attics, and basements. Duct tape and scotch tape were not recommended for mending broken bindings or torn pages. Newspaper clippings, fabrics, leaves, and flowers should be removed from between the pages and stored between acid free papers. These items can leave acid marks on the book pages. A synthetic brush should be used to clean the pages. Bibles should be stored or displayed in dust free boxes.

During the 1880's, photo pages were added to Bibles. In these Bibles, acid free paper should be placed between the pages, so the photos are preserved. Most Bibles were sold by door to door salesman. They carried samples and there were various price levels for Bibles. More expensive versions had gilded edges, hinges, and embossed names on the cover. Medium priced Bibles used marbled paper inside the covers.

Thirty-four people attended the program, of which eighteen people brought in thirty Bibles to be documented. Last year at our first event, we had six people with fifteen Bibles. An information sheet was filled out for each Bible with family information. It included language, publication date, published, condition, notes about the ink and handwriting, other writings included in the Bible, and a record of loose items. Present owner information, previous owner, relationships between owners, and if there was a succession plan were noted. Loose items were copied on the photocopier and the Bible pages were scanned. The photocopies and scans will be added to the Family files in the Heritage Trust Library. Pictures from the day and write-ups were published in the York Daily Record and York Dispatch.

A Special Publication will be published in the future combining the information gathered from both Documentation Days.

Our thanks to the York County Heritage Trust librarian, Lila Fourhman-Shaull and assistant librarian, Victoria Miller for all the time that they spent organizing and set-up this event.

HG Books in Craley, Pennsylvania is owned by Hollis Beedle and Betsy Shaw. Simple repairs such as hinge tightening, new end papers, corner and spine repair or recasing, can return a book to your collection for years of future use at a reasonable cost. They specialize in hand binding and repairs of many types of books from paperbacks to cloth bindings, as well as making custom slipcases and clamshell boxes for precious and fragile books and items. Visit www.hgbooks.com for more information.

Do We Really Need Brick and Mortar Museums?

Posted by Dick Eastman on April 2, 2012

David McMillen of the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration has written an article in the National Archives blog questioning the future of archives and museums. He raises intriguing possibilities.

Until recently, we have always wanted to see the original documents of papers that are important to us. Not only for sentimental reasons, but also for the fact that copies have never been perfect reproductions of the originals. Now that is changing.

Technology has long been able to create images that were indistinguishable from the original. We have on display in the Public Vaults a copy of the Emancipation Proclamation that is disturbingly difficult to distinguish from the real document. Our specialists routinely make copies of important documents that take an expert to discern from the original.

Today, technology has the ability to make documents better than real. We already use some of these techniques in the Public Vault. Visitors can touch a screen and magically the

German text is translated into English. Scholars at the University of Illinois are developing a search engine that will read cursive. No longer will we need to lament that they no longer teach cursive in schools or that young children stand before the Constitution saying, "I wish I could read that." Instead the words will appear before them.

Now that the technology is available to make perfect copies, why do we need to view the originals? In fact, do we even need to store the originals if an electronic copy can be stored in less space, at lower cost, and can be used at any time to create faithful reproductions of the originals that even fool the experts?

We could save billions of tax dollars if we convert to an all electronic archive, complete with multiple copies, stored in multiple locations for safety purposes. In theory, such an electronic archive could keep "original" documents safe forever, safe from fire, flood, tornados, hurricanes, earthquakes, wars, mold, and rodents.

Handwritten Journals from Lizzie Borden's Lawyer to be Published

Posted by Dick Eastman on March 5, 2012

The story, and especially the trial, of Lizzie Borden has fascinated many for years. Now some new evidence may soon be available, 120 years after the murder.

Lizzie Borden was tried for killing her father and stepmother with a hatchet on August 4, 1892, in Fall River, Massachusetts. The murders and subsequent trial was sensationalized by the media worldwide. Although Lizzie Borden was acquitted, no one else was ever arrested or tried and she has remained a notorious



figure in American folklore. Dispute over the identity of the killer or killers continues to this day. The question remains: did Lizzie commit the murders?

At the trial, Lizzie was defended by three of the leading Massachusetts lawyers of the day: former Massachusetts governor George D. Robinson, Melvin O. Adams, and Andrew V. Jennings. Jennings kept a journal during the trial and his papers have survived and now have been donated to the Fall River Historical Society. The journals reportedly contain information that has never been published. The journals are extremely fragile and will be conserved and transcribed, and eventually published by the society.

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QUERIES

Researching Thomas Baker/Becker, born 1781-1790 in PA (exact location uncertain), and died in 1832 in Buffalo Twp, Union Co, PA. Believe this Thomas Baker was the Thomas Baker listed on the 1810 census as living in Newberry Twp, York Co. He is listed as a school teacher in the Newberry Twp tax records from 1810 to 1816. In 1816, he and wife Mary (?) Baker sold their house and lot in Newberry Twp. Thomas Baker appears in the 1816 tax records of Buffalo Twp, Union Co living next to an older man, Peter Baker (born before 1775). Peter Baker died intestate in Union Co in 1823 and his wife Christina signed over her rights to administer his estate to Thomas Baker. It is presumed that Peter Baker was the father of Thomas Baker. Both Peter and Thomas Baker were listed as shoemakers in Union Co tax lists. In some lists they were named Baker and in others they were named Becker. Believe but cannot prove that this Peter Baker is the son of Wilhelm Baker/Becker and his wife Anna Catharina born in 1767 in Codorus Twp, York Co. Wilhelm Becker had land in Codorus Twp which he patented in 1767 as "Gunpowder Springs" that was along the Mason-Dixon line, very near to the Steltz church. Thomas Baker is listed with a wife Mary (?) Baker in York Co but likely had a second wife (?) Clark in Union Co. Thomas Baker is my 4-Great-Grandfather. Would appreciate any help in researching Thomas and Peter Baker, their spouses and children and I would be happy to share what information I have.

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REMINDER ... The York County Heritage Trust's 12th Annual Book Blast opens to the public on August 9th and runs thru August 11th. As in previous years, the event will share space with the A-Frame at the Agricultural and Industrial Museum at 217 West Princess Street. Questions: please call Lila Fourhman-Shaull 848-1587 ext. 223 or email at lfourhman-shaull@yorkheritage.org.