



**South Central  
Pennsylvania**  
Genealogical Society

# Our Name's The Game

www.scpgs.org

Newsletter Vol. 45 No. 6 May/June 2019

There will be no SCPGS meeting in July. The first meeting of the 2019-2020 society year is planned for Sunday, August 25<sup>th</sup>. This meeting will be announced in the July/August issue of our newsletter, and on our website.

## **From the President**

Richard Konkel

This article is my final one for this membership year on the use of land records in genealogical research. My topic for this article is the use of tax records in research. Researchers in York County, Pennsylvania are very fortunate in having a very long and almost complete run of tax records for the county. The York County Archives has tax records from 1758 to 1988. The records from 1758 to 1849 are on microfilm. The earliest records have gaps. The archives staff are working on converting the microfilm images to digital images for this early series of records. They are also in the process of digitizing the tax books from 1850 to 1949. The tax books from 1950 to 1988 are microfilmed. Many of the records prior to 1850 had been held by the Historical Society of York County and its successor the York County Heritage Trust before being returned to the County of York and entered into the collections of the York County Archives. These records can be researched on site at the York County Archives, or their friendly staff will conduct a search for you for a small fee. Please contact the Archives at [yorkcountyarchives.org](http://yorkcountyarchives.org). Microfilm copies of York County tax records from 1758 to 1849 are also available at the Library and Archives of the York County History Center.

Ancestry.com also has a number of early tax records in their database called Pennsylvania, Tax and Exoneration, 1768-1801. These include records for York County as well as a number of other Pennsylvania counties. Ancestry.com describes these records as follows: "This database contains exoneration returns and diverse tax lists from Revolutionary-era Pennsylvania. These include documents for supply taxes, 18-penny taxes, liquor taxes, carriage and billiard table taxes, and others. Supply taxes were levied to help pay debts from the Revolutionary War, while the 18-penny tax included both a poll tax on freemen and property taxes assessed to back issuances of paper money."

York County tax records are arranged differently during different time periods. For the time before 1800, the records were arranged in books by year with records for multiple townships in each book. After 1800 the records are arranged in volumes by township or borough with multiple years in each book. All of the pre-1850 records are almost completely handwritten with no forms. After 1850 taxes are recorded mostly on pre-printed forms.

So what sorts of information can be found in tax records? As the old saying goes, nothing can be certain, except death and taxes.

*continued on page 2*

Our membership year ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>, if you haven't already ... please pay your dues (the renewal was in the March/April newsletter). If we do not receive your annual dues by September 1<sup>st</sup>, you will no longer receive the newsletter or the Special Publications or enjoy the other benefits of member in the South Central Pennsylvania Genealogical Society.

*continued from page 1*

You are more likely to find your ancestors in tax records than in almost any other group of records. Although we are considering these as "land records" many people who possessed no land are recorded in tax records. If you were a man over 21 years of age you were taxed. Single men were taxed at a higher rate than married men. If you follow the tax lists and a man moves from the list of single men to the main list it is often an indication that he has recently married. Most women do not appear in them unless they were a single woman owning property or a widow owning some taxable property.

Tax records can be a year by year record of residence for an individual. If they appear in the records with livestock and or an occupation, chances are they lived there for that taxable year. If they appear with only a name and acreage, they may have lived in another township, or jurisdiction and only owned or rented land in this jurisdiction. American genealogists often only use Federal Census records to determine the residence of an ancestor. The census records are only every ten years. With tax records, we can fine tune the residence of an ancestor much better. People moved around a lot more than we sometimes realize, especially if they did not own land. A case in point is my ancestor Thomas Bull 1780-1858. He was born in West Nantmeal Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania. His family was deeply involved in the iron furnace business, with his father and himself being colliers (makers of charcoal). From the Federal census, in 1810 Thomas Bull was living in Brecknock Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania. In 1820, he was in Colerain Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and 1830 in Windsor Township, York County, Pennsylvania. Closer examination of the tax records for Colerain Township reveal him living there from 1814 to 1822, and he is sometimes listed as Colyer (collier).

Sometimes notation is made when a person died or moved. Sometimes the name is just crossed out without further explanation or disappears from the records. For poorer individuals for whom there are no probate records or tombstone or church records that record their death, tax records may be the only means of proof that the individual died around a certain time. A case in point is James Shaw, a stone mason who lived in Fawn, Lower Chanceford and lastly Chanceford Township. He owned no land, sometimes owned a cow, and was taxed for his occupation. In the 1824 tax records for Chanceford Township, his children appear in the poor children's list which was part of the tax records. In 1825 his name is crossed

out. In 1826 his wife Elizabeth Shaw is taxed as a widow and her children appear again in the poor children's list. SCPGS member Gloria Aughenbaugh compiled Special Publication 35 entitled "Poor Children Named on the Tax Lists, York County, Pennsylvania 1811-1844" which was published in 1988. These lists are very helpful in tracing poor families who left few records.

Names of male individuals of age are to be found, and it is sometimes very helpful in sorting out a family where there exist multiple individuals with the same name, because the tax collector, just like the genealogist years later had to figure out who was who. Usually this was accomplished by occupation, but sometimes the name of a father such as "John Smith of George", or "the elder" or "the younger", or Senior and Junior was used to differentiate individuals.

Tax records also record occupations which can be very helpful in supplying information you otherwise might not know. My ancestor Thomas Crawford 1772-1860, although born in Ireland, spent most of his long-life near Mt. Hope Furnace in Rapho Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Rapho Township Tax records list Thomas Crawford with the occupation of "vendue cryer" (auctioneer) from 1831 to 1846. I was not aware of him being engaged in this profession and would not have known it unless I did a careful study of Lancaster County estate papers, especially Administration Accounts or Vendue Lists, which might not even exist for that period of time. Another case of learning an occupation I did not know about is the case of Michael Wolf mentioned in my last article who appeared in Chanceford Township tax records in 1837/38 showing his occupation as "founder at Susan Ann Furnace."

The other information recorded in tax records for the early period is the acres of land and the value thereof. Sometimes it tells how many acres are under cultivation, as this land was cleared and more valuable than woodland. York County tax records rarely mention buildings. The 1801 tax records for Chanceford Township do list houses and barns and their construction materials (mostly log). Livestock are also taxed, mainly horses, horned cattle and sheep (which are not mentioned very often). Hogs, poultry and other livestock were not taxed. Negro slaves were also taxed, although there were never very many in York County. Names, ages or sex are not provided for slaves, and indentured servants were not taxed. Overall, tax records are very useful records and should be thoroughly consulted by genealogists

## A History of the Amish

Our speaker, Steve Nolt, professor of history and Anabaptist studies at the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown College began our April meeting by playing “Loblied” a hymn of praise from the Ausbund, the Amish hymnal that dates to 1564. The Loblied is sung in unison at all church services. This hymn illustrates Amish values ... tradition, patience, submission, faith, community.

Amish history is rooted in the Anabaptist movement in Europe, with the first Anabaptists emerging in Zurich, Switzerland in the early 1500s. They believed in adult baptism, christianity as discipleship, church as community, and the ethics of Jesus. Anabaptists later lived in locations including Germany, France, Holland and other regions of Europe. An emphasis on living faith in everyday works and the lack of state sponsorship resulted in a diversity of Anabaptist groups. The Amish movement emerged from within the greater Anabaptist movement in 1693.

Jakob Ammann was a Swiss Elder and, via a church schism, founder of the Amish branch of Anabaptism. Ammann sought reform in the form of more frequent communion services and the practice of regular social avoidance (shunning), which others practiced only symbolically. The followers of Ammann became known as the Amish.

Amish largely came to America in two main waves of immigration, one taking place in the mid-1700s (about 500), and a second, larger group (about 3,000) from the early- to mid-1800s. Amish in the first wave settled in eastern Pennsylvania; in Berks County near Reading (north Maiden Creek). Immigrants in the second wave primarily settled in the Midwest (Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois), Ontario, and New York state. The Lancaster County settlement was founded sometime around 1760. Settlements were also established around the same time in Somerset and Mifflin counties.

By comparison, between 1683 and 1702, 200 Mennonite immigrants arrive in Pennsylvania, and another 4,000 between 1707 and the 1770s.

In the 1800s the question arose concerning whether they should continue to uphold the old order (ordnung) or adopt changes. By the mid-1800s, there was again the question of how to engage modernizing United State society. Old orders held to the “old order” of church life, and over time have continued to hold older ways concerning dress, technology, gender roles, etc. Amish life is defined by plainness and simplicity.

They rely on the ordnung to maintain unity and social balance, and generally reject modernization.

At this time the Amish in Lancaster County was defined as one third Amish (primarily in Leacock and Uppper Leacock Townships) and two thirds Amish Mennonites. By 1910 the Amish Mennonites became known simply as Mennonites.

Today the Lancaster County Amish settlement has a population of approximately 38,000, this includes 400 in southeastern York County and 4,200 in Chester County. In 2016, a new community with about 75 members began in the Glen Rock area of York County.

Nationwide there are approximately 320,000 Amish adults and children living in 31 states. There are 500 settlements and approximately 2,300 church districts. Families have an average of six children, and approximately 80% of Amish born children join the church through baptism.

Within the Lancaster Amish community, approximately 35% engage in farming, 45% operate a shop (woodworking, metal fabrication, etc.), 10% work in construction and 10% work in retail. Most Amish prefer to stay in the community in which they were born and move into non-farming occupations when farmland is not available.

Old Order Amish generally speak a German dialect, end formal education after eighth grade, allow the church to regulate dress and appearance, allow selective use of technology, and hire car/van services for long trips because they do not have a driver's license.

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## To An Imaginary Stranger ...

from Michael John Neill's Genealogy Tip of the Day  
August 6, 2018

Can't find that ancestor in a certain record? Can't find the parents for a certain ancestor? Write up all the work you have done to find that record or set of parents. Explain the sources you have used, why they were used, and what was located. Pretend that you are writing it for someone who knows nothing about your family and not much about the time period or location in which you are researching.

When you explain something to someone who does not have your familiarity with the details, you are apt to notice gaps. And any of those gaps could be part of your problem.

### **Change in Leadership at the York County History Center Library & Archives**

Nicole Smith has assumed the role of Director of Library & Archives at the York County History Center. Nicole has served as Assistant Director of Library & Archives since March 2017 and previously held the positions of Archival Intern and Collections Manager at the York County Heritage Trust between 2001 until 2004. Nicole is from southern York County and is a graduate of Dallastown Area High School and majored in history at Gettysburg College. She received her Master of Arts degree in American Studies from Penn State Harrisburg in 2002. Nicole gained experience interning at the Adams County Historical Society, the Lancaster Heritage Center, and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and has held professional positions at both the Cumberland and Dauphin County Historical Societies, as well as the Maui Historical Society in Hawaii.

Adam T. Bentz started in May 2019 as the Assistant Director of Library & Archives at the York County History Center. Previously, he had served 3½ years as Archivist & Librarian at the Lebanon County Historical Society. He received his bachelor's degree in Historical Communications at Lebanon Valley College and completed his master's and doctorate in History at Lehigh University, where he wrote a dissertation exploring the career of Easton Congressman Francis E. Walter. While Adam's research has primarily focused on political history, he has wide interests that include industrial and military history, as well as local and Pennsylvania history. In addition to his public history work, Adam has served as an adjunct instructor at various colleges, teaching face-to-face and online courses for ten years. He has served on the editorial board of the Pennsylvania History journal since 2016 and is currently serving on the council of the Pennsylvania Historical Association.

Record the provenance of any family items in your possession?

- Do you know who the original owner was?
- Do you know anything about how or when the item was made?
- How did it come into your possession?
- Who else owned it?

### **Library & Archives of the York County History Center Now Offer Patrons Digital Access to the York Gazette and York Daily Record**

The York County History Center Library & Archives has announced that it now offers its patrons digital access to files from the York Gazette and the York Daily Record. Through its partnership with Gannet and Newspapers.com, researchers and genealogists alike now have access to this keyword searchable database that spans from the years of 1815 to 2009.

Before this digital transition, patrons would have to manually search the Library's microfilm collection. Having the capacity to search by keyword, gives the user access to more leads, materials and research. Patrons will also have the capability to download digitally-captured portions of the newspaper for ease and accessibility.

"This is an immense breakthrough for our patrons. After many years of inquiries, we now have a capability to offer our patrons digital access in a way that will enhance our user's experience for historical and genealogical research," said Nicole Smith, Acting Director of Library & Archives of the York County History Center.

The York County History Center Library & Archives plans on sending its microfilm collection of the York Dispatch to be digitalized, but does not have an immediate date set.

Access to both the York Gazette and York Daily Record can be done by visiting the York County History Center at 250 E. Market Street, York, PA 17403. Admission to the Library & Archives is \$8.00 daily and free to members. Free access to the Library & Archives are available to students K-12 and college students with ID.

The York County History Center Library & Archives offers an extensive collection of family genealogies; books on local, state and regional history, with a focus on York County history; York City and County directories; high school yearbooks, historical atlases and maps; and local and regional periodicals and newsletters covering a wide-range of topics.

The York County History Center inspires exploration of the history, people and culture of our county, state and nation. As a non-profit organization it utilizes collections, historic sites and museums to help tell the American story. For more information about the York County History Center, please visit our website at: [www.yorkhistorycenter.org](http://www.yorkhistorycenter.org) or follow the History Center on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.

## Blunston Licenses

Aaron McWilliams, a reference archivist at the Pennsylvania State Archives, present a program on Blunston Licenses at our May meeting.

The following is a brief history of Blunston Licenses prepared by The Cumberland County Historical Society from gardnerlibrary.org ... By the early 1730s the proprietaries (Thomas, John, and Richard Penn) had decided to expand the colony's western border across the Susquehanna River as far as the present day Kittocthinny Mountains. At the same time period, a border dispute was brewing with Maryland over lands located on Pennsylvania's southern border that would become York and Adams counties. Thomas Cresap, a Maryland agent, was using brutal tactics to keep Pennsylvania settlers off the southern lands. As a result, Samuel Blunston, a surveyor from Lancaster County, was commissioned to explore and map the territory that would become Northern York, Cumberland and Franklin Counties. During 1732 and 1733, he made several trips noting minor topographical features in order to help future settlers locate the land they had purchased. The features were very generic: dry spring run, limestone run, beaver dam, duck pond, barren hill, great hill, blew hill, deer lick, pine lick, big meadow and Indian path. Also, there were about forty settlers mentioned who had already been living in the valley both legally and illegally. The land offices in Philadelphia and Lancaster were issuing a few deeds in anticipation to land that had not been officially purchased from the Native Indians. The tracts were usually located in a neighborhood style setting with a source of water close by (springs and creeks); his thinking was much like a modern-day real estate developer. As a result, large tracts of land remained uncommitted and were available for future settlement. Blunston developed a pre-warrant system, and between 1734 and 1736, he wrote two hundred and eighty-four licenses enabling future settlers to apply for a warrant. An official treaty would be signed with the Six Nations tribes on October 1, 1736. Also, as a result of Blunston's surveying the southern border, an agreement would be settled with Maryland creating the future Mason-Dixon Line.

In 1731, a unique section of land (7,551 acres) in future Cumberland County was set-aside for the Native Indians in case they wanted to return to the valley. It was named Pexton Manor and Lowther Manor, and Tobias Hendricks was permitted to settle in the center of this tract in order to keep any squatters from settling. The present-day borders encompass: the Susquehanna River, Yellow Breeches Creek,



*Blunston License to William Smith (L4003.003.03g)*

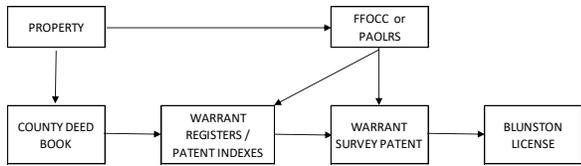
Conodoguinet Creek and the Peace Church Road. The area remained unsettled from 1731 to 1767.

Samuel Blunston had an interesting background. He was born in Chester County in 1689, the son of John Blunston. On October 27, 1682, John, a Quaker, had immigrated from Derbyshire, England on the ship *Welcome* along with William Penn. In 1718 Samuel took as his wife Sarah Bulton. Blunston was a civic minded man and held such public offices for Lancaster County as Prothonotary, Recorder and Clerk of County, Justice of the Peace, and served in the Pennsylvania General Assembly. His death took place in 1745. Since the couple did not have any children, Samuel's estate was willed to Sarah Wright, the daughter of his friend John Wright who operated the ferry at Columbia, Pennsylvania, where many settlers crossed the Susquehanna River instead of using John Harris' ferry.

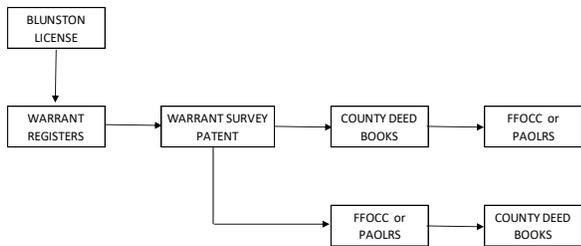
With the death of Blunston, the Penn's appointed another Lancaster County resident as Deputy Surveyor, Thomas Cookson. As a result, many of Samuel's ledgers and papers came into the possession of Cookson. Thomas was married to Mary Thompson the step-sister of General William Thompson. In 1754 Cookson died and Mary became the wife of a York County resident George Stevenson. A few years later, the Stevensons moved to Carlisle. Both were buried in Carlisle's Old Graveyard very close to General Thompson's lot. For the next one hundred and seventy years the two-volume license book remained in possession of Stevenson heirs and in the 1920s were given to the Pennsylvania Department of Internal Affairs. By 1930, the former State Librarian George Donehoo wrote his *History of the Cumberland Valley* and included in volume one a listing of all of the license recipients. Many early Lancaster County deeds referred to the Blunston License but this was the first exact listing.

How to Locate Specific Tracts

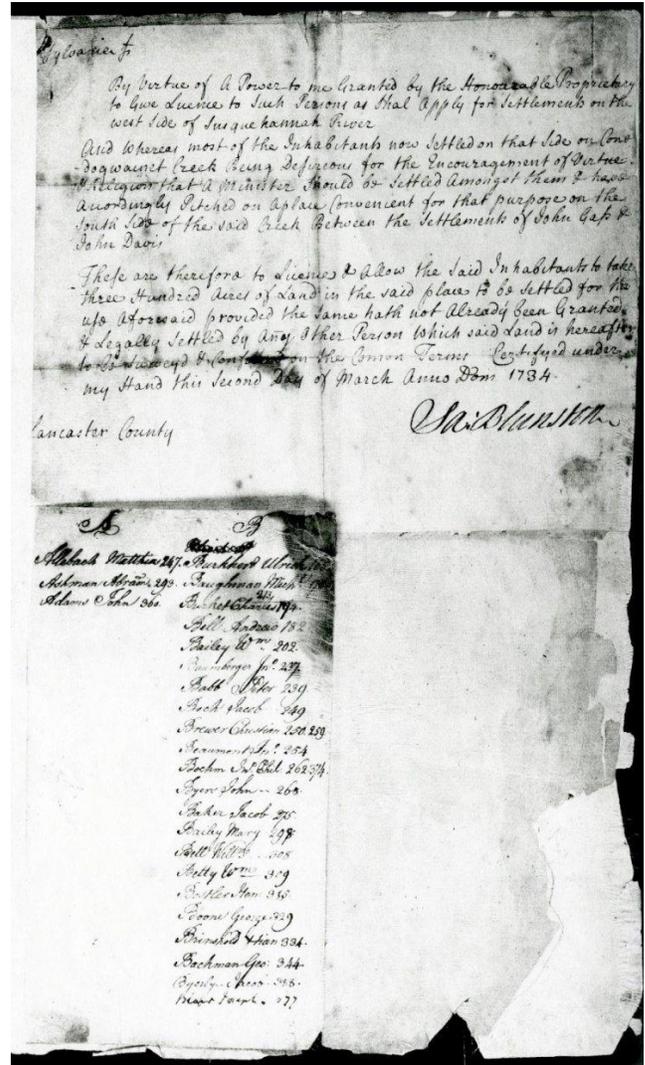
- Blunston Licenses are available at the Pennsylvania State Archives in Record Group 17 and published in the Publications of the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania, Volume XI No. 2 (1931), Volume XI No. 3 (1932), and Volume XII No. 1 (1933).
- First Families of old Cumberland County by Eschenmann and Barner
- Pennsylvania Original Land Records Series (York County) by Neal O. Hively
- Warrant Registers and Patent Registers available online at [www.pastatearchives.com](http://www.pastatearchives.com) under "Land Records"



FFOCC — First Families of Old Cumberland County  
 PAOLRS — PA Original Land Records Series (York County)



FFOCC — First Families of Old Cumberland County  
 PAOLRS — PA Original Land Records Series (York County)



Authorization of Samuel Blunston to grant settlements on the West side of the Susquehanna River.

**This Trick Will Solve Your Research Problems**

from Michael John Neill's Genealogy Tip of the Day; June 5, 2019

The reality is that there is no trick or instant solution to genealogical research problems. However, generally speaking the following approaches are helpful:

- citing your sources;
- learning as much as you can about all the records in the area;
- learning the history of the area;
- having contemporary maps;
- obtaining as many records as possible;
- using compiled sources (published genealogy books, online trees, etc. ) as stepping stones to original records;
- realizing assumptions may not be true;
- continuing to learn about genealogical research in general;
- proofing and double checking your work.

Not one trick and not a guarantee, but these general suggestions will go a long way.

## Pennsylvania State Archives

### RG-17 — RECORDS OF THE LAND OFFICE

Blunston Licenses, A Record of Licenses Granted to Sundry Persons to Settle and Take Up Land on the West Side of Susquehanna River, [ca. 1736].

LO 23.1 PLR 71; {series #17.319} [Holdings]

Arranged chronologically by date of license.

Indexed externally, alphabetically by surname of licensee in a staff-compiled list available in the Archives Search Room.

A loose register of licenses granted in lieu of warrants to settlers in Springettsbury Manor in present day York County and along the Conodoguinet Creek in present day Cumberland County and a list of licenses to settle granted to other “adventurers.” This series is filed in folder 12 within the series Proprietary Papers, [ca. 1682-1788] {17.297}. The practice of granting licenses to settle on land not yet purchased from the Indians created a new category of land. The licenses carried the promise that warrants would be granted as soon as the land was purchased from the Indians. As early as 1718, James Logan had informally granted permission to a group of Scots-Irish immigrants to settle in West Conestoga Township in what was then Chester County and Deputy Governor William Keith had also secretly given permission for a group of Germans from Schoharie, New York to settle in the Tulpehocken Valley of the present day Berks County in 1723. Despite such early informal arrangements, the Blunston Licenses were the first official licenses to be issued for land lying west of the Susquehanna River. William Penn’s policy was to always deal fairly by purchasing all rights of the native owners of land. Under this policy, between the time of the execution of the September 17, 1718 deed that transferred the remaining interest of the Lenni Lenape to the Susquehanna watershed and the Iroquois deeds of October 11 and 25, 1736 that relinquished the last Iroquois claims to the same region, no Europeans were to be permitted to settle on any of the lands west of the Susquehanna River. By 1733, however, concern over occupation of the region west of the river by settlers from Maryland prompted Governor Thomas Penn to authorize Samuel Blunston to issue licenses for settlement west of the river. (For this authorization see the Cadwalader Papers, Box 28, at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania). To protect proprietary interests in the border dispute with Maryland, he granted Samuel Blunston a commission to issue “licenses to settle” to German squatters and other “adventurers” in this region and these resemble warrants and contain much of the same type of information. Licenses or certificates were also

granted to traders who assisted in military occupation of the frontier and in securing the western fur trade. Examples of these can be found in the gentlemen’s tract applications in the East Side Applications Register, 1765-1769 {series #17.37}. Information given in the Blunston licenses is the date of the license, the name of the settler, the acreage licensed, and the location of the tract.

In all cases where settlement occurred by license, regular warrants could not be granted until the land had been purchased from the Indians. To locate a warrant issued on the basis of a license or certificate, consult the warrant register of the county with jurisdiction at the time. For example, most of the earliest warrants issued on the Blunston licenses will be found in the Lancaster County warrant register because Lancaster County had jurisdiction west of the Susquehanna River until York County was erected in 1749 and Cumberland County in 1750. For Blunston License tracts located within Springettsbury Manor in present day York County, see also the tract map and accompanying volume *The Manor of Springettsbury, York County, “Its History and Early Settlers,”* York County Original Records, vol. 6, prepared by Neal Otto Hively, 1993. (Land Office Map 55-746)

A transcription of the Blunston Licenses originally published by the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania, March 1931 (volume 11, No. 2, pp. 180-185); (Volume 11, No. 3, 269-275) and (volume 12, No. 1, pp. 62-70) is available on the reference shelving in the microfilm research area. It is accompanied by a surname index prepared by Cara McKay.

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## Hunting for Your Ancestor’s Employer

from Michael John Neill’s Genealogy Tip of the Day  
May 14, 2018

To learn more about your ancestor’s employer as given in a city directory, search the rest of the city directory as it may include advertisements or list the employer in a list of area businesses. Perform a Google search for the name of the business, search old newspapers, and search local and regional histories as well, many of which have been digitized at *GoogleBooks* (<http://books.google.com>) or *Archive.org* (<http://www.archive.org>).

## **OUR NAME'S THE GAME**

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### **DATED MATERIAL—DO NOT DELAY**

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#### **FGS 2019 Conference**

Wednesday, August 21 through Saturday, August 24  
Washington, DC

Federation of Genealogical Societies 2019 offers a new full four-day format jam-packed with topics of interest to every genealogist. Whether you're a beginner just starting to explore your family history or an old hand at research, the wide variety of new and inclusive topics offers something for you.

Explore the rich resources in Washington's many research repositories with records for everyone — whether you have colonial Mid-Atlantic roots or twentieth-century recent American immigrants. Plan some time at the National Archives, Library of Congress, DAR Library, and more, all an easy and affordable ride away on the DC Metro.

Bring the family and experience *our* capital city and its celebrated monuments and history. Spend the day learning about ancestors at the FGS conference, and then join living family for some fun with joint evening activities. You'll always remember your time in Washington, DC, together.

#### **Maryland Genealogical Society's Fall Seminar**

The Next Step: Sources and Methods to Advance  
Your Research

Saturday, September 14  
Holiday Inn-Laurel West 15101 Sweitzer Lane,  
Laurel, MD 20707

SAVE THE DATE for our Fall Seminar!

Registration information will be available soon.

There will be presentations by David A. Powell &  
Robyn N. Smith:

- Finding Original Records Online (Powell)
- Finding Foreign Original Records Online (Powell)
- A Tangled Web: Researching the Enslaved in Maryland (Smith)
- Cluster Research: Using Groups of People to Find Your People (Smith)