



**South Central  
Pennsylvania**  
Genealogical Society

# Our Name's The Game

www.scpgs.org

Monthly Newsletter Vol. 42 No. 3 November/December 2016

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

**Sunday, January 8, 2017**

**Where in the World is Tolna?**

This month's meeting will be held at the Historical Society Museum, 250 East Market Street, York. A brief business meeting will begin at 2:15 PM and the program will immediately follow at approximately 2:30 PM.

Names for communities, towns, townships and cities have unique origins. Residents identify and honor their heritage by naming a community after their homeland. The name also may have been selected to honor the property owner or a famous individual or it quite possibly is tied to a unique physical or geographic feature. And then there are those place names that one can only guess its origin as traditions and urban legends provide no clear path for its name. York County has many of these examples. English names such as York, Windsor and Manchester; German names such as Hanover, Sinsheim and Heidelberg illustrate homeland connections. Some York County communities have had more than one name as their first local 'nickname' has been replaced by an official name. And what is an official name? It can reflect the community's name selected when it was incorporated or the name for its post office.

So where is Tolna? Join Lila Fourhman-Shaull, York County History Center Director of Library & Archives as she locates Tolna and highlights many communities and their unique names with her power point presentation. This program is based upon the SCPGS publication #63 Gazetteer of York and Adams Counties, Pennsylvania that she had authored several years ago. The Gazetteer features the tremendous research of former researcher, librarian and director of the Historical Society of York County, Henry James Young.

**Sunday, February 5, 2017**

**The Amazing Discoveries and Frustrating Difficulties of African American Genealogical Research: The Story of a Family From the Northern Neck of Virginia**

Dr. Eric Holmes, superintendent of the York City School District, will discuss: how to work around some of the difficulties of conducting research on African American families from the southern states, the pre-civil war free African American population of Virginia, the Carter manumission, and how DNA impacts research efforts.

**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 visit our website [scpgs.org](http://scpgs.org) or call Richard Konkel at 717-843-7043.

**Coming soon ...** SCPGS Facebook page

*Our Facebook page will primarily be used to announce our meetings and any changes due to inclement weather.*

## From the President

Jonathan Stayer

During the question-and-answer period at the end of our genealogy conference in September, an audience member asked us to describe the impact that our family history research has had on our lives. As I reflected on that question, I realized that my genealogical quest has given me an alternative understanding of American history.

Many of my ancestral lines trace back through the religious strains of the Brethren, Mennonites and Amish. In fact, I am a direct descendant of the first Amish bishop in the United States, Jacob Hertzler. These religious groups descend from the Anabaptists of sixteenth-century Europe, which often were outside the mainstream of Christianity. Their communal emphasis and pacifist beliefs also separated them from the prevailing political system. Although all of my families have been in Pennsylvania since colonial times, I have found no conclusive evidence that any of my direct male ancestors served in any of the wars of the United States except my father who was a noncombatant in the Korean War and possibly one of my mother's Revolutionary War ancestors who was reported to have been at the battle of Princeton.

During the American Civil War, my third-great-grandfather, Adam Stayer of Bedford County, PA, filed a conscientious objector deposition with the Pennsylvania government, affirming his opposition to bearing arms because of his religious beliefs. His family was among the Dunkard (or Brethren) population of that area. He and all of his brothers filed such depositions in response to the Commonwealth's militia draft of 1862.

As I learned of this peace heritage, I have come to respect the beliefs of my forebears, developing into a pacifist myself. Studying Pennsylvania's Civil War conscientious objectors, I have a new insight into the history of that great conflict. While politicians bickered in Washington and Richmond and men were slaughtered in some of the greatest battles on the North American continent, a religious minority was attempting to preserve its right to stand by its convictions and to negotiate its relationship with an increasingly powerful federal government. The view of the Civil War from this perspective is vastly different than the one taught in most high school history classes. I have a renewed appreciation for those whose religious convictions pit them against the prevailing political and social currents.

The conclusion of one year and the anticipation of a new one offer an opportunity to reflect on the lives of our ancestors and to be thankful for the sacrifices and contributions that they made. As you move forward with your genealogical research and think about your family's heritage, look for the lessons and insights into history that it might give you.

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## Save the Date

We are on the Ulster Historical Foundation's North American Lecture Tour schedule for Sunday, March 12, 2017 from 1 PM to 5 PM. This lecture is free to SCPGS members and members of the York County History Center. There will be a \$30 charge for non-members to attend this meeting.

Watch our website ([scpgs.org](http://scpgs.org)) for more information about this meeting as it becomes available.



Family History Learning takes center stage at every Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) conference with four days jam-packed with sessions and workshops catering to all skill levels — beginner, intermediate, and advanced — delivered by nationally recognized speakers, educators, and regional experts. An FGS national conference program always delivers a compelling group of tracks guaranteed by the end of the conference to inspire and rejuvenize an attendee.

FGS conferences are open to anyone with an inkling of finding their past and provide a unique setting to interact, connect, and learn from many of the world's expert genealogists. Drawing people from all over the U.S. and around the world, FGS conferences promise to deliver an unparalleled educational and enlightening experience for everyone year after year.

Summary of the general genealogy presentations at our September 24, 2016 Genealogy Conference:

### **Climbing Your Family Tree**

Becky Anstine

Sometimes, we become so involved with gathering facts and data about our families; that we forget that we are also telling the story of our family. Which means that in addition to facts, we need to add information about lives, traditions, etc. The first step is to gather facts – birth, death, marriage, and where these events happened. Starting with yourself, you work backwards – you, your parents, their parents, etc. – gathering all the information you can – and you do this by talking to people and using sources you already have – birth certificates, death certificates, obituaries, family Bibles, funeral announcements, discharge papers, etc. Document everyone by using forms, such as family group sheets, pedigree charts (these can be found on line).

Once you have that information – look at the empty spaces on your charts. Now you'll work on filling them in by using outside sources. There are guidelines that need to be followed to prevent confusion and losing track. Sources need to be documented – you need to know where you found the information – you'll go back to this information several times to looking for missed clues. If the information was in a book – make sure you have the title, author, copyright date, pages and where you found the book. Newspapers need the title, date, place of publication, page, and where you found the article. Websites need the name of the website, address, date you accessed the information – was it a blog, and article, a video, etc. Interviews need to have the date, time, place of interview, who you interviewed. Some people keep research logs – noting where they went, what they were looking for, if they found it or not, and what they might want to look at the next time.

You have to decide how you are going to organize and store your information. Will you use a card file, notebooks, computer programs, etc. There are two types of sources that are used. The first type is known as “primary sources”. This is documentation created at the time of the event by the people involved – such as birth certificates, marriage licenses, death certificates and census data. The second type is “secondary sources”. This is documentation created by someone else, not present at the actual event – such as a published family history, a county history, letters, newspapers, obituaries, interviews, and Family Bibles.

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### **I Found It on the Internet (so it must be true!)**

Becky Anstine

Using the internet for genealogical research can be a rewarding and a frustrating adventure. It is a resource that is always open – no matter what time of day it is or what the weather is like. This session looked in depth at various websites – both free and subscription – that are available for research. There are many different types of websites that contain genealogical information. Examples of websites included: historical societies, libraries, multi-use sites, pay sites, courthouses, religious archives, county and state archives, government archives, groups and organizations (military, social, etc.) and search engines.

When using a website, certain guidelines should be applied to judge the validity of the site, such as ...

- 1) Authority – who developed the site, contact information, knowledge
- 2) Purpose – does the content support, audience, organization, are outside links appropriate
- 3) Coverage – selective or comprehensive depth, comparison to similar sites, do links go outside, are the outside links relevant
- 4) Currency – how often is the site updated or maintained, when was it created, when was it last updated
- 5) Accuracy – is the information reliable, is there a bibliography, reference or citation list

Free websites were presented by category for attendees to see what types of information can be found included:

Historical Societies: York County History Center, Harford County Historical Society

Archives: York County Archives, Pennsylvania State Archives, Maryland State Archives, National Archives

Other free websites: findagrave.com, Cyndi's list, Library of Congress, familysearch.org, usgenweb.com, rootsweb.com, google (for its images, newspapers, books, scholar, translator) various religious organizations (Mennonites, Methodists, Brethren, and Lutheran), David Ramsey Map Collection

Subscription websites included: Ancestry.com, Genealogybank.com, Newspapers.com, fold3.com (military records)

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*Climbing Your Family Tree continued ...*

Always verify your information – by getting as close to original sources as you can. Family histories are full of myths and unverified facts. Family names can also confuse research. You need to be aware of the different variations of names – such as “Josephine” – can also be Josie, Fine, Fina, Phene, Pheny. Sometimes people would go by their middle name rather than their first name, or they used a nickname all the time, or on occasion, they disliked their name and changed it to something else. Spelling of the last name can also mislead. In one document, the last name can be spelled several different ways. There really is no correct way to spell a last name; there are accepted variations, but for my last name there are over 50 variations – it would be impossible to decide on the “correct spelling”. The variety of spellings can be caused by family feuds, the part of the country where individuals are living, or the education of either the owner of the name or the person writing down the name. Accents of people and language also affect the spelling of a last name. So it is necessary to keep track of all the variations – your family might not be hiding from you in a census but listed under an obscure or different spelling.

Genealogical myths hinder many researchers. Some are errors that are passed on because they have not been verified. Others are based on the “only man with that name – so it must be him” theory. Some myths are based on the “my family would never have done that” theory. There is this is our family’s “Coat of Arms” myth – you are only entitled to a family coat of arms if your male line immigrant from England was entitled to one. Scams are also part of genealogy myths – a 99 year lease scam was predominant during the 1920’s – the Sumwalt/Zumwalt family fell victim to a scam involving them supposedly having a 99 year lease on the land that York occupies.

When a brickwall is hit, you need to expand your research scope. “Herd or cluster genealogy” can be an important key to breaking through that wall. Families traveled together – with their friends, their relatives and their neighbors – as a group and stayed together. Check to see who the neighbors are, whose names are on deeds, wills, inventories, baptisms, etc. If they immigrated – who else was on the ship – do those names show up with your ancestor? Searching collateral lines is another way to find information – if your grandmother’s maiden name is not on your mother’s death certificate – check the death certificates of your mother’s siblings

– one of them might have it. Don’t forget to check “step” and “half” family members – many times their records can hold clues that will help you break through that brickwall.

Know the history of the state that you are researching. States and counties have different ways of handling probates, deeds, etc. Orphans Court records are not restricted to orphans but to people who died intestate – you’ll find petitions by the heirs to handle various legal affairs in those records. Know when they starting keeping records – asking for birth or death certificates of your relatives who were born in the 1700’s, when the state or county didn’t start keeping those records until the 1900’s will only frustrate you and the individuals handling your requests. Knowing what kind of records the religion kept will also help prevent frustration. Some religions don’t record baptisms. Most early pastors were circuit riders – they deposited records at the nearest church or kept them themselves – not always at the church your relatives attended. Remember when using county histories – you get what you paid for. Your one ancestor may have a glowing biography because he paid a large sum but your other ancestor paid very little and only got a little biography.

Expanding your research to other resources can often provide information. Deeds will give the names of heirs, their spouses and residence when property needs to be divided. Signatures or marks can tell you if your ancestor was literate. Lack of a dower release can mean that either the spouse had died or that that individual was single. City directories can prove if your ancestor lived in a certain place, when you can’t find them on a census. Military records and pensions can contain a complete history – from physical descriptions to marriage and death certificates and family information. Cemeteries can help you locate other family members and fill in missing dates. Maps will help you locate where your family lived during certain time periods. Administrative accounts, wills and inventories can provide information about the worth of your ancestor, what he owned, and which relatives helped settle the estate.

Researching one’s family can be frustrating at times for a variety of reasons but it is also a fascinating and interesting search into finding out who we are, why we have some of the traditions we have, the various occupations we are connected with, some of our physical traits – it all helps us understand who we are and appreciate the life and the difficulties our ancestors experienced to make us what we are.

### Tales of Long Ago: Old-Time Business

from *The News*, a newsletter of the Kreutz Creek Charge of the Reformed Church; April/May 1933, Vol. XVI No. 3

In the article which appears every Friday morning, in "The Gazette and Daily," of York, entitled "One Hundred Years Ago," we were more than ordinarily interested in the one of March 17<sup>th</sup>. It describes the efforts to bring the Pennsylvania Railroad from Columbia to Wrightsville, by laying the rails across the River Bridge.

The account given is part of an address delivered before the State Legislature at Harrisburg, by a Mr. Smyser the representative from our local district. In it he describes trade conditions in our Kreutz Creek and Canadochly Valleys, giving a bird's eye view of how farmers made a living a century ago. Also he shows that condition which their descendants a century later have to contend with, even with auto transportation instead of river boats, viz, the condition of surplus and demand. We quote that part of the notes in full pertaining to our locality, with due recognition and appreciation to "The Gazette and Daily:"

An act providing for the laying of rails on the Columbia Bridge was before the Pennsylvania Senate. Mr. Smyser said, "Mr. Speaker, at the last session of the Legislature, a supplement to the

Columbia Bridge law was passed, authorizing the legislature to direct rails to be laid on the bridge for the passage of railroad cars. A communication was received from the president of the Bridge company, by both houses, at the present session requesting some provision to be made at this session relative to this matter. The bill under consideration provides for the laying of these rails, and forming a connection with the Pennsylvania railroad. If it should become a law it would bring the railroad to the town of Wrightsville, which is a place of considerable business opposite to Columbia. At that place there is a vast quantity of produce bought by the merchants from farmers and distillers who reside in the rich and fertile valleys of Creitz Creek and Chocoley. From six to seven hundred hogshead of whiskey alone are brought there some years, together with flour, pork, butter and other products. The merchants and farmers are at present under the necessity of keeping those articles in store-houses until a rise takes place in the Susquehanna, when they take it in arks to Baltimore; the consequence is that they get their articles to market at the same time that all the produce which descends the river from the western country bordering on its arrives there and by that means the market is completely glutted, so that our friends are obliged to take what they can get."

#### *I Found It on the Internet continued ...*

For more websites, it was suggested to check genealogy magazines, such as Family Search; which publishes a yearly list of the 100 best websites for the year.

There are more and more websites appearing every year with genealogy information. It can be difficult to sort through all the available sites. Researchers need to remember that the information on a site still needs to be traced back to an original source, submitted family trees need to be checked for validity (children can't be born after their parents have died or before their parents were born!). But the internet has made it much easier to research one's family by narrowing down research areas, providing clues on where to look next and making it easier to track down out of state relatives. Internet researching can connect distant family members and help one find lost relatives. It has become a boon to "Climbing Your Family Tree"!

#### *Don't let Your Family History Be Lost to Time*

*"A life that is not documented is a life that within a generation or two will largely be lost to memory. What a tragedy this can be in the history of a family. Knowledge of our ancestors shapes us and instills within us values that give direction and meaning to our lives."*

— Dennis B. Neuenschwander

## Introduction to Italian Records

The following is a summary of Lynn Nelson's October presentation:

### Administrative Organization of Italy

Italy is currently divided into 20 regions, each region is divided into provinces, and provinces are made of towns, villages and hamlets (frazioni). All three levels are used to describe a place. Records are maintained at the town level.

### The Italian Naming Tradition

First son named after the father's father  
 First daughter named after the father's mother  
 Second son named after the mother's father  
 Second daughter named after the mother's mother

If one of the above children dies, the next child of that gender will usually be given the same name.

There will be many people sharing the same name within the same generation. Therefore, you must confirm records found for people with your ancestor's name to be absolutely certain you have the correct person.

### Top Tips for Using Italian Records

The concept of maiden name does not exist. The name a woman is born with is the name she uses her entire life. All records and record indices use that name, including passenger lists.

Record Indices are contemporaneous with the records and available for most years. They are found on birth, marriage, death records and more. They are usually alphabetical by first letter of last name, however, older records may be by first name or chronological. Always check the end of the index; sometime they ran out of space and simply added names to the end of the index. Sometimes there is a decennial (10 year) index.

### Name Qualifiers

Italian records very often mention the father's name. For example ...

Pasquale Luisi figlio di Moe (son of Moe)  
 or Pasquale Luisi di Moe

FU is a tiny but very important two-letter word. When qualifying a name it indicates that the person is deceased. Records that name parents always indicate if they are alive or not. For example:

Pasquale Luisi figlio di fu Moe (son of the late Moe)

or Pasquale Luisi di fu Moe  
 or Pasquale Luisi fu Moe

### Abbreviations

First letter(s) or syllable plus last syllable in superscript. For example:

Fran<sup>co</sup> = Francesco  
 Vinza = Vincenza  
 Ma = Maria

Months ending in an "O" abbreviated:

gen<sup>o</sup> = gennaio (January)  
 feb<sup>o</sup> = febbraio (February)

Watch out for these month abbreviations:

7bre = settembre (September)  
 8bre = ottobre (October)  
 9bre = novembre (November)  
 Xbre = dicembre (December)

Note: the Julian calendar begins with March

### The Records

Birth Records (atti di nati) are recorded at the town hall, usually within 2-3 days of the birth. The baby is physically presented to record the birth. The informant is usually the father, but sometimes the midwife. Parties mentioned include the informant, the father, the mother, two witnesses, and the baby. Information recorded about each party may include: name, and often the name of the father (qualified name), age and occupation, place of birth and/or residence. Watch for margin notations they provide additional information.

Marriage Records (atti di matrimonio) usually name the bride and groom and whether they are single or widowed, their parents, and the witnesses. Information recorded about each party may include: name (and name of father), age and occupation, place of birth and/or residence. There are several different types of marriage records: Wedding Banns (pubblicazioni, memorandum), Marriage (promesa, matrimonio), and Supplemental Documents (allegati, processeti).

Death Records (atti di morte) are recorded at the town hall, usually within a day or so of the death. Usually there is one or two informants (rarely a family member) and two witnesses. No cause of death is given, however, the record may provide parents' names and spouse (fu). This is the least reliable record.

## Resources for Finding and using Italian Records

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### General Resources

To identify Italian towns, provinces, and regions)  
<http://www.italianside.com/italian-towns-database/>  
<http://italiangen.org/records-search/italian-towns.php>  
<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~itappcnc/pipcntown.htm> (good for partial/misspelled names)

FamilySearch Wikis:

[https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Italy\\_Genealogy](https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Italy_Genealogy)  
[https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Italian\\_Marriage\\_Records\\_More\\_Than\\_You\\_Think](https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Italian_Marriage_Records_More_Than_You_Think)

Also, search Wikis for your Italian regions, provinces, and towns of interest

### Skill-building Resources

Online Lessons)

<https://familysearch.org/learningcenter/results.htm?fq=place%3A%22Italy%22>

Italian Records Extraction Guide

<http://script.byu.edu/Pages/Italian/en/guide.aspx>

Paleography - Fantastic site for learning to read old Italian script, with tutorials, examples:

<http://script.byu.edu/Pages/Italian/en/welcome.aspx>

### Word Lists

Basic genealogy vocabulary (numbers, months, etc.):

[https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Italian\\_Genealogical\\_Word\\_List](https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Italian_Genealogical_Word_List)

More detailed vocabulary:

<http://www.roangelo.net/vocabula.html> (copy/paste url into browser window)

Italian first names:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Italian\\_given\\_names](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Italian_given_names)

Italian first names, including rare ones:

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~torchia/names/italiannames.htm>

Italian First Name Translator – cross references

Italian given names to Americanized versions

<http://www.daddezio.com/genealogy/italian/names.html>

English/Italian Dictionary of 18th century Italian:

<http://books.google.com/books?id=D5UCAAAAMAAJ>

Italian Occupations:

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mmange/itengocc.html>

### Other Record Resources

Use search engines (Google, etc.) with specific town name and “genealogy

### Family Search

Catalog <https://familysearch.org/catalog-search>

In “Place” field, enter name of town or province (displays all resources)

Change “Search these Family History Centers” field from ANY to Online

Select Civil Registration (Stato Civile) records

Click on link for Online records and drill down to desired town, record type and year

OR

Scroll down to see details or all resources (including microfilms and database indices)

Collection of Italian online resources (includes digital images and indexed databases):

<https://familysearch.org/search/collection/list#page=1&countryId=1927178>

For indexed records (some include images):

<https://familysearch.org/search/collection/location/1927178>

### Ancestry (requires World subscription to view records, catalog free to view)

Ancestry Card Catalog:

<http://search.ancestry.com/search/CardCatalog.aspx>

Scroll down to “Filter by Location” in left navigation pane. Drill down to desired area by:

1. “Filter by Location” = select Europe
2. “Filter by Location” = select Italy
3. “Filter by Location” = select desired Region
4. “Filter by Location” = select desired Province
5. “Filter by Collection” = select Birth, Marriage & Death
6. Select “Civil Registration” records
7. Use Browse box on right to drill down to record type and year

### Il Portale Antenati (the Ancestor Portal)

<http://www.antenati.san.beniculturali.it/>

1. Select British flag in top right corner for English (not all pages available in English)
2. Select Regions and Sources
3. Click on desired Region in map
4. Select Province from list displayed
5. Click “Browse Civil State Records”, if available
6. Drill down to desired records
7. Note: to save or print, click on record to enlarge and use your browser’s Save or Print function (right click)

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**DATED MATERIAL—DO NOT DELAY**

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The Genealogical Proof Standard serves as a “genealogical GPS” that teaches basic navigational skills: how to plot your research course, track your progress, read conflicting sets of directions and share your journey with friends and family.

<b>Element of the GPS</b>	<b>Contribution to Credibility</b>
Reasonably exhaustive research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assumes examination of a wide range of high quality sources</li><li>• Minimizes the probability that undiscovered evidence will overturn a too-hasty conclusion</li></ul>
Complete, accurate citations to the source or sources of each information item	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrate the extent of the search and the quality of the sources</li><li>• Allows others to replicate the steps taken to reach the conclusion (Inability to replicate the research casts doubt on the conclusion)</li></ul>
Tests — through processes of analysis and correlation — of all sources, information items, and evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facilitates sound interpretation of the data contributed by each source</li><li>• Ensures that the conclusion reflects <i>all</i> the evidence</li></ul>
Resolution of conflicts among evidence items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Substantiates the conclusion’s credibility (If conflicting evidence is not resolved, a credible conclusion is not possible)</li></ul>
Soundly reasoned, coherently written conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eliminates the possibility that the conclusion is based on bias, preconception, or inadequate appreciation of the evidence</li><li>• Explains how the evidence led to the conclusion</li></ul>