



Penn in Hand

The Newsletter of the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania



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GSP has a new location, website, and events

By Deborah Coombe
GSP Vice President and Editor

During the past year or so, the GSP Executive Committee has worked hard to turn unexpected problems into positives for the Society. As we approach the quasiquintennial (that's 125 years!) celebration next March of the founding of GSP, we have worked hard to modernize our service to our members.

When we learned we had to leave our Center City location because the new owner of the building wanted to rebuild, we thought we would move to a location that would better serve our members. Some of them indicated they were reluctant to travel at night to Center City and were concerned that parking was difficult and expensive.

Our new Northeast Philadelphia location, 2100 Byberry Road, Suite 111, has ample free parking, is convenient to major highways and public transportation, and has more space and facilities to offer a variety of programs.

You probably have already noticed the sleek new design and greater functionality of our website, www.genpa.org. Thanks to the expertise and thousands of volunteer hours of GSP Secretary Valerie-Anne Lutz and Treasurer Nancy C. Janyszeski we have a website that is user-friendly and has more and more records are searchable. Check the website frequently for new resources that are going up.

We are moving into the 21st century by having *Penn in Hand* and *Pennsylvania Genealogical Magazine* go digital. They will be posted on the genpa.org members only page in an easy to download format. We'll send out emails to alert members of new publications, articles, coming events,

and other important items of interest to genealogists.

GSP's new office houses a library of our collections. Appointments may be made to research our resources, or if you can't make it in, we'll go through our records for you. Fees for these services are posted on the website as well as tips to make your visit most productive.

A new addition to our website is a store where you can purchase books, services, and items necessary for your research, such as portable chargers, flash drives and lanyards, and a GSP fleece jacket for those chilly libraries.

March will be an important month for GSP and its members. Not only will we have our quasiquintennial celebration and our annual meeting, but the Ulster Historical Foundation's Fintan Mullan and Gilian Hunt will present—for the first time in our area—a full day of lectures and private consultations to help with your research into your Irish roots.

All of the following events will be held at the new GSP office, except where noted.

Genealogy...Get Ready, Get Set, Get Going
In celebration of Family History Month GSP will offer a lecture/workshop for beginners with GSP Board Member Nancy C. Nelson and President Carol M. Sheaffer. These are one session, introductory lectures with a limit of 15 for each session. Select the date that best works for you.

- Saturday, Oct. 15 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
- Friday, Oct. 21 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
- Thursday, Oct. 27 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
- Friday, Oct. 28 2:00–4:00 p.m.

Registration is required. Non-members: \$20. GSP members: \$15.

Third Thursdays will be held from 6–7 p.m. Members free. Non-members \$5. See www.genpa.org to register.

Oct. 20: Burial Customs

Ed MacFarland, a licensed funeral director at Kirk & Nice Funeral Homes, will discuss various funeral customs, paraphernalia and equipment from years gone by to the present day.

Nov. 17: Scrapbooking Your Genealogy

Even if you don't have loads of pictures, scrapbooking is a way to share your genealogy with family members. GSP Vice President Susan Koelble will give you tips on how to tell the stories you discovered in your family research.

Dec. 15: Show & Tell

Bring a picture, story or artifact to share with the group.

Jan. 19: Wherever Did I Put It?

Methods for organizing genealogical data will be discussed along with the benefits of doing so—better utilization of data and improved research planning. GSP Board Member Nancy C. Nelson and President Carol M. Sheaffer will give you tips to make your research easy to locate.

Open House: 3–8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 2

GSP's Board of Directors invite you to drop in for a brief visit and look around our new offices located at 2100 Byberry Road, Suite 111, in Philadelphia.

Ulster Historical Foundation All-Day Conference: March 18

Fintan Mullan and Gilian Hunt will be with us again this year for an entire day of lectures and consultations. Watch our website for more information.

Our 125th Anniversary Celebration: March (date to be determined)

Watch our website for more information.

Guardians of the Poor Records Contain Valuable Genealogical Material

By Susan S. Koelble
GSP Vice President
and
Jefferson Moak
GSP Board Member

By an act dated January 12, 1705/1706, the officers of Philadelphia's Corporation were empowered to annually appoint Overseers of the Poor. These Overseers were to levy and collect a poor tax and distribute its proceeds among the City's indigent.

In 1735, the Assembly placed the Alms House and House of Employment in the Corporation's control and required the Overseers to provide funds for its operation from the poor tax.

In addition, the Overseers possessed the right to look after the welfare of children whose parents were either unable or deemed unworthy to care for them.

Many of these children became apprentices during the 18th and 19th centuries, which enabled the Overseers, later renamed the Guardians of the Poor, to discharge their responsibilities in caring for the children by providing them with proper housing, care, and schooling.

In addition, these apprenticeships allowed the children to learn a trade or profession. The Guardians of the Poor were abolished by the Bullitt Bill in 1887 and their functions and property were transferred to the Bureau of Charities.

The original records for The Guardians of the Poor are housed at the Philadelphia City Archives and are available for viewing.

The Guardians of the Poor maintained quarters within the House of Employment or almshouse for dependent children, who were not placed out as apprentices. The number of children continued to grow until the Guardians established a separate Children's Asylum in 1820.

By this time, however, new laws allowed the Guardians to sue fathers and/or husbands for support of families. The Guardians established separate Committees on Bastardy and Support, which ascertained the circumstances by which women and children found themselves in need of the Guardians' services.

If a husband deserted his family or a man fathered a child out of wedlock and the mother and child were under the Guardians' care, he would quite likely find himself a defendant in the Court of Quarter Sessions.

If he lost the suit he was liable for support payments for the mother and child until the child reached a certain age (usually around the age of 7-10) when the Guardians could place the child out as an apprentice.

The husband and/or father would be required to post a bond to assure that the payments would be made. The bondsmen would be liable for the debt if the husband and/or father reneged on the support payments.

The information contained upon the bonds is quite priceless. The typical bond will give the father's name, occupation, and district of residence and the sex and date of birth of the child, if the child has already been born.

Often, the Guardians sued for the support decrees before the child arrived in order for the father to defray the costs of birthing and raising the child.

9/14/1833 Robert Johnston Park, of the city of Philadelphia, printer, father; Sarah Nicholson, mother; William D. Park, of the city of Philadelphia, printer, bondsman. Support for female child born 3/29/1833

10/10/1831 Jarvis Webster, of the city of Philadelphia, father & husband. Divorced. Support for his child, Emogene

The Board of Guardians was also authorized to put to service as apprentices to a trade or calling all poor children who became chargeable.

That is, the children of poor persons who died without leaving any property or any persons bound by law to maintain their children or children abandoned by living parents.

Males were to be bound until the age of 21, females to the age of 18. The Guardians were authorized to apprentice all children that received public support, either in the almshouse or children's asylum.

Although, through the years these papers went from being entirely handwritten to a form on which the necessary information was entered, the basic information stayed the

same: the date of the indenture, the name, occupation, and residence of the master; the name, age, term of the indenture, and trade in which the child was apprenticed.

Sometimes the names of the people responsible for the child are mentioned. The age of the child and the length of the indenture is give in years, months, and days, which is invaluable to the genealogist for determining an exact date of birth.

Frequently, there was information for either the master or the child on additional pieces of paper within the file. Some of this information pertained to schooling, the death of the master or child, the fact that the child had run away, the placement to a new master, or the return of the child to a relative.

20 October 1817 Israel E. James, 276 North 2nd Street, Philadelphia [master]; Mary Sexton, 5 years, 10 months & 19 days old [child], term of 12 years, 1 month & 11 days, the art & mystery of Housewifery. Cancelled, [child] returned to the House, September 24, 1821

15 February 1819 Samuel Rogers of Muncy Creek Township, Lycoming County [master], William Moneyppenny, aged 6 years & 9 months [child], the art & mystery of Cloth Manufacturing

The Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania has in its collection two books containing abstracts from Guardian of the Poor's records, *Philadelphia Guardians of the Poor Bonds for the Support of Illegitimate Children and other Indigent Persons, 1811-1859*, abstracted by Jefferson Moak (The Chestnut Hill Almanac) and *Philadelphia Guardians of the Poor, Indenture Records 1791-1822*, abstracted by Susan S. Koelble and Kristin K. Bryson (Bare Roots Publishing).

Both books have been donated to GSP for reprinting and can be viewed at GSP's library at 2100 Byberry Road, Suite 111. in Philadelphia or purchased from GSP's online store.

First Families of PA Corner

Nancy Cassada Nelson
First Families of Pennsylvania Chair

One of the conditions for completing your First Families of Pennsylvania application is that family histories are unacceptable as the only proof of your ancestry for several generations. Why is that? After all, the older the history, the closer the author was to the early ancestors, right?

There are several reasons why a family history alone will not suffice. The easiest answer is this: If the author of the family history quotes historical records, you can also find those records.

One sad truth is that many writers will condense, synopsis, even “dumb down” the family story in an effort to attract the non-genealogists in the family.

Here is an example that I recently stumbled on while working on an extended branch of my own family. A family historian made reference to a document with a specific date in 1843. She said that the document contained the names (I’ve changed them here) Mary Wilson Smith and Tibitha Wilson Jones, and that it proved that the two were sisters.

One reason this caught my attention is that I don’t remember ever seeing a record from the 1840s in which a woman was referred to by her first name, maiden name, and married name. Usually it will say “Mary, wife of Richard Smith” or “Mary Smith, daughter of John Jones.”

Fortunately, she included enough information about the document that I was able to retrieve the actual, handwritten item on line. When I read it, I saw that the ladies were identified not as Mary Wilson Smith and Tibitha Wilson Jones, but rather as Mary Smith and Tibby Jones. Another document in the file, signed by a different person, referred to the ladies as “Mary Smith formerly Wilson” and “Tibby Jones formerly Wilson.”

Nowhere did it say that the two were sisters. Nowhere did it say that Tibby’s real name was Tibitha. Is there a different document that proves or

disproves those statements? I’ll never know if I just accept the narrative statement as proof.

Familysearch.org is a free website that includes thousands of images of genealogical documents. Ancestry.com and fold3.com, among others, are paid websites that you can subscribe to or access free at a library or family history center.

Some original documents have never been published, and you may have to visit an archive or courthouse to find those. Local newspapers, usually every-name searchable, appear at genealogybank.com, newspapers.com, and at many library and historical society websites.

Well-written family histories certainly have their place in your research. They may contain first-person stories, letters, even photographs that you could find nowhere else. They provide guideposts that could lead you to discover things that the original author didn’t have access to.

You might find errors and misinterpretations as you uncover more and more original documents. You will be doing yourself and your family research a disservice if you fail to go beyond the published family histories.

Our mission is to provide leadership and support in promoting genealogy through education, preservation, and access to Pennsylvania-related genealogical information.

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Carol M. Sheaffer, MD

Vice Presidents

Susan S. Koelble and Deborah Coombe

Secretary

Valerie-Anne Lutz

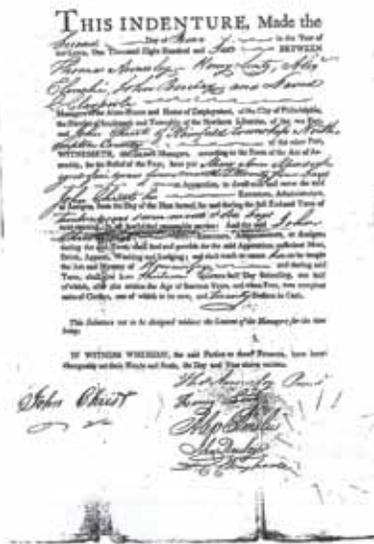
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Nancy C. Janyszeski

Penn in Hand is a publication of the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania, 2100 Byberry Road, Suite 111, Philadelphia, PA 19116. 267-686-2296 www.genpa.org.

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PIH Editor, Deborah Coombe,



The 1806 indenture of a 5-year-old Mary Ann Murdock, who is in a Philadelphia almshouse. She is to be placed in a home in Plainfield Township, Northampton County with John Christ, to learn the art and mystery of housewifery. During her apprenticeship of almost 13 years she is to be provided with sufficient meat, drink, apparel, washing, and lodging and 13 quarters half-day of schooling. When she is free, Mary Ann is to be provided with two complete sets of clothes, one of which is new, and \$20 in cash.



An 1819 document from Lancaster County releasing John Christ from the indenture because he has fulfilled its requirements. It appears Mary misspells her name as Mray and someone else writes Murdock. It is recorded that Mary made her mark.

GSP reaches all the way to New Zealand

*By Nancy C. Janyszkeski
GSP Treasurer*

The following is the story of a little boy born in Philadelphia who passed away in New Zealand in the 1880s.

GSP received an email from a resident of New Zealand. The email referred to the tombstone of an 11-year-old boy who was born in Philadelphia. The writer described a plaque that sits below a beautiful kneeling angel, and its testament to the love of his parents and family who had it erected in the late 19th century.

The email was from someone who is not a member of the family, but rather was taken by the stature of the tombstone and that it was about a child from Philadelphia who died October 11, 1882, in New Zealand.

Thomas Edward Shead was born in Philadelphia in 1871. He was buried in the Papanui Cemetery, Canterbury, North, Central, New Zealand. What were the circumstances, who was his family, and how did they end up in New Zealand?

As assumed, life in the late 1800s was not easy and much sadness befell families. This is true of Thomas' family history.

We begin with Benjamin Baker, born about 1818. Records indicate he was a ship's quartermaster. With his first wife, Ellen, he had one child, John Addison Baker, born 1859. Shortly after John was born his mother, Ellen, died of cholera, July 21, 1862, at their residence, 38 Almond St., Philadelphia.

Ellen Baker is buried in Union Cemetery, presumed to be the defunct Sixth Street Union Cemetery in Philadelphia. Benjamin Baker was left with a 3-year-old child.

One year later, in 1863, Benjamin married Annie Barry (there is a reference her last name could have been Joy and born in Canada) of Waterford, Ireland. Annie and Benjamin had three children, Richard Joy Baker, Catherine Adelia Baker, and Benjamin who died, Monday, February 26, 1866 aged 10 months. The family resided at 517 S. Front St., Philadelphia.

Catherine Adelia Baker became a school teacher in New Zealand before moving to Australia and marrying John Wills. Catherine died a widow on October 10, 1951 at Brighton Australia. She and John Wills had 10 children. Thomas (deceased), Kathleen, Bertha (Mrs. Mowforth), Joseph, Frances (Mrs. Nicholas), Anne (Mrs. Crossan), Marion (deceased), John, Charles (deceased),

Agnes, (Mrs. Hearn), and Honor (Mrs. Ellis).

Richard Joye Baker (family history states he added the "e" to Joy) was born October 05, 1863 in Philadelphia. Eventually, the family moved to Australia where Richard was a member of the Lighthouse Service. He married Honora (Norah) Curtis who was of Irish decent.

Norah and Richard had eight children together. Many of them were born at remote light stations in Victoria. Richard, Bert, Ernest, Arthur, Annie (Mrs. G. Griffith), Adelaide (Mrs. F. Noyes), Queenie (Mrs. L. Graham), and Beryl (Mrs. H. Camerone). Richard died December 2, 1949 in Williamstown, Victoria, Australia, in his 88th year.

Benjamin Baker died from an accidental drowning, May 7, 1867, three months before his daughter Catherine Adelia was born. His funeral was at his residence 328 Fairmount Ave, Philadelphia. He was a member of the International Order of Odd Fellows.

Annie, now a widow, then married Joseph Shead, born 1844 in Essex, England. Annie and Joseph had four children. Annie was born in 1872 in Philadelphia and died in infancy, December 30, 1872. The family address on the death certificate is 1021 Race St.

Thomas Edward, our subject, was born in 1871 in Philadelphia and died 1882 in New Zealand, Ej was born in 1874 and died August 10, 1874. The residence is listed as 328 Fairmount Ave. Both Annie and Ej are buried in the now defunct Machpelah Cemetery in Philadelphia.

The interments for the Machpelah Cemetery were removed in 1895 to Graceland (North Mt Moriah) in Yeadon, Delaware County. Their fourth child is Joseph William Shead.

In 1845 the Shead family is shown in Epping Chigwell, Essex in England. Parents,

Thomas Shead and Elizabeth Bartrop. The children are Joseph, Walter, Percival, and Helen. The family immigrated to Philadelphia in 1870.

The Shead family were Philadelphia bakers and ran a family business. The 1872 U.S. City Directory for Philadelphia County shows the Shead Family Bakers (Shead & Sons, Joseph, Thomas & Percy) at their residence, 1021 Race St., the same address where Annie and Joseph lived when their daughter Annie died.

Joseph and Annie Shead went to England before leaving there, in 1879, on the steamship Stad Haarlem for New Zealand. Thomas Edward died in New Zealand in 1882. Catherine Adelia became a school teacher in New Zealand and then the family moved to Australia.

John Addison Baker, the son of Benjamin and Ellen, returned to Philadelphia and married Virginia Kate Hudson March 4, 1884. Virginia was born in Delaware. They had one child, Ada Fanonda Baker who married Earl H. Wert in 1912.

By 1920 the family, including their daughter Ada, her husband Earl and their son Earl were living on 22 E. Homestead Avenue C, Collingswood in Camden County, NJ. John's occupation is listed as engineer in the marine industry, not unlike his father who was a quartermaster.

Annie Shead died May 21, 1920, 21 Moore St, St. Kilda, Victoria Australia. Joseph Shead died 1929, Melbourne, Victoria. Annie gave birth to seven children, three died in infancy and one son, John Addison Baker, from her previous marriage.

There is no indication of why the family moved from Philadelphia to England and then onto New Zealand and then Australia. The family history is documented in historical records and family stories passed down.

Thank you to the kind New Zealander who took the time to share this photo with us. It has been interesting following this family's journey.

It is one of only a few headstones of that height that survived several hundred earthquakes and aftershocks between 2010 and 2013.