



**South Central  
Pennsylvania**  
Genealogical Society

# Our Name's The Game

www.scpgs.org

Monthly Newsletter Vol. 38 No. 3 October 2012

## OUR NEXT MEETING

**Sunday, November 4, 2012 — Camp Security: A Revolutionary War Prison Camp in York County**

This month's meeting will be held at the Good News Free Will Baptist Church, 530 Locust Grove Road, York, Pennsylvania. A brief business meeting will begin at 2:15 PM and the program will immediately follow at approximately 2:30 PM. Wear sturdy shoes as we will take a walk on the hallowed grounds of Camp Security after the program ... weather permitting.

*From East Market Street turn south on Locust Grove Road. At the Y intersection with Orchard Road bear right to stay on Locust Grove Road; the church will be on the right not far from this intersection.*

York County is home to the only undeveloped Revolutionary War prison encampment site in the United States, known then and now as "Camp Security". Established at the end of July 1781 on land presently located in Springettsbury Township, this prison camp housed as many as 1500-2000 British privates and noncommissioned officers, and their families, captured at the pivotal battles of Saratoga and Yorktown. During its existence, the facility consisted of at least one stockade and a less restrictive village site called "Camp Indulgence" by its residents. It was guarded by York County militia as well as a company of men from Col. Moses Hazen's Continental Army regiment, "Congress's Own" or the "Canadian Regiment." Following the preliminary peace treaty between the fledging United States and Great Britain in the spring of 1783, the prisoners were released and marched to New York during the second week of May 1783. In the past year, more than 150 acres of this historic land were purchased for permanent preservation through a consortium of historical and conservation organizations with the assistance of state and local government.

Jonathan Stayer, supervisor of reference services at the Pennsylvania State Archives, will discuss the fascinating history of Camp Security — the selection of the site, its construction, the prisoners and the guards, prison conditions and escapes. Mr. Stayer has been studying the encampment for more than thirty years, and he will show slides of documents and artifacts associated with the site. He also will describe the latest exciting findings in British archives as well as the ongoing efforts to preserve the.

## LOOKING AHEAD TO 2013 ...

Our first meeting in 2013 will be on Sunday, January 6<sup>th</sup>. Please plan to join for *Civil War: On the Light Side*. During this program members and visitors will have a chance to share a Civil War story, picture, pension file, or artifact.

## ANNOUNCING GenerousGenealogists.com

*Posted by Dick Eastman on September 16, 2012*



Several new websites have been launched recently that hoped to replace the popular RAOGK (Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness) site that went off line last year, following the death of its founder, Bridgett Schneider. So far, none of these new sites have managed to attract a large crowd of enthusiastic volunteers. Still another site has recently been launched and this one possibly could become the replacement for RAOGK.

The new group is led by Mark Rabideau who did the organizing and programming. GenerousGenealogists.com is brand-new and only has a handful of volunteers so far. However, the new site is inviting others to look at the site and, if interested, to join in. As you would expect, GenerousGenealogists.com provides services completely free of charge. Voluntary donations are appreciated, however. Donations may be made by PayPal.

I took a look at GenerousGenealogists.com and am impressed. To be sure, it is almost a “skeleton” at this moment as it is brand new. I didn’t expect to find many volunteers listed and I was right. However, the site is well designed and looks like it could succeed. The site has discussion forums with separate sections for many different countries. Most of the sections are empty at this time. The web site also has a section for “Free Genealogy Coaching” that provides “how to” information about a number of topics.

I suspect there are a few bugs or “rough spots” in the GenerousGenealogists.com web site. After all, it is brand new. You cannot reasonably expect it to be perfectly smooth and polished just yet. However, any such rough spots undoubtedly will get smoothed out as experience is gained.

For both accuracy and privacy reasons, the original RAOGK’s volunteer database was not used. Even if you were listed on the old site, you will need to sign up on the new site as a volunteer.

I’d suggest you check out the new GenerousGenealogists.com and, if interested, add your name to those who have volunteered to help fellow genealogists. You can find the site at <http://www.generousgenealogists.com>.

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## DECEASED MEMBERS

**Dolly C. Anderson**, of St. Louis, Missouri, passed away on Monday, April 23, 2012 at the age of 89 years. She was the daughter of Noah and Goldie (Reedy) Creamer, and wife of Gene O. Anderson. Dolly was born on August 16, 1922 in Jackson, Missouri, and was a teacher at Glasgow Elementary School in the Riverview Gardens School District for 24 years teaching third and fourth grades. She enjoyed genealogy and was a member of the St. Louis Genealogical Society.

Charter member **Dorothy Jane Rearich**, formerly of Zions View, York County, passed away September 12, 2012 at the age of 80 years. She was the daughter of Jessie Boyer Shearer Senft and Warren William Shearer, and wife of John P. “Phil” Rearich. Dorothy was born during the Great Depression on May 24, 1932 in Altoona. Her family moved to York in 1943 where she lived on East Philadelphia Street and attended York City schools; graduating from York High in 1950.

## **FAMED ARCHITECT BENJAMIN LATROBE MAPPED LOWER SUSQUEHANNA RIVER**

written by June Lloyd, Librarian Emerita, York County Heritage Trust

Benjamin Henry Latrobe is best known as one of the fathers of American architecture. He designed the U.S. Capitol, Baltimore Basilica, Bank of Pennsylvania and Philadelphia Waterworks. In 1801-1802 Latrobe used his engineering skills to complete a project much closer to (our) home, channel improvement and detailed surveying of the Susquehanna River from Columbia to the Chesapeake Bay.

The Susquehanna was only navigable, even during spring freshets, south to Columbia. From there to its mouth at Havre de Grace, it was fraught with dangerous rapids, falls and obstructions. By 1800, hundreds of thousands of barrels of flour and bushels of wheat, beef and pork, whiskey, iron, coal and lumber arrived at Columbia on barges and arks, virtually unsteerable, box-like boats up to 90 feet long and 20 feet wide. Arks drew only two feet of water, but because of the dangers south of Columbia they were offloaded, broken up and sold as lumber there. The cargo continued by wagon to Philadelphia and other markets. Only heavy rafts, usually of logs, would venture to ride the spring freshets on down to the Chesapeake.

The Pennsylvania government wasn't keen on improvements to the lower Susquehanna, which could divert more commerce to Maryland's Baltimore instead of Pennsylvania's Philadelphia. Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware finally agreed, around 1800, to cooperate on Susquehanna improvements that would then allow for canal connections to benefit all three states.

Pennsylvania Governor Thomas McKean contracted with Col. Frederick Antes to survey the lower Susquehanna. Antes asked his nephew, architect Benjamin H. Latrobe, to assist him as engineer and surveyor. Antes started work August 1, 1801, scouting out the river from Columbia to the Maryland line for channel clearing. He hired local contractors, set up a tool repair shop and bought supplies such as black powder and brimstone for blasting. By the time

Latrobe arrived at Lancaster on September 7, Antes was gravely ill, but he spent the last two weeks of his life planning, with Latrobe, the completion of the channel clearing and the river survey. Latrobe immediately took over, and channel clearing and obstruction removal were pretty well done by October.

Latrobe wrote: "All my exertions were bent to force through all obstructions, a channel clear of rocks, of 40 ft. wide close to the Eastern shore, never leaving any rock upon which a vessel could be wrecked between the channel and the shore, so that in the most violent freshes a boat should always be safe, by keeping close in shore. Rocks of immense magnitude were therefore blown away, in preference to the following a crooked channel more cheaply made, but more difficult and dangerous..."

The survey phase was conducted during October and November 1801. It was done in two directions with Latrobe starting at Columbia and assistant surveyor Christian Hauducoeur working north from the Maryland line, meeting at McCall's Ferry. Each survey crew included an assistant surveyor, chain bearers, axe men and canoe men. (Hauducoeur had already published a map of the Maryland section of the Susquehanna in 1799).

Latrobe's part of the survey, from Columbia to McCall's Ferry, took several weeks. The crews worked every day but Sunday, lodging and eating at the few riverside inns and farmers' houses. Latrobe wrote to his wife Mary from Burkhalter's Ferry: "The little incidents of our journey have been often extremely laughable, and almost always curious. The very reception we have met with has been so various, that I could fill a letter with description of character, and manner that would often make you laugh. And as to the natural Scenery in which we have been engaged, it is so Savage in many instances, and so beautiful in others, that I could not fail to find in that alone matter enough for twenty letters."

Latrobe wrote his report for Governor McKean soon after the project was completed. Even with blasting obstructions and clearing a narrow channel, the Susquehanna was still very hazardous. He felt Turkey Hill was especially formidable, where the two mile wide river “suddenly contracts itself on breaking through the mountains to the width of 3/4th of a mile.” High ridges of rock made up the river bed there and current was “astonishing rapid in autumn”. He noted other danger spots and the geology that created them.

It took Latrobe about a year after the survey to produce a large scale, high quality, strip map 17 feet long and two feet wide. The Pennsylvania section was rendered in detail with pencil, ink and watercolor. Latrobe completed the Maryland section, mostly based on Hauducoeur’s 1799 map, without the coloring. Shorelines, streams, falls, rapids and channels were clearly defined. On shore, including on large islands, buildings were shown, as were woods and trees and the few existing fields.

Latrobe later complained of having seen his map “in scandalous condition,” stained by fly dirt and smoke from hanging ... near the ceiling of the state house” in Lancaster (the capital of Pennsylvania from 1799 to 1812. Worse was to come — the map was in the House chamber in Washington in 1814 and destroyed when the British burned the Capitol.

Luckily, Benjamin Latrobe had drawn a facsimile copy for himself. It is now in the Maryland Historical Society, and has been reproduced in black and white. A reference copy may be used at York County Heritage Trust Library/Archives.

Over \$20,000 was spent by Latrobe and his colleagues in 1801 on the survey and channel clearing. Latrobe estimated it would take \$100,000 more to make the lower Susquehanna “fit for the common purpose of convenient intercourse.” It was never provided, and not until 1840, with the opening of the Susquehanna & Tidewater Canal from Wrightsville to Havre de Grace, was that section safely navigated.

#### Sources consulted:

Edward Carter II, John C Van Horne and Charles E. Brownell, eds. *Latrobe's View of America, 1795-1820: Selections from the Watercolors and Sketches.*

Darwin H. Stapleton, ed., *The Engineering Drawings of Benjamin Henry Latrobe.*

Maryland Historical Society: *Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe*

York County Heritage Trust Library/  
Archives: B/W Full Size Copies of 1801 Map

*This article first appeared in the York Sunday News in April 2012 and was the handout from our October meeting.*

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## **PENNSYLVANIA STATE ARCHIVES**

The Pennsylvania State Archives has recently signed a contract with *Ancestry.com* to have the original state birth and death certificates that are now open records scanned and data extracted. The contract gives exclusive online access to *Ancestry* for three years after which the database will be moved to the Pennsylvania State Archives website where it will be free to all. Unfortunately access to the records while they are on *Ancestry* will require having a subscription to *Ancestry*. However, the contract does require that Pennsylvania residents have free access to this particular database. How that

will be accomplished has not been worked out and they are open to suggestions as to how all Pennsylvania residents and only Pennsylvania residents could have access. While we would have very much preferred that the records be made available online for free to all immediately rather than after three years it is still much better than what we have been dealing with for over a hundred years. *Ancestry* was apparently able to make the best deal for the Archives and the records will eventually be available online to all at no cost to the taxpayer.

## *CensusGenie* ANNOUNCING CensusGenie.com Posted by Dick Eastman on September 7, 2012

Genealogists have multiple web sites available that contain indexes and images of U.S. census records. However, a new web site hopes to extend the capabilities by adding high-tech tools to find those difficult-to-locate records. This site only searches the U.S. census records, nothing else.

The following is an extract from an email message I received from Joe Dolinak:

We've got a website started, <http://censusgenie.com>, which you or some of your followers may find useful. The website will house many tech-inspired tools for the researcher to use in their searches. Some of these tools will allow the user to be more specific in their searches, some tools will allow the user-interaction to be more enjoyable, and some tools will show results in a new perspective.

The website is initially geared to the 1940 census. Other websites have created indexes, but only a certain percentage of households have been transcribed accurately (or even initially recorded correctly by the census taker). For those hard-to-find families, our tools can be used.

Some of the nice-to-have search tools are: search by family size, search by ages and genders within the family (e.g., when you suspect the family name has been misspelled), search within a certain number of miles of a location (e.g., to search western PA, but not include Philly), etc.

Some of the nice-to-have presentations of the census images are: being able to scroll through the forms mimicking the scroll of a microfilm roll, looking at colorized images rather than black-and-white images, etc. Another nice-to-have is the ability to input a modern day street address, and get back a colorized map of the block and enumeration districts for that address. I believe this may be the only block-number tool available today.

The website will become subscription-based in a few weeks, as we bring more tools online, make more accurate those tools which are already online and correct a few bugs. Currently some of the areas are grayed out for this purpose.

You can learn more at <https://www.censusgenie.com/>

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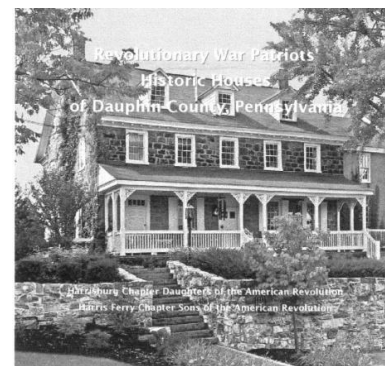
## NEW BOOK

Harrisburg Chapter of DAR and the Harris Ferry Chapter SAR recently announced a new publication: *Revolutionary War Patriots Historic Houses of Dauphin County, Pennsylvania*.

This 9"x9" hard cover book with color photographs of sixty houses and buildings delves into the history of 97 Patriots who fought in the Revolutionary War.

To order a copy of this book, make your \$40 check payable to Harrisburg Chapter DAR and send to:

Carol Jones  
5579 Fulcroft Avenue  
Harrisburg, PA 17111-4145



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### **FINAL REMINDER**

The pre-sale of our second volume of the United States Direct Tax of 1798 for York County, Pennsylvania will end on November 1<sup>st</sup>. If you haven't already order your copy at the reduced price ... *time in running out.*

This publication will include Dover and Manchester Townships; it is 71 pages in length, includes a surname index, and will sell for \$20 plus a \$5 fee to cover postage and sales tax.

During this "pre-sale" the member price is only \$12.50 (sales tax and postage included).



To reserve your copy please make your check payable to SCPGS and mail to ...

South Central Pennsylvania Genealogical Society  
Attention: Margaret Burg  
PO Box 1824  
York, PA 17405-1824

We anticipate that pre-sale orders will arrive in your mailbox shortly after Thanksgiving. This publication would make a great Christmas gift for the genealogist on your gift-giving list.