



THE ARCHIVIST



A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF BERGEN COUNTY

VOLUME 42, ISSUE 3, AUGUST 2015

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Margaret Kaiser, GSBC President

The GSBC Board and I are pleased to share many recent noteworthy activities and announcements with the GSBC membership. What a delightful lineup! The GSBC truly rocks!

At a recent monthly meeting a guest unfortunately suffered a minor medical incident — but was in excellent hands throughout. Offering assistance were GSBC members, Joe Boyle, MD; EMTs, Mary Beth Craven and Alison Wallin; and Peggy Woods, RN; as well as Barbara Ellman, Joe Suplicki, and Steve Gabai. Thank you to all these qualified and helpful GSBC members who offered their timely assistance. Our “patient” has made a full recovery.

During the month of July, the second floor display case at the Ridgewood Public Library was dedicated to the GSBC. Bolger Librarian, Sarah Kiefer, informed us that “the display got a lot of really good feedback — which is great news!” The display was designed to inform general library attendees about our organization and inspire them to start down the path discovering their own family stories. Our thanks are due to Michelle Novak who developed the overall content and included examples provided by GSBC Board Members Ree Hopper, CG, Mary Beth Craven, and Anne Greene. (A slide show of the items in the display will be made available on the GSBC website in the next few weeks.) Arrangements are being made to mount this display next at the Northvale Municipal Center. If you know of other local organizations which might be interested in showcasing a display about genealogy, please contact us at GSBCArchivist@icloud.com.

A real ‘wow’ for those searching Irish records was set in motion in early July when the National Archives of Ireland launched a site where one can search digitized images of Ireland’s Roman Catholic parish records! Look for GSBC Board Member, and past President, Judy Kenney’s review of the site in this issue.

Also of interest to many of our members is the digitization of Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island directories by the Brooklyn Public Library. The directories, which cover the city from 1856 to 1908, are digitized, saved as PDFs, and are fully OCR scanned so all the text is searchable. You can view them at the website or download the PDF file to your computer for later searching and viewing. See the directories at www.bklynlibrary.org/citydir/.

And, speaking of Brooklyn, this issue contains information on the Brooklyn Historical Society’s (BHS) beautiful, landmarked building and the Othmer Library. The BHS was originally formed as the Long Island Historical Society and the Library contains many publications and manuscripts relating to the early history and families of Long Island. In addition to being an excellent resource, the Library’s online catalog is easy to use and the BHS staff is very responsive to queries about the holdings.

GSBC FALL COURSE:

**Introduction to Genealogy at
Bergen Community College ILR**

GSBC will hold a course at Bergen Community College ILR (for those 55 and older) in the Fall. Contact the college at 201-447-7156 or ilr@bergen.edu for more information.

The Association of Ackerson/Eckerson Descendants, Inc. has unfortunately suffered from diminished membership over the years, as well as the passing of its founders and officers, and has agreed to disband. The Ackerson/Eckerson family abounds in Bergen and Rockland Counties and their publications and newsletters provided excellent resources for local researchers. (The Ackerson/Eckerson family were early immigrants. The descendants of Thomas Hugesson and Sarah Brout assumed the name Eckerson.) The Association had prearranged that when the time came to disband, its assets would be divided between Bergen and Rockland genealogical organizations. The GSBC received 13 copies of Ethel Kay Konight’s book, *The Ackerson/Eckerson Family in America* (third printing, 2001). In addition to the Ackerman/Eckerson families, the publication includes 17 index pages of area surnames. The books will be offered for sale soon at the GSBC website. (A copy of the 2001 edition is in the The Bolger Heritage Center Archives room. The 1999 edition is located in the open stacks.) In addition to the books, a check for \$1,190.47 was also donated to the GSBC. These donations are respectfully received and we thank the Association.

The Bylaws of the GSBC were long overdue for updating. A Bylaws Review Committee Chaired by Geri Mola, with members Barbara Ellman, Nancy Groo, Margaret Kaiser, and Judy Kenney, recently completed the task. Members will be receiving a copy of Bylaw updates via postal mail for their review. Board Member, Nancy Klujber, collated, labeled, and completed the mailing. The GSBC Board reviewed these changes at our last quarterly meeting and approved the updates. The Bylaw changes will be presented to the membership for their approval, via vote, at our September General Meeting.

Our GSBC Facebook page continues to grow in readership. Our Social Media Committee, which includes Barbara Ellman, Lauren Maehrlein, Geri Mola, and Michelle Novak, has been posting fantastic, informative, and newsworthy genealogical items almost daily. Posts include announcements of GSBC events, new databases and resources, notices of discounts and free search periods on various collections, and links to events and information from other related societies. The Social Media Committee has plans for future endeavors that will be quite innovative. But for now, keep up to date by visiting our page at www.facebook.com/GenSocBergenCo and clicking ‘Like.’ This will deliver the GSBC posts directly to your Facebook home page!

**THE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF
BERGEN COUNTY, NJ**

P.O. Box 432, Midland Park, NJ 07432
www.njgsbc.org | contact@njgsbc.org
www.facebook.com/GenSocBergenCo

BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2014-2015

PRESIDENT

Margaret Kaiser, 201-887-7543

1ST VICE PRESIDENT (PROGRAMS)

Mary Beth Craven, 201-767-1020

2ND VICE PRESIDENT (LIBRARY)

Lucille Bertram, 201-265-7174

3RD VICE PRESIDENT (MEMBERSHIP)

Lauren Maehrlein, 201-265-6872

TREASURER

Barbara Ellman, 201-863-0021

RECORDING SECRETARY

Anne Greene, 201-652-5009

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

Nancy Klujber, 201-797-7669

WEBMASTER

Afina Broekman, 201-703-8699 / afinab@hotmail.com

PAST PRESIDENT

Judith Kenney (2010-2013), 845-357-3532

TRUSTEES

Steve Gabai (Speakers Bureau), 201-686-7684

Nancy Groo (P.O. Box, Mail), 201-447-0368

Geraldine Mola (Tribute Cards, Bylaws), 201-797-2109

Michelle D. Novak (*The Archivist*), 917-363-1521

Sydney Robertson (Audit, Education), 201-652-0729

Steve Winter (Social Events, Historian), 973-423-0116

TRUSTEE EMERITUS

Maria (Ree) Jean Pratt Hopper, CG, 201-391-7386

Contact other officers by email at contact@njgsbc.org

OTHER CHAIRPERSONS

Delegates to the Federation of Genealogical Societies

Maria (Ree) Jean Pratt Hopper, CG;

Lauren Maehrlein

Indexing Projects: Afina Broekman

Ridgewood Public Library Liaison: Sarah Kiefer,
Local History Librarian at Ridgewood Public Library,
201-670-5600 x135

The Genealogical Society of Bergen County, NJ, is an organization of people interested in educating others in family and local history preservation. The various ancestral trails of its members span much of the U.S., Canada, Eastern and Western European countries, as well as other parts of the world. Some members trace back to this country's first settlers, while others are the children of recent immigrants.

Our purpose is to bring together family tree researchers for mutual assistance and sharing of research experiences and to encourage the preservation of family history by the public through educational programs and classes.

Membership in the Genealogical Society of Bergen County is open to all those interested in genealogy. Annual dues are \$20 (Individual membership); \$25 (Family membership); and \$10 (Junior Membership, ages 13-18).

The Genealogical Society of Bergen County is a tax-exempt organization as described in sections 501 (c) (3) and 509 (a) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code. Bequests, legacies, devises, transfers or gifts to the Society are deductible for federal income, estate, and gift tax purposes as provided by the IRS.

(Continued from previous page.)

GSBC Member and recent lecturer, Fred Voss, will be teaching the "Introduction to Genealogy" course this fall in the Institute for Learning in Retirement (ILR) program at Bergen Community College. (Please note that the ILR program is for students 55 and older.) Beginners and intermediate learners won't want to miss this opportunity. Thanks to Mary Beth Craven, our retiring instructor, for teaching this program in recent years. For more information, call the college at (201) 447-7156.

Our GSBC web site is scheduled to undergo a major overhaul in the next month so that we can fix the current bugs in the site, share events more easily, better manage our Members' area, create a more robust store, and improve our online forms. The Board is excited to be able to present a more useful, informative, and updated web presence for GSBC. These changes will be coming soon, but please be patient. Up to now, our Webmaster, Afina Broekman, with assistance from Michelle Novak and Will Mackowski, have built and maintained the site entirely in their own time. Retooling and refreshing are overdue. Afina and Michelle will supervise the rebuild and relaunch and are excited to share the new site with you when it is ready.

If you need to visit an archive or repository and would like some company, consider signing up for a GSBC car-pool research trip. This year, trips have been offered to the Hackensack Courthouse and Trenton State Archives, where Ree Hopper and Carol DeWitte, who are both highly-experienced researchers, have guided researchers around the facilities. To sign up for an upcoming trip, either as a driver or passenger, contact Ree at reetree@optonline.net or Carol at delftgirl@aol.com. Don't miss this opportunity to travel with other researchers to explore these great facilities.

Our Lock-In Committee has begun work on this year's RPL Lock-In event coming up on Saturday, 24 October. Information about the event, and a sign-up form, will be available on our website soon, so save the date!

Volunteers who have helped index, assisted patrons, lent a hand with GSBC's mailings, taught a class, or have served the GSBC in other ways over the past two years will be invited to our Volunteer Brunch (invitation-only) on 7 November. If you are not already a volunteer, let us know what activities you would like to join. Training is provided where required and many projects can be done from your home computer.

Lastly, *The Archivist* is published for two reasons. First, to engage, inform, and inspire genealogists to hone their craft and discover new things. And secondly, to serve as the "newsletter of record" for the Society. We love submissions on all topics related to genealogy. So, if you have a family story you wish to share (as Joe Boyle, MD, did when we published poetry written by his aunt), a brick-wall-busting research tip or technique (as Barbara Ellman is so adept at offering), or have a document that you would like to share with the world (as Ree Hopper shares her family's Bible records and one-of-a-kind family papers), please drop us an email at GSBCArchivist@icloud.com. We will happily assist in helping to get your submission published. Who knows, your descendants may stumble across your family story or how-to article many generations from now!

Members of the GSBC, please advise us of your thoughts and interests so we may better serve you.

Hopefully your searches are developing well. Don't forget to attend our monthly meetings — we have a slate of very interesting programs and events ahead this fall!

— *Margaret*

THE ARCHIVIST

Michelle D. Novak, *Editor*; Lauren Maehrlein and Margaret Kaiser, *Proofreaders*. The Archivist is published four times a year and mailed to members about the 15th of February, May, August, and November. Electronic delivery via PDF and email is available. Back issues are available on our website, www.njgsbc.org, with recent back-issues accessed through the members' section of the website.

GSBC Members are encouraged to submit content for this publication. The Editor of this publication reserves the right to accept or reject submissions and edit submissions for content and length. The deadline for submissions is the 15th of the month preceding publication. Send material to: **Genealogical Society of Bergen County, PO Box 432, Midland Park, NJ 07432 or GSBCArchivist@icloud.com**

While we strive for accuracy, the Society assumes no responsibility for typos, errors of fact, or opinions expressed or implied by contributors. The GSBC or *The Archivist* does not endorse services or products mentioned in this publication or in sponsor advertisements. Errors brought to our attention will be corrected.

No reproduction without permission.

Ellis Island

Program Recap by Lauren Maehrlein

The GSBC's monthly meeting on 27 April provided members and visitors with an entertaining and informative lecture on the immigration epicenter of the early twentieth century, which just happens to be in our backyard, Ellis Island.

Fred Voss, a very knowledgeable tour guide and researcher at the Ellis Island National Park, provided a detailed look into the history and workings of the first federal immigration center in the US. Mr. Voss (who, was scheduled to speak by invitation of GSBC President, Margaret Kaiser) illustrated his talk with photographs from the center's earliest days and as it looks today. Mr. Voss kept the audience enthralled with major and minor details of the center, including:

- Ellis Island was known by various names, including "Little Oyster Island." It was eventually named after an eighteenth century owner, Samuel Ellis. The island was leased to the State of New York in 1794 and was a Federal arsenal protecting the Port of New York throughout the 1800s.
- Originally Ellis Island consisted of only three acres. Landfill gradually expanded its size to the present 27.5 acres.
- Located a stone's throw from Jersey City, ownership has long been contested between New York and New Jersey. A decision by the US Supreme Court places the original three acres (including the main building) in New York with the landfill section (including the hospitals) in New Jersey. Some structures span both states and the states agreed to have joint jurisdiction of the island. The island is managed by the National Parks Service but restoration and preservation is managed by a non-profit foundation.
- Prior to its opening in 1892, immigration was handled by individual states — and records from these ports are State, not Federal, records. A large percentage of those coming into New York before Ellis Island were processed at Castle Garden in lower Manhattan.
- Within a few years after its opening, Ellis Island was processing approximately 80% of all US immigration, including the ancestors of upwards of 40% of today's Americans.
- A fire in 1897 forced the immigration center to shut down and operations were temporarily once again run out of Manhattan, at the Barge Office, until a new building was constructed on the island. (Castle Garden was in use at the time as the NY Aquarium.) The new, fireproof processing center opened on Ellis Island in 1900.
- In 1924 a system of quotas by nationality, biased towards northern Europeans, was enacted. Emigrants were required to apply for visas in their home countries before traveling to the US and immigration from some countries was severely curtailed.



- In 1954, with more and more people arriving by airplane and with much of the advance work done at the embassies where the emigrants originated, Ellis Island closed.

ELLIS ISLAND HOSPITAL

The hospital, which treated immigrants until they were well enough to enter the US, until they died, or were shipped back home as unfit for entry, was opened in 1902. In 1911 a Contagious Disease Ward was opened with approximately 450 beds. The Ellis Island hospital closed in 1951.

Some diseases and conditions were deemed serious enough to indicate immediate rejection, including syphilis and tuberculosis; prostitutes and those considered "imbeciles"; and those without funds, family, or job prospects who were, therefore, expected to likely become a public charge.

Hospital care was paid for by the immigrants themselves, or their families. Immigrant societies would sometimes make charitable donations or co-sign bonds with the immigrants for their medical payments. The shipping companies paid for the meals of those who were detained and for transit costs of those who were returned to their country of origin.

If a ship had passengers who showed signs of having a contagious disease, the ship would stop at an island outside of New York Bay and be quarantined there until health inspectors could board the ship and examine the passengers. Once given the all clear, the ship could proceed into the New York Harbor.

ELLIS ISLAND — FACT AND FICTION

Mr. Voss also educated us on the urban legend of names often being changed during processing. He informed the group that manifests were produced by the shipping companies in the country of origin. Names were checked against those manifests upon arrival, so the name on the manifest, whether right or wrong, was the name under which an immigrant was allowed to enter the US. Additionally, the federal government provided inspectors and clerks who collectively spoke virtually any language that might be necessary to communicate with an arriving passenger, further disputing the claim that names were changed because a clerk was unable to understand an immigrant.

LEFT: Two unidentified children, most likely siblings, with their manifest number, "3 Erie," pinned to their coats. Under the manifest paper appears to be a packet containing the rest of their papers. **RIGHT:** Immigrants at Ellis Island in the queue for processing in the Main Hall. Both images from the George Grantham Bain Collection, c1915-1920; Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, DC



(Continued on next page.)

(Continued from previous page.)

PATH OF IMMIGRANT THROUGH ELLIS ISLAND

After the introduction, Mr. Voss gave the audience an illustrated tour, following the path the immigrant would have taken.

Passenger ships were docked at the final destination and the First and Second Class passengers processed at the ship's terminal. Steerage passengers, and any passenger whose paperwork did not seem in order or was suspected of being ill or infirm, were loaded onto barges and shipped to Ellis Island. About ten percent of immigrants had hearings and two percent were deported.

Those who were deported were done so at the cost of the shipping companies, so there was an economic incentive to pre-screen passengers well. The costs for running Ellis Island were paid for by a per-head tax on all immigrants, which was part of their fare.

Upon arrival on Ellis Island, immigrants would check their baggage and have their manifest number pinned to their clothing. From this moment on, all passengers were under the steady gaze of immigration officials who watched them closely. As passengers walked up the stairs to their "six second exam" immigration officials looked for signs of limping, those who were struggling to climb the stairs, those who were pregnant, or those too weak or ill to make the climb. At the exam, doctors quickly evaluated a person for obvious signs of illness or mental infirmity. They marked the coats of the immigrant with coded letters, "X" for mental deficiency, "H" for a heart condition, and "LCD" for Loathsome Contagious Disease such as tuberculosis or syphilis. These passengers were then detained for extra evaluation. (One of those who failed initial inspection was Charlie Chaplin, who as a lark, walked up the stairs on his hands. The inspectors thought him insane.)

Those who passed the health inspection continued to an eye exam, where they were checked for trachoma (which was incurable at the time) and onto the great hall for the inspection of their legal documents. Here, the wait for processing could last hours, and those who did not speak English may have had to wait until a translator who spoke their native language was free to process their papers. From there, immigrants returned to the piers, but this time to board a ferry to their final US destination — whether New York City, New Jersey, or the nearby Jersey City railroad terminals, including the Central Railroad of NJ Terminal.



Eye examination of female immigrants at Ellis Island, New York City, c1911; Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C.

ELLIS ISLAND TODAY

In 2012, Hurricane Sandy caused significant damage to Ellis Island, approximately \$77 million dollars worth, and some of the artifacts from the permanent exhibitions were moved to Maryland for storage during repairs. The exhibitions are being reinstalled, including a new interactive exhibit, and all are scheduled to be completed on the island by the end of 2015.

BEHIND THE SCENES ON THE ELLIS ISLAND "HARD HAT TOUR"

The Save Ellis Island Foundation, which is working with the National Park Service to restore the 29 buildings in the hospital

complex on the southside of the island, offers a number of tours for visitors, including a "hard hat tour" of the unrestored hospital wings. (A tour which Mr. Voss leads.) These buildings are in their original, sometimes ruinous, state and tours are limited. Visitors see the general hospital, tour the Contagious Disease Wards, and hear stories of those who were detained there (one person for 17 months!).

The Statue of Liberty–Ellis Island Foundation, with National Parks Service, worked to restore the original Immigration Building and continues to work to restore the buildings surrounding the Immigration Building on the north side of the island.

A recent installation, *Unframed*, mounted historical photographs of those who passed through Ellis Island on the walls and windows of the hospital buildings. www.saveellisland.org/gallery/unframed-ellis-island-by-jr-photo-gallery/.

The Statue of Liberty–Ellis Island Foundation website, www.libertyellisfoundation.org, will help you learn more about its history and to find those ancestors who may have come through the processing center. The website also contains an excellent, illustrated timeline of the history of immigration into the US.

Attendees are encouraged to donate to the continued restoration and preservation of the center through www.saveellisland.org.

The GSBC thanks Mr. Voss for providing a look into one of the preeminent venues of genealogical importance for those of us in the NJ/NY area and throughout the United States.

Fred Voss will be teaching the GSBC's fall Genealogy Course at Bergen Community College's ILR program (for those 55 and older). For information, please contact the college at (201) 447-7156.

LEFT AND CENTER: The Great Hall was designed to hold about 500 immigrants at a time for processing. Right: "Immigrants Await Their Examination." The family in the foreground, with the imposing matriarch, appears in other photographs and is identified as coming from the Netherlands. (Library of Congress, c1900-1917. View more images in the Library of Congress' Ellis Island collection at www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/070_immi.html. **RIGHT:** One of the isolation wards on Ellis Island's south side. (©2015 Fred Voss.)



Passenger Manifests and The Immigrant Experience

Program Recap by Sydney Robertson

On Monday, 22 June 2015, Phyllis Kramer, Genealogist and JewishGen *Vice President of Education*, spoke to the GSBC about the experience of immigrants coming to the United States between 1880 and 1924.

In a comprehensive presentation, Ms. Kramer discussed the experience of the immigrant voyage, including:

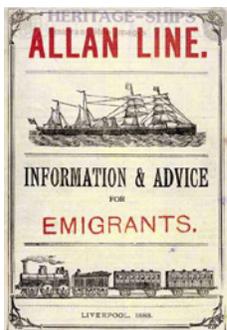
- what economic class were typical steerage class immigrants? *largely poor farmers, and unskilled laborers;*
- why did they emigrate? *various reasons, from economic crisis, war, religious persecution, famine, revolution, to social unrest;*
- how did they travel to the US? *largely in ships, first sail and later steam ships;*
- what was the length of the trip? *from 10 to 40 days;*
- how did they get to the port of embarkation? *largely rail;*
- where and how did they purchase their tickets? *local steamship agents and Immigrant Banks;*
- what was the cost of the trip? *about 2-3 years of savings;*
- what hardships did they endure? *seasickness;*
- what was the day to day experience of the voyage? *passengers made the most of their time above deck when they could;*
- what were the main ports of departure and arrival?;
- were there strict departure laws and regulations? *no, but Russia was a notable exception;*
- what documents did immigrants carry with them?; and
- what vital documents recorded their departure and arrival? *the passenger manifests.*

The rules for entry into the US were widely published in European newspapers by the shipping companies and some companies published their own guides for would-be immigrants (below). Transporting steerage passengers was extremely profitable for the passenger lines.

PASSENGER MANIFEST RESEARCH

Particular attention and a detailed discussion was given to passenger manifests — which are the key to finding information and opening insights to the immigrant voyage. While most of the talk was devoted to the immigrant journey to the US, a number of other ports of immigration were also discussed, including Canada, Great Britain, Germany, and Belgium.

A wide array of sources for passenger manifests was identified in the talk. Ms. Kramer also briefly outlined the history of US immigration regulations, laws, and practices. This is important as knowing what requirements an immigrant had to meet can lead a researcher to records. Until 1921, no additional records beyond passenger manifests, were required. After 1921, an ever growing list of documents were required.



LEFT: *Information & Advice for Emigrants*, 1883. RIGHT: Steerage passengers on the deck of the North German Lloyd steamship, *Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse*, which sailed from Bremen to New York. Some passengers are enjoying the sun and sea air while others, who are lying down, appear to be miserable — and possibly seasick. All images courtesy of www.norwayheritage.com.

Because the passenger manifest was the primary form of documentation until 1921, Ms. Kramer devoted particular attention to the details of passenger manifest research. Ms. Kramer's handout for the talk, which is available for a limited time on GSBC's website, includes information on:

- How to find passenger manifests
- The large array of on-line sources
- The contents of the manifest and what it can tell you
- The notes and annotations on the manifest and what they mean
- How to decipher the handwriting

DETAINED ALIENS

Ms. Kramer also discussed the special circumstance of Detained Aliens, the causes of detention, the length of detention, and the nature of the records available regarding detention. JewishGen's website has a number of pages devoted to reading the records of Detained Aliens, including the codes used at www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/Manifests/detained. From the JewishGen website:

"Immigrants [who were] detained faced only minor obstacles to their admission. The most commonly detained immigrants were women traveling alone (or with children), destined to a husband, fiancé, or male relative. These women could not be admitted without assurance that someone would care for and protect them. A woman may have been held to wait for her husband to come collect her, or to wait until a response was received to a telegram informing her husband or relative of her arrival. Once it was known someone expected her, she could be sent forward via rail to her destination. The "Cause of Detention" in these cases usually reads "to husb[and]," or to father, mother, sister, brother, brother-in-law (b-i-l), uncle, etc. Then, in the "Disposition" column, one will read the name and address of the person to whom the immigrant was released, even if that person is at an address far from Ellis Island. If this information is preceded by the initials "R.R.," it means the passenger was sent forward via rail.

Often, immigrant aid societies took charge of these women (or children traveling alone) and guaranteed immigration officials of the immigrants' safe arrival at their proper destination. In these

cases, the entity to which the immigrant was released may be the name of the aid society, such as 'Hebrew Society,' 'Irish Home,' etc.

Another common cause for detention was an immigrant's lack of tickets through to his or her final destination. The cause listed in these cases is typically "to Tel \$,"

(Continued on next page.)

meaning a telegram had been sent to their relatives to send money for transportation fare. Once received, the immigrant was ticketed and released.”

PATHS TO CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Kramer also briefly reviewed the evolution of the paths to citizenship, including, in 1911, the requirement for a Certificate of Arrival (COA) for the US Naturalization process.

The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in Washington DC holds the Certificate Files, called C-Files. The USCIS website contains information on the history of US naturalization at www.uscis.gov/history-and-genealogy/genealogy/certificate-files-september-27-1906-march-31-1956.

Files from the USCIS are not publicly accessible, but researchers can start the research lookup process by ordering an Index Search from the USCIS for \$20. The Index Search will tell you if, and what, records are available for the immigrant which may include correspondence, naturalization records, visa and passport information, among other records at www.uscis.gov/genealogy.

Ms. Kramer provided a handout that contains an outline of her presentation and a comprehensive list of online links to information, sources, references, tools, and other resources, including many of the sites mentioned in her presentation.

She has given her permission to make her handout from her talk available, for a limited time, on the GSBC's website at www.njgsbc.org/immigrant-exp.

GSBC SUMMER MEETING RECAP

“Expanding Your Research from a Single Fact” Webinar and Discussion

Program Recap by Nancy Klujber

As genealogists, we often are called upon to conduct research on an ancestor about whom we know very little – sometimes just a single fact, such as a name, date, or location, or a single unusual document. The July meeting of the GSBC featured a Legacy Family Tree webinar by Marian Pierre-Louis, a genealogist specializing in Southern New England research. It discussed the need to think beyond traditional genealogical records, and to supplement our research with non-genealogical sources such as histories, journals, and manuscripts. These can in turn direct us to other records.

EXPANDING FROM A NAME

If all you have is a name, where did that name come from? An obituary? A county history? An oral history? Does that name suggest any religion, ethnicity, or meaning?

Focus on the next generation. Where did they live? What was their religion, economic status, or occupation? What were migration routes for arrivals to that location? What occupations were the most sought after? Research the history, religion, economy, and politics in the home country, migration routes from that country, and conditions in the United States at the time.

Use ‘cluster’ genealogy. Research others of the same ethnicity, religion, language group or economic class. Research friends, neighbors, and others in the community. Did your ancestor arrive with others? Develop a likely scenario based on historic fact. This may be modified later based on new data that is uncovered.

The principal drawback to surname-based research is that the name may have been changed or anglicized, making further progress difficult.

Useful sources for name-only research include [FamilySearch wikis](#), [Google search](#), and ethnic genealogical sources. Search [Amazon.com](#) or the [Internet Archive](#) for books relating to your ancestor, and get [copies of promising sources at your local library](#).

EXPANDING FROM A DATE

If all you have is a date – often of a birth, marriage, death or other significant event – then you can pinpoint a moment in time.

What was happening at that time? Check world, national and, if possible, state, county, and local histories. A series of books titled *American Decades*, by Vincent Tompkins, discusses in detail

what was happening at that time to impact your ancestors and the decisions they made. Was there an extreme weather event, political unrest, an epidemic, a period of economic instability, or a backlash against a particular immigrant or an ethnic group? Seek out cultural information, including:

- Birth, marriage and death practices in the target time frame
- Ethnic and religious considerations
- The influence of gender. Female ancestors generally have far fewer documents available

EXPANDING FROM A LOCATION

If all you know is a location, examine histories and other geographically based sources. Find out all you can about that location – language, religion, who settled there and when, and from where did they come and where did they go.

Put the location in the context of surrounding countries and states. Does the place currently exist under the same name? Country, state, county, and city boundaries may have changed over time. Research the history of the old country using ethnic genealogy books, ethnic and geographically based genealogical records, and location based blogs.

What records exist for that location during the time frame in which you are interested? What surnames, and their variations, are prevalent in that location? If researching in another language, learn translations for key genealogical terms.

EXPANDING FROM UNUSUAL DOCUMENTS

Unusual facts and documents relating to our ancestors give context to their lives. They help us put ourselves in our ancestors' shoes, and develop likely scenarios. These, in turn, can suggest other sources worth researching.

Ms. Pierre-Louis concluded that even with just a single fact, we know more than we think we know. By being creative and looking beyond traditional genealogical sources, we can find new record sources and avoid many a brick wall.

This Legacy Family Tree webinar and many more topics are available, via paid subscription, at www.familytreewebinars.com/download.php?webinar_id=280

Finding that Elusive Ancestral Town

By Barbara Ellman

Many genealogy researchers reach the point in their efforts where they want to jump in to explore their ancestors' country of origin. But to do so, the correct town and country need to be identified. At times, a clue of the correct county or district is sufficient to direct such efforts.

How do you find the name of the correct town and country? The only means of identifying the correct locale for the ancestral town is records found in this country. This means that the researcher must seek out ALL possible documents. In addition to census records, access to naturalization records, marriages, birth records of children, and military registrations should all be sought. A ship's passenger manifest may also help you identify the town where the travelers came from.

At times, you might be lucky to find the actual town or district name listed on these documents. When seeking the town name, family members may have given the name of a nearby larger town or district. In this case, searching records for towns surrounding the named town would be appropriate.

Census records often offer conflicting versions of the country. The researcher must be able to discern, based on time frame, what the issue may be, e.g., border changes. For example, the town of Drohobycz is the district seat. Before WWI, it was part of Galicia in the Austrian Empire. Between WWI and WWII, it was in the province of Lwow in Poland. After WWII the town was in the Soviet Union and today it is in Ukraine. And with border changes often come variations of the name of the town. Lviv, Lvov, Lwow and Lemberg are all the same place! Such changes are not restricted to border changes. In Ireland, Cove became Queenstown and is now Cobh.

Wikipedia has a good source for tracking city name changes

at www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_city_name_changes. For Eastern European locations, the JewishGen Communities Database at www.jewishgen.org/Communities/Search.asp is especially helpful. For areas in the Burgenland Region of Austria (formerly Hungary) consult www.the-burgenland-bunch.org/Villages/Villages.htm. Or, if you're searching another area, use Google to find webpages that list the town changes in the specific area you need.

While we generally research our direct ancestors, the records of their family members should also be reviewed for clues to the town. In a recent case, I was searching for the ancestral town of a friend's family. After checking naturalization records, birth records of children born in the US, and being unable to locate immigration records, I located the marriage record of a half sibling. This marriage certificate indicated that the person came from Wilna (today Vilnius, Lithuania). This is the only record that I found with any reference to a European locale. With a direction to follow, I was then able to identify that the family came from a town in the province of Vilnius when I located the 1858 Revision List (a form of census used for military conscription) for the mother's family.

Without sufficient evidence of your ancestral town, the research will likely be frustrating. Make the effort to find the elusive clue. It will be well worth it in time savings.

School days! By Michelle D. Novak

What were the expectations of a 14 year school girl old nearly 100 years ago? Somewhat the same, and yet very different.

My grandmother, Ruth Berdan (1905–1970), was born and raised in a financially-comfortable family in Totowa, Passaic Co., NJ. She died when I was a toddler, so I never really knew her, and I loved to look at her family pictures and papers and wonder what her life was like.

On her eighth grade report card (1919), she was graded on: Deportment (social etiquette), Reading, Writing, Spelling, Arithmetic, Mental Arithmetic (calculation without making notations), Algebra, Geography, Language and Grammar, History, Civics, Music, Drawing, Sewing, Cooking, and Physical Training. (Physiology, Composition, and Book-keeping are also listed but are not graded.)

But when I look at her report card now, I can't help but think about my nieces — who are about the same age as she was in 1919.

At just 14 years of age, Ruth had completed the extent of her formal education. This was not unusual. Even though the US was in the middle of an education revolution, from 1900-1919, only half of the population would reach the eighth grade.¹

To me, her report card is a reminder that the notion of childhood is truly a modern concept.

In the past, many Western cultures considered children as miniature adults and they were expected to take on responsibilities such as cooking, farm work, childcare, weaving, sewing, and caring for livestock



MONTHLY REPORTS AND COMPARISONS													
Month	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Year
Reading	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80
Writing	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
Spelling	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
Arithmetic	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
Mental Arithmetic	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
Algebra	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
Geography	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
Physiology	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
Language and Grammar	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
Composition	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
History	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
Civics	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
Music	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
Drawing	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
Book-keeping	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
Sewing	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
Cooking	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
Physical Training	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70

* In NJ, women could vote and hold property from the Revolutionary War until 1807 — a topic for another day.

1. Tyack, D., & Cuban, L. (1995). *Tinkering toward utopia: A century of public school reform*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

2. Judy Russell, JD, CG, CGL; "How old did folks have to be?"; www.legalgenealogist.com/blog/2012/01/17/part-1-how-old/

Irish Parish Records on the National Library of Ireland Website

By Judy Kenney

On 8 July, the National Library of Ireland released a treasure trove of records. They have put the digitized images of Catholic parish records, for both Ireland and Northern Ireland, on their website for free viewing and downloading.

Starting in the 1950s, the National Library undertook a huge project to microfilm as many available Irish Catholic parish registers as possible and they filmed records for 1,086 out of 1,142 parishes. The starting dates for these records varies

by individual parish. For a few parishes, in or near large cities, the records may begin as early as 1750. For parishes in the western part of the country, they might start as late as 1860. The records end around 1880. Those films have been available to researchers at the National Library of Ireland in Dublin for many years.

Many of these records have also been available elsewhere, but at a cost. Some are held by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and can be ordered, for a fee, through their website and delivered to a LDS Family History Center. Other copies of these records are available through subscription sites such as rootsireland.ie, findmypast.ie, and the Ulster Historical Foundation.

The new National Library website is simple to use. On the parish records homepage, you can either enter the parish name in the search box or click on the map to select a province, then a county and a parish. By clicking on the name of the parish, you will be shown a list of what the registers for that parish cover. It shows whether that register is baptisms or marriages or both. You then click on the register to begin paging through the records.

You have many options to manipulate the image. You can zoom in or out, change the brightness and contrast, and invert the image. The image can also be downloaded or printed. You can filter your search by choosing baptisms or marriages and a year.

But, there are a few issues to be aware of.

The first issue is that the names of the parishes are the Catholic, not the civil, parish names. If you know the civil name, there is a link you can click on in the Help section to convert it to the Catholic parish name.

The second issue is that these records are not indexed. If you do not know the name of the parish where your ancestor lived, you may have to search through many parishes located in the county



they came from. You may be able to find the name of the parish by finding your ancestor on some other source, such as Griffiths Valuation, the 1901 Ireland Census, or Civil Registration records.

The third issue is that these digital

images are only as good as the original parish books were (and the microfilm made of the books). There may be damaged pages, faint or illegible handwriting, or gaps in the records.

Ireland did not begin registering civil records until 1864. So, these records may allow some lucky researchers to find several earlier generations of their families.

This website has an extensive Help section to answer questions you might have or to clarify how to use the site. It gives suggestions on what to do when you don't have the name of your ancestor's parish and other useful hints.

The release of this collection is a huge development in Irish research and it greatly benefits those who have not wanted to commit to paying for a subscription website. Those with the patience to page through these Catholic registers may find it well worth the effort.

SUGGESTED WEB LINKS FOR IRISH RESEARCH

- National Library of Ireland (NLI) – www.nli.ie
- National Library of Ireland Catholic Parish Registers (*New website!*) – <http://registers.nli.ie>
- FamilySearch – www.familysearch.org
- Ancestry.com (\$) (To view only records from Ireland, select Search > Card Catalog, and then use the left column to filter by location, Europe > Ireland.)
- Roots Ireland – www.rootsireland.ie
- Find My Past – www.findmypast.ie
- Ulster Historical Foundation – www.ancestryireland.com
- Griffiths Valuation (1848-1864) – www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/
- Ireland Census – www.census.nationalarchives.ie

Welcome New GSBC Members!

Kathleen Bonsall, Studio City, CA
The deVeer Family, Brentwood, TN
Jane Lyle Diepeveen, Fair Lawn, NJ
Judith Faley, New Milford, NJ
Joan Henry Faust, Southington, CT

Mary Jo Gohmann, Floyds Knobs, IN
Kurt Greene, Gurnee, IL
Barbara Keohane, Waldwick, NJ
Arlene Novak, Oakland, NJ
Michael Novak, Grosse Pointe Park, MI

Ruth Portela, Livingston, NJ
Karen Ramsey, Mahwah, NJ
Louisa Rowland, Washington, DC

Budke Tombstone Transcriptions — The Lost Volume

Recently, the Ridgewood Public Library received a very special donation. A local Society donated an old book of transcribed cemetery data. An inside page read “Francis Westervelt,” but in faint, erased pencil was also another name, “Mr. George Budke.”

George Budke was an avid researcher who voraciously collected manuscripts and records and made transcripts of source material from Rockland County, NY, and Bergen County, NJ. He sold his collection to the New York Public Library where it remains today in the Manuscripts Division (<http://archives.nypl.org/mss/423>). At the time of the sale, Volume 5 of cemetery transcriptions was missing and listed in the catalog of the collection as “borrowed many years ago by a Mrs. Westervelt of Hackensack, N.J. and never returned.” Why it wasn’t recovered in time to join the rest of the collection will probably remain a mystery.

When the book was donated to RPL, Local History Librarian, Peggy Norris, knew immediately that she was looking at the ‘lost’ Budke volume. (And, for those who know how much Peggy loves cemetery transcriptions, or have heard her talk on the subject, I can only imagine she did a little ‘genealogy happy dance,’ too.)

Peggy invited me to help digitize the book and having used the collection at the NYPL, I jumped at the chance. I spent a number of days photographing, scanning, and converting the images

back into editable, live text. We are currently proofing the text against the original pages and have plans to release the data on the Ridgewood Public Library’s website when complete.

The volume contains transcriptions of readable headstones in the following cemeteries:

#8067 – 8648	Cemetery of The Reformed Dutch Church at Wyckoff, N.J. (581 Records)
#8649 – 9289	“New York” Cemetery Between Hackensack and Little Ferry, N.J. (1,213 Records)
#9290 – 9862	Valleau Cemetery, Ridgewood Township, Bergen County, N.J. (572 Records)
#9863 – 9936	Cemetery at Midland Park, N.J. (73 Records)
#9937 – 10047	Cemetery at Upper Campgaw, N.J. (110 Records)

A copy of Volume 5, made from the photos, is available in the Bolger Heritage Center at the RPL and information in this collection can be ordered through the GSBC Lookup Service.

If you wish to help with the proofreading of the digitized text (there are many pages to go) or any of the other GSBC transcription projects, please contact the GSBC’s Volunteer Coordinator, Afina Broekman, at contact@njgsbc.org.

CRUNCHING THE RIDGEWOOD VALLEAU CEMETERY (1859) BUDKE TRANSCRIPTION DATA

When people think of an older cemetery, many think about those who died young — either in childhood, childbirth, from disease, war, or at an otherwise early age. But during the transcription and proofing of the Budke data, I noticed something I hadn’t expected to see, a number of people who died well into their old age — including 22 people who lived into their 90s! Could this be possible? The answer is always (as GSBC 2014 Seminar Presenter, Judy Russell, JD, CG, likes to say) “It depends.”

- **Does this collection of transcriptions truly record all the interments at the cemetery? Does it include those buried without stones or whose stones were lost?** No. This records only those with stones readable at time of transcription, and is not a copy of the Church’s interment records. Peggy Norris, who has done considerable research on Bergen County cemeteries, explains that “Valleau opened in 1859 and those with death dates before 1859 were moved to Valleau from private family cemeteries and the Paramus Churchyard cemetery.”
- **Does it include the stillborn or those who died too young to have their own marker?** No. (See following, “Ages 0-9 and 10-19”).
- **Is this snapshot of interments representative of the community at large?** According to Peggy Norris, “the purchase of plots was not limited to Paramus Church members but limited to Protestants, until 1920 when it became a non-sectarian cemetery.”
- **Was the pace of interments steady?** Not likely. Usually, as a church’s congregation grew, demand for plots also increased. The first 10 years of the cemetery, 1822-1832, records only six tombstones — and all that are pre-1859 were moved there from other cemeteries. The last 10 years of the cemetery, 1908-1918, records 51 tombstones. Further work with the data will separate men and women by age range to see if any patterns arise and plot the rate of interments.
- **Was there something in the water that helped them to live so long?** Just like today, it’s probably a combination of genetics, lifestyle, and good luck. (I’m hoping it was due to drinking lots of beer.) Keep in mind that some liked the attention that came with exaggerating their age, or that the person who ordered the stone may not have known the true age of the deceased.

So, in creating a snapshot of the individuals recorded at Valleau Cemetery, keep in mind that the original records were created for genealogy, not as census of all who lived, and died, in the community.

Ages 0-9 and 10-19 — Babies and children are most likely the largest unrepresented segment. Ree Hopper, CG, reports that Budke is known for regularly under-counting children and adds that the “Goff data for the same cemetery records 22 children that Budke does not.” One entry reads only “Several children of Abraham H. & Susan B. Lydecker who are buried in Flint Hill Cemetery, Fairfax Co., VA” without listing ages, names, or number of children actually buried in the plot.

Ages 20-29 — Three out of the 24 men in this age range were listed as killed in action during the Civil War.

- #9335 William Terhune, 23rd Mass Vol. Fell at Battle of White Hall, N.C., 1862; Age 22
- #9580 William A. Osborn died at Bell Plains, VA, a member of Co. B., 22nd Regt. N.J. Vol., 1863; Age 23
- #9540 Lieut. J. H. Van Emburgh, Co. F., 137th Regt. N.Y.S. Vols., Killed at the Battle of Gettysburgh, (*sic*) PA, 1863; Age 28

Four other veterans, all who died after the war, are also listed. One has a curious inscription on his stone: “#9802 Francis Van Blarcom from disease contracted in the service of his country during the war of the Rebellion.” (b. 1833; d. 1886; 53y).

Ages 90-99 — The oldest recorded age is that of “#9639 Jane Landers; b. 1779; d. 1877” who died at 98 years old.

BUDKE – VALLEAU CEMETERY INTERMENTS BY AGE RANGE

Age Range	Number of Stones Recorded	Age Range	Number of Stones Recorded	Age Range	Number of Stones Recorded
0-9	2	40-49	40	80-89	90
10-19	5	50-59	67	90-99	22
20-29	24	60-69	103	No Age	12
30-39	38	70-79	169	TOTAL	572

Brooklyn Historical Society Library

This series highlights local repositories and underutilized resources that may be of interest to GSBC Members. If you have a repository or library you would like to see included in this series, please send your suggestions to GSBCArchivist@iCloud.com



The Long Island Historical Society was founded in the 1863 to discover, procure, and preserve materials and records related to the natural, civil, literary, and ecclesiastical history of Long Island. In the mid-twentieth century, the Society redefined their mission to one focused exclusively on the complex and ever-changing history of Brooklyn and renamed itself the Brooklyn Historical Society (BHS). Located in a stunning, ornate Queen Anne style building in bucolic Brooklyn Heights, NYC, the BHS is a museum and library with a renewed mission. In the past decade, the building underwent an extensive restoration: preserving the beautiful interiors while adding modern amenities and a new exhibition gallery space. The Society has also reconnected with the Brooklyn community via social events, lectures, and selling Brooklyn-produced items in their gift shop. The result is a modern facility inside a breathtaking building that has retained their world-class collection of records and artifacts — and makes them easily accessible to researchers.

From the BHS website: “The Othmer Library at BHS houses world-renowned special collections and archives and is one of the most comprehensive collection of materials related to Brooklyn’s history and culture. Its holdings include more than 33,000 books, 1,600 archival collections, 1,200 oral history interviews, 50,000 photographs, 2,000 maps, 8,000 artifacts, and 300 paintings which document the commercial, residential, community, and civic development of the borough... including manuscripts, personal and family papers, business records, newspapers and other periodicals, books and pamphlets, maps and atlases, artifacts, paintings, photographs, films, oral histories, and genealogies.”



as well as a card index for abstracted marriage and death notices, 1809-1845.

CAN I RESEARCH ONLINE?

The BHS has a very user-friendly description of their genealogical holdings on their website as well as a BHS-specific online catalog, called ‘Emma,’ and an online image collection and gallery.

- www.brooklynhistory.org/library/genealogy.html
- www.brooklynhistory.org/library/search.html

WHAT ARE THE HOURS, FEES, AND OTHER INFORMATION?

- The BHS Othmer Library is located at:
Brooklyn Historical Society
128 Pierrepont Street, Brooklyn Heights, NY 11201
at the corner of Clinton Street in Brooklyn Heights
- For comprehensive driving directions or transportation options, see www.brooklynhistory.org/visitor/visitors.html
 - Street parking is practically non-existent. Plan ahead by researching nearby parking garages (which are always cheaper than a NYC parking ticket or tow) or use mass transportation.
 - The BHS is a few blocks walk from the N/R, 2/3, 4/5 subways.
- The library is open to the public on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from 1 to 5 pm. Note that the library is closed most Saturdays in August, see website for hours.
- An elevator serves all floors and the staff will assist patrons who cannot access the library stacks.
- The Library is the main repository for the collection and is climate-controlled to provide a optimum environment for the materials.
- Suggested contribution: \$10 adults; \$6 teachers and seniors; free to members, students with valid school IDs, and children under 12.
- All large bags and ink pens must be checked upon entering the Library. Cubbies and a coat rack are available for your use.

Brooklyn Heights is a wonderful, walkable historic community. Explore, shop, take in the skyline from the Promenade, or find a cafe for lunch — your visit can be a great day out for you and your family.

HOW CAN I CONTACT A RESEARCH SPECIALIST?

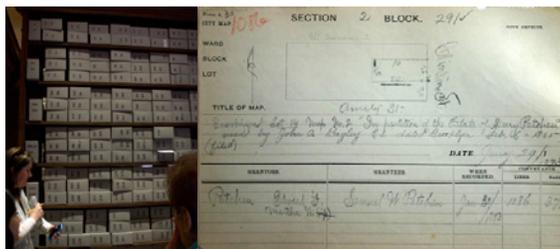
During normal operating hours, BHS staff are always available to help you develop a research strategy or identify useful sources. Contact the BHS Library staff at library@brooklynhistory.org or 347-381-3708.

WHAT ARE THE MUST-SEE RESOURCES FOR GENEALOGISTS?

- **Family Histories** — The BHS Othmer Library holds thousands of published volumes on local families. Some of the titles are commercially published, others privately published, and some are even bound from loose papers and may be the only surviving copy of the work. The collection of family genealogies spans nearly half of the Library’s lower-level stacks and most titles are listed in the catalog on the BHS’ website. (During my visit to BHS, I undertook some research for my brother-in-law’s Brownejohn-Lott tree. Within fifteen minutes, I had found about eight titles on this family and easily found the information he needed for an elusive ancestor in a privately-published book.)
- **Ecclesiastical Histories** — Before governments started keeping consolidated records in the late 1800s, births, marriages, and deaths in the community were recorded by houses of worship. The BHS holds an excellent collection of early church histories and records for Long Island and Brooklyn, including some original manuscript materials, and the collection takes up about one-fifth of the first floor stacks.
- **Brooklyn Land Conveyance Collection** — This collection of transcripts documents Brooklyn land transfers from the late-seventeenth century through to 1896. These abstracts show seller (grantor) and buyer (grantee) information and in many cases these abstracts are the only records for these early land transactions that have survived. The collection is not publicly accessible and staff will retrieve the folder for the property you require. (Please note that these are abstracts, not the actual deeds.)

www.brooklynhistory.org/library/wp/brooklyn-land-conveyances/

- **Long Island Star / Brooklyn Evening Star (1809-1863)** — One of the earliest newspapers in Brooklyn, the BHS Library has the entire run on microfilm



Images, from top: NY-NJ-CT town histories, some privately published, organized alphabetically by town name (MN); The BHS Othmer Library (BHS); Brooklyn Land Conveyances cards (BHS and MN)

Kudos!

At the Bergen County Historical Society Annual Meeting, GSBC Trustee and past President, **Geri Mola**, was awarded The first Westervelt Award for her leadership in chairing the "Bergen 350" Gala. The Gala celebrated NJ's anniversary and raised funds for the BCHS museum.

GSBC Trustee, **Lucille Bertram**, was recently elected to the Board of the Bergen County Historical Society.

GSBC Trustee and *Archivist* Editor, **Michelle D. Novak**, was recently installed as a Trustee of the Genealogical Society of New Jersey (GSNJ).

Upcoming Events

28-30 AUGUST

BCHS Loyalist Genealogy & The School of the Loyalist

The Bergen County Historical Society will be hosting the **School of the Loyalist** which welcomes Canadian researchers, historians, genealogists, and historical re-enactors to Bergen County August 28-30.

Of particular interest to GSBC Members will be a lecture on Friday evening, 28 August, by Kathryn Lake Hogan, "A Loyalist in the Family," about Canadian-Loyalist genealogical research and resources.

See www.bergencountyhistory.org/Pages/SchoolOfLoyalist.html for more information.

17-19 SEPTEMBER

The Dutch in America Across the Centuries, Albany, NY

The New Netherland Institute (NNI) will hold its annual conference with the Association for the Advancement of Dutch-American Studies (AADAS). In addition to the two-day conference's six sessions and 15 speakers, there will be a tour of the Upper Hudson Valley's Dutch heritage sites, a reception at the Fort Orange Club, and a conference dinner.

See www.newnetherlandinstitute.org or email nyslfnn@nysed.gov for information.

British Research and Record Lookups

Melissa Johnson, CG, who will be giving a talk to the GSBC about British records this fall, will be spending a few weeks in London, UK, conducting research. If you have a need for UK research or record lookups, please contact Melissa about her itinerary, availability, and rates at 732-365-2680 or mjohnson@johnsongenealogyservices.com.

GSBC Speakers' Bureau — Call for Speakers and Events

The Society's Speakers' Bureau is always looking to expand its roster of topics and presenters. If you are interested in presenting on a genealogical or historical topic, especially beginner genealogical topics, or need a speaker for your school, congregation, or Society, contact GSBC Trustee, **Steven Gabai** at sgabai@hotmail.com.

17-19 SEPTEMBER

New York State Family History Conference, Syracuse, NY

The New York Genealogical and Biographical Society (NYG&B) and the Central New York Genealogical Society (CNYGS) are hosting the second New York State Family History Conference (NYSFHC), 17-19 September in Syracuse, NY.

The Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) is sponsoring the first day of talks. Days two and three will contain more than 35 talks on various subjects, from NY State research to DNA, there is something for everyone. The exhibit hall will feature Societies, publishers, and genealogical companies.

For the complete schedule, registration, and hotel information, see www.nysfhc.org.

2-3 OCTOBER

Polish Genealogy Conference, New Britain, CT

The Polish Genealogical Society of Connecticut and the Northeast is holding their 2015 Genealogy Conference on 2-3 October at Central CT State University in New Britain, CT.

The conference will help you learn strategies for tracing your Polish-American and Eastern European roots. One-on-one consultations with one of our speakers are also very popular and

there are only a limited number of openings.

Always a favorite at this conference is the two-part seminar "Introduction to Polish Research" on Friday night which is designed for both beginner and intermediate researchers.

For more information see www.pgscctne.org/ConferencesEvents.aspx or contact Diane Szepanski at Szepanski3@cox.net.

24-25 OCTOBER

Gen-Gen Conference, NYC

Gen-Gen (formerly "The Genealogy Event") will return in late October at a new venue and format. Gen-Gen will be held over multiple days at the Scandinavia House located on Park Avenue South in Manhattan and the program for one day will focus exclusively on DNA.

More details are to be announced, see www.thegenealogyevent.com.

7 NOVEMBER

GSNJ Annual Meeting & Catholic Records, NJ

The Genealogical Society of New Jersey (GSNJ) will hold its Annual Meeting on 7 November. A brief business meeting will be followed by a presentation by our featured speaker, Alan Delozier, D.Litt., Archivist for Seton Hall University, who will speak on Catholic Records.

More details to be announced soon, see www.gsnj.org for details and sign-up (free).

NJ's Donald Arleigh Sinclair inducted into The National Genealogical Society Hall of Fame

At the National Genealogical Society's (NGS) annual Family History Conference, held this year in St. Charles, Missouri, the NGS presented twelve awards to individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions to the genealogical community. The National Genealogical Society Hall of Fame award was bestowed (posthumously) upon Donald Arleigh Sinclair who contributed greatly to the early genealogical history of New Jersey. From the NGS' press release:

"This year, Donald Arleigh Sinclair, nominated by The Genealogical Society of New Jersey, was elected to the NGS Hall of Fame. The main body of his work consists of more than fifty articles about his transcriptions of cemetery and bible records of New Jersey families that were published in *The Genealogical Magazine of New Jersey*. Other notable publications include *A Guide to Manuscript Diaries and Journals in the Special Collections Department, Rutgers University* (1980); *New Jersey Family Index: A Guide to the Genealogical Sketches in New Jersey Collective Sources* (1991); and *A New Jersey Biographical Index: Covering Some 100,000 Biographies and Associated Portraits in 237 New Jersey Cyclopedias, Histories, Yearbooks, Periodicals, and Other Collective Biographical Sources Published to About 1980* (1993)."



The Genealogical Society of Bergen County, NJ (GSBC) Membership Form

Sign up
now for our
2015-2016
membership
year!

The GSBC Membership year runs 1 November–31 October. Please make checks payable to “GSBC” and mail to:

Genealogical Society of Bergen Co., P.O. Box 432, Midland Park, NJ 07432, USA or with a **credit card at www.njgsbc.org > Our Store**

The GSBC is a tax exempt organization as described in sections 501(a) and 509 (a)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code. Membership dues are deductible for federal income tax purposes as provided by the IRS.

Membership Type: All amounts in \$US dollars Individual \$20 Family \$25 Junior (Ages 13–18) \$10 New Renewal

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State / Province: _____

Zip / Post Code: _____

Tel: _____

E-mail: _____

Surnames You Are Researching: (Renewing Members, please update) _____

Privacy Preference — May we post the research names listed above, as well as your name, to the Members-only area of the GSBC website? This may help you connect with other Members who are researching the same surnames. Your contact information **will not** be public and we will contact you if someone makes a request to get in touch with you.
 Yes, please share No, keep my names private

Delivery Preferences (US Members. International members will receive materials via e-mail.)

GSBC Archivist Newsletter: B&W Print / Mail Color PDF / E-mail

GSBC Event Announcements: Print / Mail PDF / E-mail

All members will receive the twice-monthly **GSBC E-News** via e-mail.

Save the Date! — Upcoming GSBC Meetings and Events

GSBC General Meetings are held at 7 pm every fourth Monday of the month (except holidays and December) in the Ridgewood Public Library Auditorium, 125 N. Maple Ave., Ridgewood, NJ. Phone 201-670-5600. The program is preceded by a brief business meeting and announcements. Check www.njgsbc.org for up-to-date information on topics, speakers, events, and classes.

MONDAY 24 AUGUST, 7 PM

Genealogy Workshop Roundtable

Join us for small group roundtable discussions about genealogical topics of your choice!

MONDAY 28 SEPTEMBER, 7 PM

GSBC General Meeting

Using “Old Fulton Postcards”

Laura Congleton will take you on a journey through Old Fulton NY Post Cards (www.fultonhistory.com), an often-overlooked gem for free newspaper research. The website contains more than 29 million historical newspaper pages, from the U.S. and Canada — all digitized by a retiree from his NY State home! Laura’s presentation will teach you how best to use the site, work with, and sometimes around, the website’s quirky navigation, and reveal some gems hidden in plain sight.

SATURDAY 24 OCTOBER, 4:30-11 PM

RPL Lock-In

Genealogists take over the Ridgewood Public Library (RPL) after-hours for a light supper, research, workshops, brick-wall busting, and sharing. A great way to improve your skills, meet new friends, or just have a whole evening

to research in the Library. Sign-up form and schedule to follow soon. Check the GSBC or RPL website for information and updates.

MONDAY 26 OCTOBER, 7 PM

GSBC General Meeting

A Memorial Speaks — A Vermont Stonecutter’s Story

Wise Owl Workshops will talk about the life of a stonecutter in “The Granite Center of the World,” Barre, VT, and take you on a genealogical adventure that spans two countries and two centuries. The talk will conclude with a photographic tour through Barre’s Hope Cemetery which contains some of the finest, and eclectic, examples of memorial design and granite craftsmanship ever produced.

31 OCTOBER

GSBC Membership year ends. Please renew your membership by mail or at www.njgsbc.org

SATURDAY 7 NOVEMBER

Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast — Members who have volunteered to transcribe, index, and/or assist at Seminars and other GSBC activities are rewarded with a certificate of appreciation, an entertaining program, and light brunch. (*Invitation to come.*)

MONDAY 23 NOVEMBER, 7 PM

GSBC General Meeting and Annual Meeting

Intro to British Genealogy

Learn how to research your British ancestors using both the wealth of information available on the Internet, including vital records, immigration and emigration, military records, wills, criminal records and federal government records, as well as on-site resources in the UK.

Melissa A. Johnson, CG, is a professional genealogist specializing in New Jersey, New York City, and British families, and genealogical writing, editing, and publishing. She is a Trustee of the Genealogical Society of New Jersey (GSNJ) and the International Society for British Genealogy and Family History.

DECEMBER

No GSBC General Meeting. Happy Holidays!

GSBC Classes @ RPL

Hone your research skills or dive into a new topic! **Advance registration is required.**

Class Fees: GSBC Members and Ridgewood residents, \$5; other attendees, \$10. Visit www.njgsbc.org or the Ridgewood Public Library website calendar for descriptions and sign-up.

Genealogy Myth-Busters

By Barbara Ellman

I had a lot of thoughts about genealogy this holiday season—which were inspired by some wildly-embellished family stories. While visiting with my family is always fun, I found that some of their assumptions about genealogy would benefit from some, well, *enlightenment*. So, in the spirit of helping you at your next family gathering, and putting the record straight, I've put together ten myths about genealogy that I think could use some “busting.” Here are the top ten myths spouted by some of my family members—and the perfect myth-busting response to each of them:

Myth #1: Your family's surname can be traced way back in history.

Myth-buster Response: The advent of surnames is a relatively recent phenomenon and surname adoption varied by country and custom. Many cultures around the world adopted family names after governmental regulation. Notable examples of late adoption of surnames include the Netherlands (1811), Japan (1870s), Thailand (1920), and Turkey (1934).¹ By 1400, most English people used surnames, but many Scottish and Welsh people did not adopt surnames until the seventeenth century, or even later. Napoleon inspired France (1808) to take this modern step, which was followed by various German states. Even in the twenty-first century, a recent immigrant from Kenya did not have a surname until he moved to the US and adopted one.²

Myth #2: Our family always spelled the name as...

Myth-buster Response: Spelling is largely irrelevant in genealogy, as the consistent spelling of names is primarily a twentieth century development and obsession. How to spell a name has always varied widely and has only become standardized in the past 100 years or so.

Names were almost never spelled in a standard way in earlier records. The people who created earlier records often were census takers, town clerks, tax collectors, clergymen, and others, who wrote down what they heard. In the days when most people

could not read or write, many did not know how to spell their own names. So, when a clerk asked, “How do you spell that?” a common answer was often, “I don't know.”

Myth #3: We have the same last name, so we are probably related.

Myth-buster Response: Just because two people have the same surname does not necessarily mean that they are related. Very few surnames are monogenetic—having only a single progenitor with that surname. Many surnames (e.g. most patronymics, clan names, etc.) are extremely common, each perhaps having hundreds of separate progenitors. Surnames derived from patronymics (a surname handed down across generations from father to children), occupations (*Alderman*, *Bowen*, and *Cooper* to name a few), or toponymics (place names such as *Abruzzese*, *Boyd*, and *Hamberger*) and many arose independently in towns throughout Europe, among non-related families. So researching by surname matches alone isn't always productive. Geographic-based matches are often more important than the surname matches—and genealogical research can prove or disprove such a supposition.

Myth #4: Our family surname changed at Ellis Island.

Myth-buster Response: No, it was not. Passenger lists were filled out at the port of embarkation by clerks hired by the steamship lines or by the ship's purser. Thus, the names on these passenger lists are the European, pre-Americanized, versions of names. Upon arrival, US customs or immigration authorities only checked off names against the ship's manifests—they did not alter the names.

1 Wikipedia, “Family Name” (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Family_name : assessed 2016)

2 Oral testimony by Lauren Maehrlein, 2016

Editor's Addition for Myth #2: Note that surnames can be more than one type. The name Bogaert, which should be familiar to Bergen County researchers, derives from the Dutch word for “orchard,” possibly referring to a specific individual who owned the orchard. Bogaert eventually became a name of a village, and was later adopted as a surname in nearby Belgium. There are numerous variants on the spelling—some of which may have NO relation to the original fruit grower. So, this one surname can refer to a the owner of the orchard and his direct descendants (monogenetic), those who hailed from the village (toponymics), or a larger extended clan (patronymic) who may have no relation to the owner of the orchard—depending on which time-frame you are looking at! (The town of Bogota, NJ, is also derived from this family name!) The name Wyckoff was a complete invention. After the fall of New Netherland to the British, the British imposed the English patronymic surname system on the Dutch settlers. It is said that Pieter Claesen invented the name “Wyckoff” as he thought the name sounded “English.”

Many people also assume that there was a language barrier at Ellis Island and that millions were admitted under different names because immigration officials could not communicate with the newly-arrived travelers from many lands. This is also a fallacy. Ellis Island hired a small army of interpreters who spoke the languages of the immigrants arriving fluently.³ Most interpreters were either prior immigrants themselves or the children of immigrants who learned their mother tongue as children. No immigrant was ever admitted until he or she answered multiple questions—often times through an interpreter on the Ellis Island payroll.

No names were changed at Ellis Island. Many immigrants opted to change their own names: to a more “American sounding surname, to match their already arrived relatives or to avoid ethnic discrimination, or to a name with perceived greater renown. Immigrants didn’t need to make a name change “official”, but may have made the change on becoming naturalized

Myth #5: All of the vital and other family records were destroyed.

Myth-buster Response: Often when making an inquiry about the location of certain records we are told that they were destroyed in a fire or flood or lost during hard times such as war. Undoubtedly, there have been many fires—especially in county court houses, town halls, houses of worship, and other repositories—which have destroyed many valuable records. However, fire has been given far too much credit for the destruction of many records. There are more records surviving and available than most of us are aware. Many records were recorded in duplicate, sometimes triplicate, and filed at different offices. Other records, such as births and deaths, may overlap with those records held by local houses of worship. There is no doubt that many records were destroyed due to wartime conditions, but on the whole, many records have survived and are waiting to be discovered in archives or religious institutions throughout Europe.

Myth #6: Your complete genealogy is available online. Some people believe that all you need to do is to go online, click a link, and your entire genealogy appears before your eyes.

Myth-buster Response: Although some individuals have posted genealogies that go back centuries, there is no such thing as a complete (and completely correct) genealogy that traces everyone in the tree. There’s always a point when you hit the brick wall and can’t find the next ancestor, or accidentally take a wrong turn and grab onto the wrong person. Genealogy is a constantly evolving, endless puzzle.

Compilers of family histories who borrow from previously compiled genealogies, without verifying their documentation, help to perpetuate false information. Unless a web page or information contained in a tree cites primary sources, it should NOT be used as a reference. Additionally, an internet source should only be used as a stepping off point (a clue) to finding an ancestor—not as conclusionary evidence. Even if the work cites references, these references may also be speculative or correct and you’ll need to recheck the references yourself. In short, a good genealogist takes nothing at face-value and will insist on following the reference to its original source. Beware of anyone who claims to have traced their descent all the way back to Adam and Eve—there simply isn’t enough evidence to trace back that far.

Myth #7: Birth dates are always correct.

Myth-buster Response: Wrong. Many immigrants did not

know their actual birth date. Many birth dates were calculated in relation to a religious holiday or event (for example, “three days after Christmas,” or “soon after the fire in Mr. O’Hara’s barn.”) and sometimes the baptismal date was the only date officially recorded. Many immigrants decided to adopt American holidays, such as January 1st or July 4th, as their birthday.

Some people adjusted their ages for various reasons: to avoid conscription into the military, to be eligible to vote, to work, to enable them to obtain pensions, or for vanity. (It is often quipped that the average woman’s age decreased with every Federal census from 1900 through 1940.)

Myth #8: Family stories are always true.

Myth-buster Response: While many stories have germs of truth that should be investigated, often stories are exaggerated (or completely wrong) as they are handed down through the family.

Those “descended from a Cherokee Princess” might be disappointed to discover that North American tribes did not have royalty. Great-great-great-grandfather Ivan probably wasn’t “the tailor to the Tsar,” but more likely sewed uniforms for the Russian army. And that great-grandfather who “played in the Emperor’s band” was possibly a member of the local band that was dedicated to the Emperor.

Family stories are wonderful, but remember they are only stories until they’re backed-up with *evidence*. Over time, our recollections can dim and “facts” can take on a new life of their own. Label your stories as such and endeavor to back them up with proof.

Myth #9: DNA Analysis is *the* easy way to find your family.

Myth-buster Response: DNA analysis is a science in its infancy. Autosomal DNA (atDNA) research can suggest if two people are related within about five generations or fewer⁴. (The nearer the generation, the stronger the results may be.) But without a specific research goal, results can present many “false positives” and assumptions must be thoroughly investigated with good old-fashioned genealogical research before any conclusions are drawn.

Myth #10: A census will provide the truth about your family.

Myth-buster Response: Oftentimes, there are elements in the census that are incorrect. When census enumerators came to the door, they questioned whomever they found there—sometimes it was the head of the house but other times, it may have been a spouse, a young person in the household, an elderly relative who lived with the family, or even a neighbor. Sometimes, the person supplying the information didn’t know all the facts, and may have been asked to estimate the ages, nationality, and occupations of those being enumerated.

Enumerators were paid by the line and so speed was in their interest. While some enumerators may have visited properties multiple times to catch those households they missed the first time around, others skipped households, or sometimes, entire blocks!

To identify incorrect information, it is important to compare multiple years of the census against each other as well as other key and primary source records such as birth, marriage, and death records; passenger manifests; military draft records; naturalization documents, etc.

That’s it! I hope the above will be helpful in explaining to your friends and family what you do during all those hours in the library and why your genealogical happy dance is your favorite form of exercise!

3 US National Parks Service, “People of Ellis Island” (www.nps.gov/ellis/learn/historyculture/people.htm : assessed 2016)

4 Family Tree DNA, Learning Center (<https://www.familytreedna.com/learn/dna-basics/autosomal/> : assessed 2016)